CHAPTER LXVII

THE COCKPIT

ATHWART the route to India and the Far East lay the Peninsula. And for eight years, the Peninsula had been a battlefield between Britain and France.

Spain and Portugal were the Mexico of Europe:

April 3, 1834: . . . George Villiers and Howard write equally bad accounts from their respective Courts, neither seeing any hope of the termination of the Peninsular contests, and each of them alike disgusted with the men they have to deal with.

The dissensions in both countries were dynastic. In 1826, King George VI of Portugal died. And his heir, Don Pedro I, was already Emperor of Brazil. He handed on the Crown, therefore, to his young daughter, Maria, and appointed his younger brother Miguel, her uncle, to be Regent.

In oaths of allegiance, Miguel was not greatly interested:

August 24, 1833: . . . Talking of Miguel, the Duke related that he was at Strathfieldsaye with Palmella [Miguel's Minister], where in the library they were settling the oath that Miguel should take. Miguel would pay no attention, and instead of going into the business and saying what oath he would consent to take (the question was whether he should swear fidelity to Pedro or to Maria) he sat flirting with the Princess Thérèse Esterhazy. The Duke said to Palmella, "This will never do, he must settle the terms of the oath, and if he is so careless in an affair of such moment, he will never do his duty." Palmella said, "Oh, leave him to us, we will manage him."

Miguel seized the Crown. According to the Duke of Wellington (August 25, 1833) Miguel "had no idea of overturning the Constitution and playing false when he went there, but was persuaded by his mother and terrified by the lengths to which the constitutional party was disposed to go."

Neutrality was not easy. In December, 1828, a party of 652 refugees, loyal to the Queen, sailed from England to Portugal under the leadership of Count Saldanha. Wellington ordered Captain Walpole of H. M. S. *Ranger* to stop the expedition, which he did by firing a gun:

February 9, 1829: . . . Saldanha got up a *coup de théâtre* on board his ship. When Walpole fired on him a man was killed, and when the English officer came on board he had the corpse stretched out and covered by a cloak, which was suddenly withdrawn, and Saldanha said, "*Voilà un fidèle sujet de la Reine, qui a toujours été loyal, assassiné,*" &c.

It did not seem quite right.

Pedro landed, then, at Oporto, and the British—that is, the Whig—Government, differing from the Duke, supported Tweedledum against Tweedledee:

July 25, 1832: . . . Nobody seems much to care whether he or Miguel succeed. The Tories are for the latter and the Whigs for the former.

Between the combatants (June 5, 1834) Portugal was reduced to "a dreadful state from frequent exactions and the depression of commerce and cultivation." Indeed, according to Howard, the British Minister, "we could put an end to the Portuguese affair whenever we chose," for "they would submit to British power without thinking it a degradation."

And "one *coquin* for another, the Portuguese think they may as well have Miguel" who was "the favourite." Pedro's expedition merely "hobbled along," and his cause seemed "hopeless":

London, October 7, 1832: . . . Miguel has attacked Oporto without success; but, as he nearly destroyed the English and French battalions, he will probably soon get possession of the city. It is clear that all Portugal is for him, which we may be sorry for, but so it is. The iniquity of his cause does not appear to affect it.

August 24, 1833: . . . Pedro has committed, since he was in Lisbon, every folly and atrocity he could squeeze into so small a space of time; imprisoning, confiscating, granting monopolies, attacking the Church, and putting forth the constitution in its

most offensive shape. I suspect we shall have made a sad mess of this business.

But the tide turned. The report was that:

April 3, 1834: . . . Miguel is not popular in Portugal, but that the priests have made a crusade against Pedro and Liberal principles, and that they drive the peasantry into the Miguelite ranks by the terrors of excommunication; that the only reason why Pedro's military operations are successful is that he has got an English corps, against which the Portuguese will not fight.

June 5, 1834: . . . He [Lord John Russell] said that nothing but an inconceivable succession of blunders and great want of spirit and enterprise on the part of Miguel could have prevented his success, as at one time he had 70,000 men, while the other had not above 8,000 or 10,000 cooped up in Oporto, which is not a defensible place; that Miguel might at any moment during the contest have put an end to it.

The man who helped Pedro was that darling of the ocean, Charles Napier, already known for his fighting on the Potomac and elsewhere:

July 15, 1833: . . . It was he who in 1803 (I believe) was the cause of the capture of a French squadron by Sir Alexander Cochrane. The English fell in with and cleared the French fleet, but Napier in a sloop outsailed the rest, and firing upon the stern of the French Admiral's flagship, so damaged her (contriving by skillful evolutions to avoid being hurt himself) that the rest of the ships were obliged to haul to, to save the Admiral's ship, which gave time to the British squadron to come up, when they took four out of the five sail.

July 15, 1833: Yesterday came the news of Captain Napier having captured the whole of Don Miguel's fleet, to the great delight of the Whigs, and equal mortification of the Tories. It appears to have been a dashing affair, and very cowardly on the part of the Miguelites. The day before the news came, Napier had been struck out of the British Navy.

Lord William Russell predicted "another revolution . . . whenever the foreign troops in his [Pedro's] pay were disbanded."

But in the meantime, Pedro depended on "the confiscated Church property which is very great." London, where money was plentiful, offered Portugal "a loan of a million at eighty which they have declined."

In Spain, too, there was trouble. On September 29, 1833, King Ferdinand VII had died. The Regent was his widow [Christina], a Princess of the Two Sicilies, and according to George Villiers (February 25, 1834) "the stories of the Queen's gallantries are true." Certainly, her morganatic yet otherwise regular marriage with Don Fernandez Munoz yielded ten children. According to Guizot, conversing with Greville:

January 12, 1847: . . . Queen Christina was a very extraordinary woman—"*très habile, avec un esprit très impartial*"—that she had no prejudices, and he had heard her talk of her greatest enemies, of Espartero even [the Regent], without rancour and with candour; that she had great courage, patience and perseverance, and never quitted a purpose she had once conceived; that royalty was irksome to her, and government and political power she did not care about except so far as they were instrumental to the real object of her life, which was to live easily, enjoy herself, and amass money for her children, who were numerous, and whom she was very anxious to enrich.

Against Queen Christina, the Carlists took the field:

February 25, 1834: . . . Carlos has a large party in the north, where the Queen's person is odious, the monks have persuaded the people that she is atheistical and republican, that she has not force enough to crush the rebellion; and what she has is scattered on different points, without being able to make any combined or vigorous efforts, that she has no money.

June 27, 1834: . . . Don Carlos is coming to town to Gloucester Lodge. When they told him the Spanish Ambassador [Miraflores] was come to wait upon him, he replied, "I have no Ambassador at the Court of London." He will not take any money, and he will neither relinquish his claims to the Spanish throne nor move hand or foot in prosecuting them. "If chance will have me king, why let chance crown me, without my stir." (He was meditating evasion at this time, and got away undiscovered soon after.) They say he can get all the money he wants from his partisans in Spain, and that there is no lack of

wealth in the country. Strange infatuation when men will spend their blood and their money for such a miserable object.

Villiers (February 1, 1834) thought "that the only chance of safety for the Queen is to make common cause with the Liberals." But the Duke disagreed. The Queen's "success," so he was convinced, depended on "her opposing Liberalism." It was Spanish oratory that Melbourne mistrusted.

September 25, 1834: . . . After dinner we talked of languages, and Lord Holland insisted that Spanish was the finest of all and the best adapted to eloquence. They said that George Villiers wrote word that nothing could be better than the speaking in the Cortes—great readiness and acuteness in reply—and that a more dexterous and skilful debater than Martinez de la Rosa could not be found in any assembly. "*That* speaking so well is the worst thing about them," said Melbourne. "Ah, that is one of your paradoxes," Lord Holland replied.

Indeed, the faith of Villiers himself wavered:

March 12, 1834: . . . George Villiers writes to his family from Spain, that nothing can be worse and more unpromising than the state of that country. Notwithstanding his Liberal opinions and desire to see a system of constitutional freedom established in the Peninsula, he is obliged to confess that Spain is not fit for such a boon, and that the materials do not exist out of which such a social edifice can be constructed.

Nobody really knew what would happen. The Duke held—

Belvoir Castle, January 7, 1834: . . . that the Spanish Government will be too happy to interfere in the Portuguese contest (as in fact I know that they have offered to do), but that we never can allow this, which besides the consequences of interference (as a principle) would necessarily make Portugal dependent on Spain.

But Villiers wondered whether Portugal might not have taken the initiative:

February 25, 1834: . . . If Miguel had resolved to give effectual aid to Carlos, and dashed into Spain, he might certainly have placed him on the throne, and then secured him as a powerful ally to himself in his own contest.

The seamen were sure that they could easily settle it:

September 10, 1833: . . . Palmerston showed him [George Villiers] a letter he had received from Charles Napier, in which, talking of the possible interference of Spain, he said, "Your Lordship knows that I have only to sail with my fleet" (enumerating a respectable squadron of different sizes) "to Cadiz, and I can create a revolution in five minutes throughout the whole South of Spain." Palmerston seems to have been a little amused and a little alarmed at this fanfaronade, in which there is, however, a great deal of truth. He said that of course they should not allow Napier to do any such thing, but as nothing else could prevent him if we did not, the Spaniards may be made to understand that we shall not be at the trouble of muzzling this bulldog if they do not behave with civility and moderation.

For Queen Christina, it was a busy time:

August 7, 1836: . . . He [Villiers] said that he had been stopped on his road to St. Ildefonso by intelligence that the Carlists were approaching the place, and that the Queen had taken flight. He found all the relays of mules ready for her Majesty, and he returned to Madrid. It turned out to be a false alarm, and the Queen stayed where she was; but he said that he could only compare the progress of the Carlists to water spreading over table-land.

September 7, 1836: . . . It [the narrative of Villiers] reminds one of the scenes enacted during the French Revolution. . . . It is remarkable how courageously and prudently the Queen seems to have behaved. What energies a difficult crisis called forth! How her spirit and self-possession bore up in the midst of danger and insult, and how she contrived to preserve her dignity even while compelled to make the most humiliating concessions! No romance was ever more interesting than this narrative.

France was ready to assist:

August 24, 1833: . . . I dined with Talleyrand yesterday, who is furious, laughing non-intervention to scorn; and he told me he had for the last ten days been endeavouring to get the Government to take a decided part.

February 25, 1834: . . . The Carlists of Spain being in the north, and those of France in the south, it is very likely they will endeavour to make common cause, in which case it will be difficult for France not to interfere, so he [Villiers] thinks; so do not I, and am more disposed to believe that Louis Philippe is too prudent to run his head into such a hornet's nest, and that he will content himself with keeping matters quiet in France without meddling with the Spanish disputes.

This being the situation, a Quadruple Alliance, as it was called, was signed by Britain and France, the aim of which was "the pacification of the Peninsular Kingdoms." The date of the Treaty was April 22, 1834.

The attitude of Louis Philippe toward his diplomatic obligations had an amusing side:

September 24, 1846: . . . He [Palmerston] said that when he proposed it to Talleyrand, the latter jumped at it. He said, "This is the very thing we most desire. What I want is to sign something, no matter what, with you, that our names should appear together in some public act demonstrative of our union." Accordingly the Quadruple treaty was signed. It answered the end. The other governments took alarm at the union between France and England, and began to make advances to France. Then Louis Philippe, having got all the good he expected out of this treaty, turned his thoughts to the object of improving his relations with the other powers who had hitherto treated him so coldly. Pozzo went to him and remonstrated with him on the Quadruple treaty, and he replied (so Palmerston says), "*Mon cher, je vous donne ma parole d'honneur que je n'ai signé le traité que pour ne pas l'exécuter.*" . . . It was nothing but the connivance of the French Government in the transport of stores from France to the Carlists which kept the war alive so long, and as soon as that connivance ceased, the war was brought to an end.

According to Villiers (August 7, 1836), "France, instead of coöperating according to the spirit of that treaty, has thrown every impediment in its way." In fact (November 29, 1835), "Louis Philippe . . . is playing false diabolically."

While Guizot (November 19, 1841) was "supposed to have

had no concern in these underhand dealings," Louis Philippe "in the Spanish business" was "intriguing up to the chin":

November 8, 1841: . . . Everybody knows this, and our press has let loose against him without reserve; but we must screen his delinquency as well as we can, and pretend not to see it. It is a marvellous thing that so wise a man can't be a little honest, and, as has been remarked, a striking fact that, notwithstanding his great reputation for sagacity, he is constantly engaged in underhand schemes, in which he is generally both baffled and detected.