CHAPTER LXVIII

A DIPLOMATIC SERENADE

In Spain and Portugal, there were thus queens on the throne, young queens, young and unmarried. Each of those queens had a kingdom for her dowry. Each was a factor, therefore, in the great game of Peace and War.

Of "the young Queen of Portugal," Greville tells us (September 10, 1833) that King Louis Philippe "wanted [her] to marry [his son] the Duc de Nemours and when he found that impossible (for we should have opposed it) he proposed Prince Charles of Naples," which "was likewise rejected."

King William IV, presumably favouring Miguel, the Tory "*coquin*," was "at first very angry" at the daughter of Pedro, the Whig "*coquin*," "coming to England." But hearing that Louis Philippe, in his chagrin, had "treated her with incivility," he "changed his mind and resolved to receive her with great honours." We have seen how the Princess Victoria attended the Ball.

The Queen ultimately married the Duke of Leuchtenberg, son of Prince Eugène Beauharnais:

September 10, 1833: . . . This Duke went to Havre the other day, where the Préfet refused to admit him, though he went with (or to) his sister, pleading the law excluding Napoleon's family. He went to the Préfet to say that he protested against such application of the law, but, as he would not make any disturbance there, desired to have his passports *visé* for Munich, and off he went. At the same time he wrote a letter to Palmerston, which George Villiers, to whom Palmerston showed it, told me was exceedingly good. He said that though he did not know Palmerston he ventured to address him, as the Minister of the greatest and freest country in the world, for the purpose of explaining what had happened . . . that it was true that Don Pedro had wished him to marry his daughter, and that he had written him a letter, of which he enclosed a copy. This was a

very well-written letter, begging the Emperor to pause and consider of this projected match, and setting forth all the reasons why it might not be advantageous for her; in short, Villiers says, exhibiting a very remarkable degree of disinterestedness, and of long-sighted views with regard to the situation of Portugal and the general politics of Europe.

King Ferdinand VII of Spain had left not one daughter but two. And of these sisters, the elder, Isabella II, was Queen. By a coincidence, the King of France had two unmarried sons, the Dücs de Nemours and Montpensier.

Talk about the Treaty of Utrecht, signed in 1713, was declared by the Duke of Wellington (February 15, 1847) to be "all damned stuff." Still, by that treaty, it had been laid down that the Crowns of France and Spain were never to be united.

During the crisis that developed, Greville was "as completely in possession of the case on both sides as it is possible to be." He was shown all the papers by Jarnac, the French Ambassador with whom he spent three and a half hours. He saw Palmerston, and other British statesmen. He went to Paris on an unofficial mission of reconciliation and Guizot found him to be "the only Englishman he could speak to." And when Greville "appealed to the Treaty of Utrecht," Guizot said—

January 12, 1847: . . . great changes had taken place since that time. It was true France had acquired Algeria, and through it a certain power in the Mediterranean; but that we had acquired Gibraltar, Malta, and Corfu, which we had not been possessed of before, and which were quite sufficient to secure our power there.

Palmerston (January 10, 1847) was "determined to urge the point." And while Greville was not alone in considering that the insistence was "mischievous," it was in line with British tradition.

The first moves in the game were formal. Louis Philippe received a visit from Queen Victoria:

August 26, 1843: . . . On Wednesday I went with Adolphus Fitzclarence on board the new yacht *Victoria and Albert*, and steamed as far as Gravesend. It is luxuriously fitted up, but everything is sacrificed to the comfort of the Court, the whole

ship's company being crammed into wretched dog-holes, officers included. I breakfasted with one of the lieutenants, and he showed me their berths. They are packed two officers in one berth about seven feet by five at most, and, as he said, they have not room to move or dress themselves. The whole of the arrangements were submitted to the Queen and Prince, so that they were apprised of all this. What I heard on this matter exemplifies the selfishness and absence of all consideration for others engendered by unbroken habits of indulgence and eternal adulation. There is a large room, a sort of waiting room allotted to the pages, who are in fact footmen, and round this on both sides their berths, one to each. It was pointed out that the room for the officers was insufficient, and suggested that one half of these berths should be allotted to them and the other half to the pages; the other pages they proposed to put on board the attendant steamers. This proposal, which was only to put the officers and the royal footmen on the same level as to accommodation, was rejected, because they said, it might possibly be inconvenient not to have *all* their servants together and they preferred condemning the officers (all picked men and distinguished) to be thus disgracefully treated, rather than run the risk of sustaining even a momentary inconvenience. The Admiralty are much to blame for suffering the officers to be used with such indignity, but flattery seems to be the order of the day.

The sovereigns met at the Château d'Eu and the occasion was a "complete success—she left a good impression." Lord Aberdeen "had a great deal of conversation with Louis Philippe and with Guizot, mostly on the affairs of Spain."

September 15, 1843: . . . King Louis Philippe repudiated the idea of having any purpose of marrying one of his own sons to the Queen, and they came to a regular agreement that neither France nor England should interfere, or endeavour to influence the choice of a husband for her in any way.

Strictly, the agreement was that no son of Louis Philippe should marry the Spanish Queen in any event and that no such son should marry her sister until the Queen had been married and had borne children.

In the diary there is a suggestion that "they had agreed upon the person to whom she should be married"—namely Don Carlos. Enough (December, 1846) that Don Carlos was "out of the field." After all, as Lord Clarendon said, "the whole [Spanish] nation would oppose any such pretension" on the part of England and France "to dispose of her hand."

There was a curious incident which revealed the veracity of Louis Philippe. A kind of Primo di Rivera or dictator called Espartero had set up a Regency in Spain. For this statesman, Louis Philippe entertained "spite and hatred." Hence (January 13, 1842) "all Europe [was] thrown into a state of agitation and the gravest statesmen [were] occupied" with a matter of etiquette:

January 13, 1842: . . . This mighty and important question is neither more nor less than whether the French Minister shall deliver his credentials to the Regent at once, or whether he shall deliver them to the Infant Queen, by her to be placed in the hands of the Regent. On this momentous difference the political and diplomatic world is divided, a vast deal of irritation is produced, and, in consequence of it, very important negotiations are suspended and delayed. Aberdeen is vainly attempting to negotiate a compromise.

Yet, when another revolution drove Espartero to take refuge in a British vessel at Cadiz, Louis Philippe described his "fall" as "the greatest evil that could have happened," this despite the French attempts "to weaken his government and undermine his authority." Apparently, the Bourbon's admirers understood his moods:

September 19, 1843: . . . It is abundantly probable that Aberdeen was cajoled and deceived by the King and Guizot. It seems that Marliani, who was here the other day, saw Aberdeen, who told him what the King had said and how much he regretted the late revolution. Marliani replied, "*On joue bien la comédie à Paris, et je ne suppose pas qu'on la joue moins bien au château d'Eu.*"

In December, 1845, Henry Reeve happened to be in Paris. He reported that "the King's repugnance to Lord Palmerston is . . . insurmountable." He spoke of him as "*l'ennemi de la mai-*

son." Reeve said that "such a speech indicated a gross forgetfulness of the services rendered by Lord Palmerston" to Louis Philippe at the time of his accession. But:

24 Rue de la Paix, Paris, December 20, 1845: . . . When Lord Palmerston meant to come here, he employed the Cowleys through Madame de Lieven to enquire of the King how he would be received at the Tuileries. The King coldly replied that he would give him a dinner.

We have seen that, in 1845, Lord John Russell had tried to form a government with Palmerston as a Minister and had failed. The welcome news of the failure was "received abroad with transports of joy and here [in London] the funds and all securities have risen with extraordinary rapidity":

24 Rue de la Paix, Paris, December 20, 1845: . . . The apprehension . . . of Lord Palmerston's return to office . . . prevails in its fullest extent at the Bourse and in the country. Rothschild says: "*Lord Palmerston est un ami de la maison. Il dîne chez nous à Francfort. Mais il a l'inconvénient de faire baisser les fonds de toute l'Europe sans nous en avertir.*"

February 11, 1842: . . . Melbourne then talked to me about Palmerston, of the aversion he had inspired not only in France, but in all Germany, and said that his notion had been that everything was to be done by violence; that by never giving way or making any concession, and an obstinate insistence, every point was sure to be gained. This was *à propos* of the French refusal to ratify the Slave Treaty, and Guizot having delayed to sign it, because he would have nothing to do with Palmerston.

Lord Palmerston had not been at the Foreign Office for a fortnight before the Duke of Bedford (July 18, 1846) told Greville that "many disagreeable things are occurring." Palmerston had "already begun to disturb the harmony that subsisted in Aberdeen's time."

January 7, 1847, at night: . . . He [Guizot] was convinced that Palmerston came into office with a resolution to overturn French influence all over the world; that he fancied (as many others did) that Aberdeen had sacrificed the interests or the dignity of England to the French Government, while he him-

self had continually been charged with doing the same thing in France: charges which destroyed each other. But that this was Palmerston's idea, and that he was resolved to oppose France everywhere, to display his independence.

Palmerston's view was that, under Aberdeen:

London, January 2, 1847: . . . English agents everywhere *were* made subservient to the French, and to such an extent that they did not dare complain of any French misconduct, because they knew they should be reproved and run the risk of being humiliated in their public capacities, and he attributes to this *laissez faire* of Aberdeen's much of Louis Philippe's success in his intrigues, and the uncomfortable state of things in Europe.

As Greville was to explain to Guizot, Palmerston, on taking up his duties, was too much "encumbered with business" to think of the Spanish marriages. He was "occupied with questions of much more urgent importance in the House of Commons." At Broadlands (September 24, 1846), Palmerston, as Greville said, "was so engaged, messengers arriving all day long, that there was no possibility of conversing with him for some time." To all this, Guizot answered:

January 12, 1847: . . . "*Comment!*" he said, rather angrily, *il n'y pensait pas? Est-ce que vous nous prenez pour dupes que vous voulez nous faire croire cela?*"

To Sir Henry Bulwer, British Ambassador at Madrid, Palmerston sent a despatch, and "the substance of it was this":

December 25, 1846: . . . We had always considered the marriage as a Spanish question, in which no foreign power had any right to interfere. That there were three candidates left in the field . . . "Prince of Coburg and two sons of Don Francisco"; that we only desired that the Queen might take whichever of them would most conduce to her own happiness and the good of Spain. We neither supported nor objected to any of them.

"I must say," wrote Greville, as events developed, "that I begin to think no reliance is to be placed on him [Palmerston] and that he is really a very bad and dangerous Minister." The despatch to Sir Henry Bulwer was, in itself, "very able,

very sound," but Palmerston was so "extremely imprudent" as to "communicate" this despatch "to the French Government."

London, September 15, 1849: . . . In the course of our conversation, Lord John told me something about the famous despatch of July 19, curiously illustrative of his *laisser aller* way of doing business. After acknowledging it was very injudicious, he said, "I remember the despatch was brought to me on a Sunday morning, just as I was going to church. I read it over in a hurry; it did not strike me at the moment that there was anything objectionable in it, and I sent it back. If I had not gone to church, and had paid more attention to it, it would not have gone"; and upon this despatch, thus carelessly read, and permitted to go, hinged the quarrels with France and with Spain, the Montpensier marriage, and not impossibly, though indirectly, the French Revolution itself.

The mere allusion to the Prince of Coburg struck like a spark to gunpowder. Guizot said to Greville:

January 12, 1847: . . . This marriage it was impossible for France to tolerate. There was already a Coburg in England, another in Portugal, and to have had a third at Madrid would have been to make Spain a part of Portugal, and to have exhibited to all the world the triumph of English over French influence; that this combination which we wanted to bring about, they were bound to defeat, and then again assuming that *our Court* was bent on it, he said: "*Le fait est que vous êtes meilleurs courtisans que nous.*"

It was the language addressed by France to Prussia in 1870 when the candidate for the throne of Spain was a Hohenzollern.

The Queen's partiality for the Coburg family to which she and her husband belonged was indeed well known. When Portugal rebelled against the Lisbon Coburgs we have this:

February 22, 1847: . . . On Thursday Lord Beaumont asked a question about the Portuguese prisoners, whom the Queen of Portugal has so barbarously transported to the coast of Africa. Lansdowne made a very good and proper reply, after which Aberdeen rose, and in a speech of extreme bitterness and ill nature found fault with the Government, insinuated that they

had favoured the insurgents, and fomented the insurrection, and said everything that was most odious in the most odious manner. Ellenborough spoke out the other way like a man. It was bad enough of itself in Aberdeen but his speech has a more important source than his own ill-humour. The Queen; who is Coburgized from head to foot, has all along taken the part of these foolish Portuguese royalties with extraordinary zeal, and she is provoked to death with Palmerston for not consenting to an active interference in their behalf, and accuses him of having covertly encouraged her enemies. This accusation was put into her head by the Queen of Portugal, who never ceases writing over complaints and calumnies against Howard, Southern and the English Government.

Britain helped the Portuguese dynasty:

April 30, 1847: . . . In Portugal, the other Queen continues as obstinate as ever, yielding inch by inch as the danger approaches her more nearly, and is supported in her obstinacy by the security she is still able to find in foreign intervention. We have anchored our ships close to the town, and are prepared to land our Marines to protect her person, and, thus knowing she is personally safe, she is emboldened to refuse or demur to the terms of accommodation which Palmerston has suggested, and to try on the chances of war totally regardless, of course, of the misery of prolonging the contest. The natural course for us to take would be to offer our mediation, and if she refused it to withdraw our ships and leave her to her fate. But we cannot do this, because, if we were to desert her, the Spaniards and French would instantly step in and reconquer her kingdom for her.

But the suspicion in France that the Queen had favoured a Coburg marriage was not justified.

Greville assured Guizot that "the Court had never sought this alliance and that Prince Albert had long ago written to his cousin to say that he must not think of it, as it was impossible."

As French Ambassador, Jarnac spoke to the Duke of Bedford, to Clarendon, and to Lord John Russell, the Prime Minister (December 25, 1846), from all of whom "he admits, as well

as from Palmerston himself, he received the most positive assurances that we did not and would not support the pretensions of the Prince of Coburg."

Guizot's fixed idea was that, despite all assurances to the contrary, the Coburg marriages were "imminent." And Mme. de Lieven—

Paris, January 6, 1847: . . . repeated over and over that "we had departed from the agreement with Aberdeen"; and if not, "*pourquoi nommer le Coburg?*" She said all Europe was against us, that we had with little dignity knocked at the doors of the three powers [Russia, Prussia, and Austria] who turned their backs on us.

At night, January 7, 1847: . . . Much talk on the old subject, and the fire of my tongue extinguished the fire of hers, for, without the least convincing her, I reduced her to silence.

Guizot "insisted that it did not signify what he [Palmerston] meant [by his despatch]; that the question was what impression it was calculated to convey."

As Palmerston told Greville one Sunday morning after breakfast, the facts were (September 24, 1846) that "Christina wanted the Queen [her daughter] to marry the Coburg Prince" and "we refused."

The French Ambassador, Jarnac, asked that the British assurances be put "on paper." Palmerston omitted to do this which was "inexcusable." Owing to his "negligence and tardiness," he allowed five weeks to "pass away." The fact was that he "did not regard Spanish affairs with the deep interest" manifested by Paris. When Greville asked Guizot why he did not put a question plainly to the British Foreign Secretary, he answered "*Ce n'était pas à moi de faire l'éducation de Lord Palmerston.*"

The action of the French appeared to be entirely correct. Jarnac, in London was "instructed to go on offering to settle the matter with us" and to him Palmerston said:

September 24, 1846: . . . "Why don't you at once take one of the Spanish princes, Don Francisco's sons? Of the two, Don Enrique seems the least objectionable, and would be preferred by Queen Isabella to his brother, whom she dislikes. We are quite ready to concur with you in this settlement and to

communicate with the Spanish Government accordingly." Jarnac appeared to acquiesce.

Then, "early in September, the news came like a thunderclap that both marriages were settled and declared." As Guizot put it, "*J'ai agi.*" The Government were "all very much annoyed at . ... the way in which Louis Philippe has carried his point." They accused him of a "long course of diplomacy and intrigue":

Woburn Abbey, September 16, 1846: . . . Our government considers that they have been deceived and ill-used, and that the independence of Spain, in which we have an interest, is about to be completely sacrificed. . . . There is and must be an end of the intimacy between the two Governments, and probably between the two Courts, for the Queen and Prince Albert partake of the indignation and resentment of her Ministers.

September 24, 1846: . . . It has been a great damper to the Queen's *engouement* for the House of Orleans, for she fully enters into the feelings and sentiments of her Ministers upon the whole question. She wrote to the Queen of the French a letter, in which (though I suppose in very measured terms) she made known her thoughts. We have done all we can do with propriety and dignity in such a case. The long and short of it is that we have been tricked and deceived, but we cannot quarrel outright about it. We have remonstrated and given our opinion upon it, but the matter has now proceeded too far to be stopped, and Louis Philippe would not be such a fool as not to clutch the prize, when he has subjected himself to all the odium, nor could he now retract if he would.

Even Louis Philippe dared not marry his son the Duc de Montpensier to the Queen of Spain. Montpensier therefore was assigned to the Queen's sister, whom Greville (January 19, 1847) saw at the Tuileries, "a pretty plump little thing [who] looks three or four years older than she is." She would "soon be very fat" but, in the meantime, she was "decidedly the best" of the Princesses who were "a very scraggy set."

September 24, 1846: . . . Though policy would forbid the banns, she is well enough off. The Duc de Montpensier is probably a far better husband in all ways than she would have found elsewhere, and to be transplanted to Paris and made a

member of such a family as that of Louis Philippe, people who have brains and hearts, is a blessed lot for her in comparison with that of her elder sister.

In itself, then, the Montpensier marriage was not worse than many others. It was merely a breach of faith:

October 7, 1846: . . . I heard also a miserable subterfuge of Guizot's for which I feel quite sorry and ashamed. He gave (either to Normanby or to William Hervey) a positive assurance that there was no design of making the marriages simultaneous, of marrying the Infanta at the same time as the Queen. When he was subsequently called to account for this fresh piece of falsehood and deceit, he was not ashamed to descend to so paltry a subterfuge as to say that he never intended anything but that they were not to be married by *one ceremony*, that they were not to stand at the altar *together!*

"I have very little doubt," added Greville, of this conversation, "that this is not true." But the point involved is well enough established that until the Queen had children, there was to have been no French marriage for her sister.

The French argument for forcing a husband on the young Queen of Spain was simple:

According to Guizot:

January 12, 1847: . . . The young Queen was impatient to be married, and . . . if they had not found her a husband, she would infallibly have taken a lover. "*Vous ne savez pas ce que c'est que ces princesses Espagnoles et Siciliennes; elles ont le diable au corps, et on a toujours dit que si nous ne nous hâtions pas, l'héritier viendrait avant le mari.*"

Unless another husband had been provided, the Queen "infallibly would have concluded the marriage with the Prince of Coburg" and would have considered herself "secure of English support."

But, even in those days of cynicism, the selection of the husband aroused disgust. Don Francisco had two sons. Enrique was "so much *better a man*, better endowed morally and physically, than his brother" that Palmerston considered him to be "the better husband" also. But it was "quite clear that this did

not suit Louis Philippe." For the Queen, standing as she did between the Montpensiers and the throne, he wanted the worst husband possible:

September 24, 1846: . . . As soon as he found we were ready to join in settling such a marriage, he sent off orders to Madrid at once to clinch the affair with the Duke of Cadiz. All this was done without any intimation to us of his designs; on the contrary, Jarnac was deceiving Palmerston here, at the very time all this intrigue was working at Madrid. The nocturnal Council was held, and the young Queen compelled, much against her inclination, to accept as her husband a miserable creature, whom she dislikes and despises. They told her if she did not take him she should not be married at all. He is known to be imbecile, and supposed to be impotent; but it is possible in this latter respect the world may be mistaken, and that he may be the means, after all, of continuing a race of imbeciles, of which the Royal Family of Spain has generally consisted.

The sequel was what might have been anticipated:

April 30, 1847: . . . Every day exhibits more and more the infamy and disgrace of the marriage which the French Government forced upon the Queen. Her husband is a wretched imbecile sulky fanatic, who passes his life in trying to make embarrassments for the Queen, and in praying to the shade of his mother to forgive him for having married the usurper of his cousin's throne. They have been endeavouring to effect the semblance of a reconciliation between them, but he is incurably sulky, and will not make it up. Not long ago he sent for Pacheco, and told him it was his desire that a Council should be convened forthwith. Pacheco said very well, but begged his Majesty would be so good as to tell him for what purpose he wished for it. The King replied that his object was to lay before the Council proofs of the Queen's infidelity to him. Pacheco said if that was his object he must beg to decline to summon the Council. On this he announced that he had prepared a manifesto to the nation setting forth his wrongs, and that it should be immediately published. They persuaded him to desist from this scandalous intention, and as a sort of compromise they got Serrano to quit Madrid. It appears that the Queen mother seeing how matters were going on, intended to return; but her daughter had

no mind she should, and told her Ministers they had better look to it. It was their affair, but that if Mama came back matters would go ill. On this they sent Concha to Paris to stop her. Christina wrote to Isabella a lecture on her proceedings, and told her that she was too little educated to know how to conduct herself properly, to which she replied, "Mama knows that I did not educate myself."

January 22, 1848: [Sir Arthur] Aston [Secretary of Legation in Spain] called on me yesterday, and told me a great deal about Spain and Spanish affairs. He thinks it is the object of Queen Christina to destroy the Queen, her daughter, and that she will accomplish it; that she has always hated her, and prefers (without caring much for her) the Infanta; he thinks that by medical treatment the cutaneous disease with which the Queen has always been afflicted has been thrown in, and hence the epileptic fits by which she has been recently attacked; he says that they have lately put about her a French doctor, since which all her Spanish physicians have declined to attend her. I own I cannot believe anything so horrible as this implies, but it accords with suspicions from other quarters. He told me that Espartero before he left England showed him a letter he had received from the Queen's music master, a devoted adherent of his who had continued to correspond with him. This man was an eyewitness of the scene which took place when the Queen was forced by Serrano to take Narvaez for her Minister, having been by accident in the adjoining apartment. The details are revolting, and show, if true, that the Queen is nearly under duress and incapable of any freedom of action. She has, however, one chance of emancipation, and that is in the attachment to her of the people of Madrid, which is general and enthusiastic. She has all the Manolas to a woman, and through them their lovers, brothers, and friends; they would rise *en masse* for her if called upon. Christina is universally unpopular and yet remains there; she is gorged with riches and in possession of uncontrolled power. When she left Spain in 1843, she stripped the palace of all the plate and all the crown jewels of enormous value; of all the gold and silver services there were not six spoons left. Espartero appointed a committee to enquire into the disappearance of the crown jewels, but they begged leave not to report to avoid the scandalous exposure of the Queen's

mother, and she was left in possession of her spoil. The young Queen was found without clothes to her back; the Marchioness of Santa Cruz told Aston she had only six pairs of darned cotton stockings which hurt her legs, then sore with her cutaneous disease. Aston said that Bulwer was constantly intriguing, foiled, found out, and not trusted by any party or any individual.

The music master's story:

January 22, 1848: . . . He was waiting in the room next the Queen's to be called in to give her her lesson. Suddenly he heard violent screams and his impulse was to rush into the room. On opening the door he saw the Queen on the floor, and Serrano standing over her grasping her by the throat, and threatening her with uplifted arm. Serrano's back was turned to him and he did not see him; terrified at being the witness of such a scene and knowing it would cost him his life or his liberty if they were aware he had been, he took to his heels as fast as he could. The same evening the decree was signed. Serrano, the most infamous of creatures, of whom the Queen was really fond, had been bought over and fulfilled the contract by his violence. He said that the Queen was a prisoner and not allowed to communicate with anybody, a mere puppet in the hands of her abominable mother, all the grandees in the French interest, regretting the revolution, Carlists in heart, and only caring for a government of corruption and peculation; the Moderado party in power through the elections which had taken place under the election law by which the freedom of the Municipalities was destroyed.

According to a footnote, dated April 30, 1847, the King of Spain was odious to the Queen either from a natural incapacity to fulfil the duties of a husband, or perhaps from a dislike to them, and from unnatural inclinations. M. Bresson told L. Philippe that the Infant was supposed to be impuissant and have the appearance of it. These letters were found in the Tuileries after the sack of the palace in 1849 and were published.