

## CHAPTER XCIV

### THE PRINCE THAT DIED

TO ENGLAND, the rise of Italy was as the unchaining of an Andromeda. There was a little incident that revealed the national sentiment:

*July 5, 1844:* . . . However, this affair had hardly subsided before another storm was raised about opening letters at the Post Office. Tom Duncombe, indefatigable for mischief, and the grand jobman of miscellaneous grievances, brought forward the case of M. Mazzini, whose letters had been opened by Sir James Graham's warrant. This matter, in itself most ridiculous, inasmuch as Graham had done no more than what every other Secretary of State did before him, soon acquired a great and undue importance. The press took it up. . . . It lit up a flame throughout the country. Every foolish person who spoils paper and pens fancied his nonsense was read at the Home Office. . . . It was very wrong and very unfair of John Russell not to make common cause with him, not to vindicate the law and its exercise, and to say manfully at once that he had done the same thing when he was in office; instead of this, he both spoke and voted against Graham.

To liberate Andromeda, what an enterprise! No Napoleon could be deaf to such a call.

It was to win glory, after all, that the French Emperor had waged the Crimean War. He had wanted himself to go to the front. And Cowley, the British Ambassador in Paris, had told Greville why the Emperor stayed at home:

*Paris, June 17, 1855:* . . . All the Ministers deprecated it and did all they could to prevent it. They suggested that, if any misfortune occurred while he was there, he could not quit the army; if any success, he would infallibly stay to pursue it, so that his speedy return could not be counted on. This failed to move him. The intention was that Jérôme should be,

not Regent, but Chief of the Council of Ministers, and they advised Jérôme only to consent to take his office on condition that he was invested with the same despotic power as the Emperor himself. This his Majesty would not consent to, as the Ministers foresaw, and this was the reason why the expedition was given up.

When Greville was talking with the Emperor, he betrayed his yearning for adventure:

*June 26, 1855:* . . . A little while after, when we were talking of the siege of Sebastopol, he asked if I had ever seen a very good engineer's map of the whole thing; and when I said I had not, he said, "Then I will show you one"; and he again went into his Cabinet and brought it out. After this long palaver he took leave of me, shaking hands with much apparent cordiality.

On the surface, Paris was brilliant. Greville, no mean judge of horseflesh, went (March 8, 1856) "to see the Imperial stables, a wonderful establishment; and then the stallions, near Passy."

*March 3, 1856:* Went about visiting yesterday, and at night to the Tuileries, an evening party and play, two small pieces; the Emperor was very civil to me as usual, came up to me and shook hands; he talked to Orloff and to Clarendon, then the Grande Maitresse told him the Empress was ready, when he went out and came back with her on his arm, Mathilde, Princess Murat, and Plon Plon following. As the Emperor passed before me, he stopped, and presented me to the Empress. . . . This morning I went to see the opening of the legislative bodies, and hear the Emperor's speech. It was a gay and pretty sight, so full of splendour and various colours, but rather theatrical. He read his speech very well and the substance of it gave satisfaction; it was not easy to compose it, but he did it exceedingly well, and steered clear of the ticklish points with great adroitness and tact. It sounded odd to English ears to hear a Royal speech applauded at the end of each paragraph, and the shouts of "*Vive l'Empereur!*" from the Senators and Deputies.

Greville adds that they were "all so vulgar-looking." The Empress Eugénie "does not look her best, of course"—there

was a reason for that—"but I was much disappointed with her beauty."

*Paris, March 1, 1857:* . . . I was much struck with the ugliness of the women, and the extreme *recherche* of their costumes. Nature has done nothing for them, their *modistes* all that is possible.

*March 6, 1856, at night:* Just before dinner came an invitation to go to the Tuileries to-night, which with much reluctance I was forced to do. Two *petites pièces* as on Sunday. I did not attempt to get into the gallery, and sat in the next room, first with Brunnow, then with the Grand Vizier, who is become a great friend of mine. The Emperor did nothing but take off one plenipotentiary after another.

It was the inside of affairs that was so rotten:

*February 15, 1856:* . . . He [Cowley] thinks the Emperor honest and true, but that he is surrounded by a parcel of men every one of whom is dishonest and false. The Emperor knows this, and knows what is thought of his Ministers, but he says, "What am I to do? and where can I find better men who will enter my service?"

Everything was "intrigue and jobbery," and Cowley told Greville about "a sort of gang of which Morny is the chief who all combine for purposes of speculation":

*February 11, 1858:* . . . The penal laws enacted or to be enacted in France are considered as the inauguration of a reign of terror, and there is rapidly growing up the same sort of feeling about the French Empire that there is here about the Palmerston Government. Nobody pretends to foresee what will happen but everyone thinks that the state of France is rendered more combustible, and that any spark may produce an explosion.

In April, 1858, "Cowley said that the Emperor's nerves were shaken to pieces by the *attentat*, and he was greatly changed." Under the circumstances, Greville believed "the country to be in nearly equal danger from Louis Napoleon abroad and Mr. Bright at home."

The "distrust" of Napoleon was "incurable." He was (April

20, 1859) "this rascally adventurer." And (March 28, 1860) here was "the Triumvirate of Palmerston, John Russell and Gladstone, who have it all their own way . . . playing into the Emperor Napoleon's hands." Soon, he would be "able to treat all Europe, England included, in any way he pleases." Charles Villiers—

*July 17, 1860:* . . . thought it probable that any attempt on Belgium would be deferred till after King Leopold's death (who is seventy-five years old), at which time in all probability the annexation would be attempted, and with very reasonable prospects of being assented to by the Belgians themselves, an idea which had not struck me, but which I think exceedingly likely.

Greville, when in Paris, dined with the Sardinians (March, 1856) and wrote, "Knowing none of the people, it was a bore; I found nobody to converse with but Cavour and Flahault." It was Cavour's cause that Napoleon espoused. And as long as Napoleon supported Cavour, Palmerston supported Napoleon:

*January 7, 1860:* . . . When Cowley was here some months ago I remember his telling me that, one day when he met Cavour, either at Compiègne or Paris, I forget which, when it was the question of the Congress before the war, Cavour said to him, "So you are going to have a Congress." "Yes," said Cowley, "thanks to you and all you have been doing in Italy." "Thanks to me!" cried Cavour, "I like that; why don't you say thanks to your own Minister at Turin, to Sir James Hudson, who has done ten times more than ever I did?"

*Hatchford, January 12, 1860:* . . . The people dislike Austria and wish well to the Italians, but they want not to interfere in the affairs of either, and I doubt if they would give a man or a shilling to help Palmerston in blotting Austria out of the map of Europe and giving Sardinia a much larger slice of the map. That twofold object amounts to monomania now with Palmerston, and I believe he would sacrifice office to attain it, which is the highest test of his sincerity. The three confederates are Palmerston, John Russell, and Gladstone.

*Buxton, August 11, 1860:* . . . The Irishmen held off, indignant at Palmerston's having mentioned with approval the landing of Garibaldi on the mainland. This was held to be an insult to the

Pope, so More O'Farrell, Monsell, Sir John Acton and eight or ten more would not vote at all.

The war of Italian Independence was a triumph for France: *July 15, 1859*: . . . The friends of the Emperor Napoleon say that they believe his motive for making peace on any terms he could get to have been principally that he was so shocked and disgusted at the fearful scenes of pain and misery that he had to behold after the battle of Solferino in addition to the other battlefields, and at the spectacle of thousands of killed and wounded presented to his eyes, that his nerves could not bear it. Lady Cowley told me that he was so tender-hearted that he could not bear the sight of pain, much less being the cause of inflicting it, and she had seen him quite upset after visiting hospitals at the sufferings he had witnessed there, which of course are not to be compared with the horrible scene of a battlefield.

*Hatchford, March 7, 1860*: . . . Palmerston had been highly elated, and he and Lord John had been exulting in the fancied glory of being the Liberators of Italy, and of having procured the complete success of their own objects. As Clarendon wrote to me, "The Emperor must greatly enjoy the helplessness of Europe, and in feeling that he may do just what he likes with perfect impunity. Russia is crippled, Austria rotten, Germany disunited, and England, though growling, occupied in gnawing the Treaty bone he has tossed to her. All must submit to the laws made known to them through the *Moniteur*."

Amid it all, a child was born:

*March 16, 1856*: We passed the day in momentary expectation of hearing of the Empress's confinement. No news arrived, but at six in the morning we were awakened from our beds by the sound of a cannon of the Invalides, which gave notice of a son. Will his fortune be more prosperous than that of the other Royal and Imperial heirs to the throne whom similar salvos have proclaimed? It is a remarkable coincidence that the confinement was as difficult and dangerous as that of Marie Louise, with the same symptoms and circumstances, and that the doctor *accoucheur* [Dubois] in this instance was the son of the Dubois who attended the other Empress. From all I hear, the

event was received here with good will, but without the least enthusiasm, though with some curiosity, and the Tuileries Gardens were crowded. People were invited by the police to illuminate.

Who would have imagined that it would be the assegais of Zulus which would pierce the Prince Imperial to the heart?