CHAPTER LVII

PIROUETTING AT THE PRECIPICE

In 1833, Mehemet Ali had been excluded from Constantinople. But in 1840, he was still firmly entrenched in Syria. "For many years," writes Greville, it had been Palmerston's, "fixed idea" to pursue "the project of humbling the Pasha of Egypt." The Pasha was the pawn of France. And "humbling the Pasha" meant opposing him and the influence of France.

There were certain statesmen of France who mattered. Mme. de Lieven—

Paris, January 19, 1837: . . . likes Molé, as pleasing, intelligent, and gentlemanlike; Thiers the most brilliant, very lively and amusing; Guizot and Berryer, both very remarkable. . . . She described him [Molé] as not the cleverest and most brilliant, but by far the most sensible, sound, and well-judging man of them all.

In the year 1840, the Prime Minister of France was M. Thiers. The French Ambassador in London was his rival:

September 1, 1840: . . . I know very little of Guizot, but yesterday, I made Madame de Lieven ask him to dine here, and he did. He is very civil and conversable, of course full of information, but rather priggish in his manner, and has a sort of falsetto voice which is disagreeable.

March 29, 1840: . . . He is enchanted and elated with his position, and it is amusing to see his apprehension lest anybody should, either by design or inadvertence, rob him of his precedence; and the alacrity with which he seizes on the arm of the lady of the house on going out to dinner, so demonstrative of the uneasy grandeur of a man who has not yet learned to be familiar with his own position.

September 22, 1840: . . . Guizot committed a great *gaucherie* the other day (the last time he was at Windsor), which he never could have done if he had had more experience of courts, or

been born and had lived in that society. The first day, the Queen desired he would sit next to her at dinner, which he did; the second day the lord in waiting (Headfort) came as usual with his list, and told Guizot he was to take out the Queen of the Belgians, and sit somewhere else; when he drew up and said, "*Milord, ma place est auprès de la Reine.*" Headfort, quite frightened, hastened back to report what had happened; when the Queen as wisely altered, as the Ambassador had foolishly objected to, the disposition of places, and desired him to sit next herself, as he had done the day before.

We are now to watch, step by step, the masterly stride of Palmerston to his diplomatic and indeed military objective:

September 22, 1840: . . . This year Cabinet after Cabinet passed over, and no mention was ever made of the affairs of the East, till one day, at the end of a Cabinet, Palmerston, in the most easy nonchalant way imaginable, said that he thought it right to mention that he had been for a long time engaged in negotiation upon the principles agreed upon at the Cabinet at Windsor, and that he had drawn up a Treaty, with which it was fit the Cabinet should be acquainted. At this sudden announcement his colleagues looked very serious, but nobody said a word, except Lord Holland, who said, "that he could be no party to any measure which might be likely to occasion a breach between this country and France." No discussion, however, took place at that time, and it was agreed that the further consideration of the matter should be postponed till the next Cabinet. The following day, Palmerston wrote a letter to Melbourne, in which he said that he saw some hesitation and some disapprobation in the Cabinet at the course which he had recommended for adoption, and as he could only hope to succeed by obtaining unanimous support, he thought it better at once to place his office at Melbourne's disposal. Melbourne wrote an answer begging he would not think of resigning, and reminding him that the matter stood over for discussion, and then sent the whole correspondence to Clarendon. Clarendon immediately wrote word that he felt under so much obligation to Palmerston that it was painful to him to oppose him; but as he could not support him in his Eastern policy, it was much better that *he* should resign, and begged Melbourne would accept *his* resigna-

tion. Melbourne, however, said, "For God's sake, let there be no resignations at all," that his and Lord Holland's retirement would have the effect of breaking up the Government; and then it was suggested that they might guard themselves by a minute of Cabinet (that which they subsequently drew up and gave the Queen) from any participation in the measures they objected to. After this, Palmerston continued to do just as he pleased, his colleagues *consentientibus* or at least *non dissentientibus*, except Holland and Clarendon, with whom nevertheless he seems (especially the latter) to have gone on upon very good terms.

It meant that, without the knowledge or consent of France, four powers, England, Russia, Austria, and Prussia, signed a treaty, dated July 15, 1840, by which Mehemet Ali was excluded from Syria and his dominion restricted to Egypt.

That two Ministers in the Cabinet dissented from this policy without resigning is an important constitutional fact. Their "minute of Cabinet," as Greville calls it, was sent to the Queen who "desired to keep it."

September 10, 1840: . . . There can be little doubt that in her heart she coincides with them [Clarendon and Holland], for Leopold [of Belgium] is frightened out of his senses, and is sure to have made her in some degree partake of his alarm. She told Melbourne that, of all things, what astonished her most was the coolness and indifference of Palmerston.

September 26, 1840: . . . The Queen is all this time in a great state of nervousness and alarm, on account of Leopold [of Belgium]; terrified at Palmerston's audacity, amazed at his confidence, and trembling lest her uncle should be exposed to all the dangers and difficulties in which he would be placed by a war between his niece and his father-in-law [Louis Philippe].

The Queen "hears constantly from Leopold, who is mad with fright and imparts all his fears to her."

Dedel, the Dutch Minister, considered that "Palmerston had conducted himself with a *légèreté* quite unaccountable." Melbourne "was now become seriously alarmed, so much so that he had written to John Russell 'he could neither eat, nor drink, nor sleep,' so great was his disturbance." Lord Spencer

[Althorp] wrote "that it was his earnest desire to give his support to the Government in all their measures, but that it would be contrary to his judgment and his conscience to support them in their policy on this question." Also, Dedel reported this:

September 1, 1840: . . . The Duke of Wellington, when he was at Windsor, had talked over the state of affairs with Melbourne, and said to him, "I do not say that I disapprove of your policy as far as regards Mehemet Ali; perhaps I do not think that you go far enough; not only would I not leave him in possession of a foot of ground in Syria, but I should have no scruple in expelling him from Egypt too. But what is Mehemet Ali or the Turk in comparison with the immeasurable importance of preserving peace in Europe? This is the thing alone to be regarded, and I give you notice that you must not expect our support in Parliament of the policy which you have chosen to adopt.

Clarendon's account was that the Duke had merely said, "I approve of your policy but you must have no war."

In Paris, Thiers suffered from "considerable alarm." It would have been easier for him if Mehemet Ali had quietly submitted. But, as Thiers wrote to London, the trouble was "to restrain the Pasha and prevent his making any offensive movement."

September 6, 1840: . . . He offered, if France would join him and make common cause with him, to place his fleets and armies at her disposal, and to be governed in all things by her advice and wishes, a thing utterly impossible for France to listen to. Upon the impossibility of this alliance being represented to him, the prudence of keeping quiet strenuously urged upon him, and the utmost endeavours made to convince him that a defensive policy was the only wise and safe course for him, he had engaged not to move forward, or take any offensive course unless compelled to do so, by violence offered to him; his army was concentrated at the foot of the Taurus, and there (but in a menacing attitude) he would consent to its remaining; but if any European troops were to advance against him, or be transported to Syria, any attempt made to foment another insurrection in Syria, or any attack made upon his fleet, or any violence offered to his commerce, then he would cross the Taurus, and, taking all consequences, commence offensive operations. In that case, said Guizot, Constantinople might be occupied by

the Russians, and the British fleet enter the Sea of Marmora; and if that happened, he could not answer for the result in France, and he owned that he (and Thiers expressed the same in his letter) was in the greatest alarm at all these dangers and complications.

As Guizot said to Greville, the French Government were thus—

September 6, 1840: . . . in a position of the greatest embarrassment, far from inclined to war, the King especially abhorring the very thoughts of it, and at the same time so far committed that if the four allies act with any vigour and drive Mehemet Ali to desperation, France must either kindle the flames of war, or, after all her loud and threatening tone, succumb in a manner not only intolerably galling to the national pride, but which really would be very discreditable in itself.

That morning, Guizot had seen Palmerston and read to him Thiers' letter:

September 6, 1840: . . . I asked him if it had made any impression on Palmerston. He said, "Not the slightest"; that he had said, "Oh! Mehemet Ali *cédera; il ne faut pas s'attendre qu'il cède à la première sommation; mais donnez-lui quinze jours, et il finira par céder.*"

September 10, 1840: . . . When it was suggested to Palmerston that it might with every effort be impossible to prevent the Pasha from crossing the Taurus, he said, "So much the better if he did, that he would not be able to retreat, his communication be cut off, and his ruin the more certainly accomplished."

Palmerston, indeed, was "quite impenetrable." In a remarkable phrase, Guizot urged that Europe was "at the mercy '*des incidents et des subalternes.*'" And it was a peril of which Melbourne himself was conscious. For Ponsonby, at Constantinople, previously on holiday, was now on the rampage:

September 28, 1840: . . . Melbourne said that there was a danger greatly to be feared, and that was, that our ambassador at Constantinople, who was very violent against Mehemet Ali, and not afraid of war, might and probably would urge the im-

apprehension) to the possible results; but he talks in the most offhand way of the clamour that broke out at Paris, of his entire conviction that the French Cabinet have no thoughts of going to war, and that if they were to do so, their fleets would be instantly swept from the sea, and their armies everywhere defeated. That if they were to try and make it a war of opinion and stir up the elements of revolution in other countries, a more fatal retaliation could and would be effected in France, where Carlist or Napoleonist interest, aided by foreign intervention, would shake the throne of Louis Philippe, while taxation and conscription would very soon disgust the French with a war in which he did not anticipate the possibility of their gaining any military successes. Everything may possibly turn out according to his expectations.

In Paris, Granville, the British Ambassador, was "disgusted at his position" and especially "at being kept entirely in the dark." Indeed, "his private correspondence with Clarendon and Lord Holland [is] quite at variance with his public [correspondence] with Palmerston [his official chief]."

Ministers, at Windsor (September 12, 1840), agreed that "calling Parliament together . . . was to be avoided and would be on every account objectionable. They might incur any expense for naval affairs on their own responsibility and Parliament would be sure to bear them out." Indeed, the Cabinet let things slide:

September 23, 1840: . . . It is most extraordinary that while all reflecting people are amazed at the Government being scattered all abroad at such a momentous crisis, and instead of being collected together for the purpose of considering in concert every measure that is taken, as well as the whole course of policy, with any changes and modifications that may be called for, the Ministers themselves, such of them at least as are here, cannot discover any occasion for any Cabinets or meetings, and seem to think it quite natural and proper to leave the great question of peace or war to be dealt with by Palmerston as a mere matter of official routine.

Matters of prejudice began to arise—"a proclamation of Admiral Napier, which people are disposed to consider a forgery

and an impossibility, but which was believed at Paris and by Guizot here, and consequently raised a storm there and put the Ambassador in despair"—also a mission of Count Walewski to Alexandria which Palmerston believed to be intended by France to encourage the Pasha, an insinuation which France repudiated. Indeed, the French were "making vigorous preparations for war"—Louis Philippe using "very firm language"—and "a considerable rise in the funds, indicating a reviving confidence in peace" was hardly justified.

September 12, 1840: . . . As for Metternich, he is at his wit's end, and occupied night and day in thinking how he can *se tirer d'affaire*. He tells Lamb that as to contributing a guinea or a soldier toward the operation, it is quite out of the question, and begs him never to mention such a thing, and that if the Treaty could quietly fall to the ground it would be a very good thing. It is, however, entirely contemplated by the other powers that Russia shall occupy Constantinople, and march to the assistance of the Sultan if necessary.

It was Lord John Russell who "requested Melbourne to call a Cabinet":

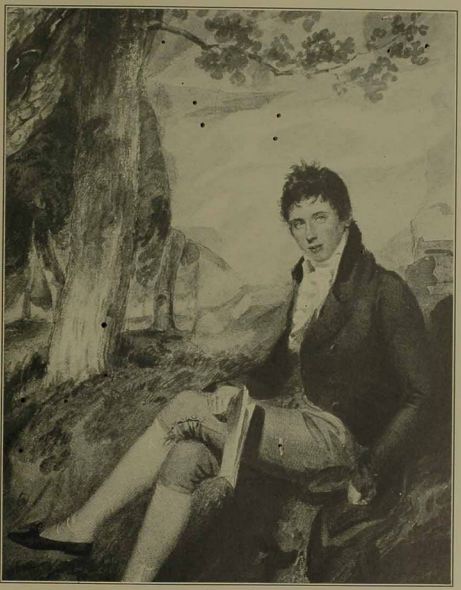
September 26, 1840: . . . At this Cabinet, Lord John is prepared to make a stand, and to propose that measures shall be taken for bringing about a settlement on the basis of mutual concession, and he is in fact disposed to accept the terms now offered by the Pasha with the consent and by the advice of France. He anticipates Palmerston's opposition to this, and his insisting upon a continuance of our present course; but he is resolved in such a case to bring matters to an issue, and if he is overruled by a majority of the Cabinet, not only to resign, but to take a decisive part in Parliament against Palmerston's policy, and to do his utmost there, with the support which he expects to obtain, to prevent a war. He is aware that his conduct might not only break up the Whig Government and party, but that it may bring about an entirely new arrangement and combination of parties, all of which he is willing to encounter rather than the evils and hazards of war. On the other hand, if Palmerston refuses to accede to his terms, and if unsupported by the Cabinet he tenders his resignation, Lord John is ready to urge its acceptance, and himself to undertake the adminis-

tration of our foreign affairs. . . . Palmerston has been indignant at the opposition thus suddenly put forward by Lord John, and complains (not, I think, without very good cause), that after supporting and sanctioning his policy, and approving of the Treaty, he abandons him midway, and refuses to give that policy a fair trial. . . . Between the urgent remonstrances of Lord John and the indignant complaints of Palmerston, Melbourne has been at his wit's end. So melancholy a picture of indecision, weakness, and pusillanimity as his conduct has exhibited, I never heard of.

A "*transaction*" was devised, therefore, which was intended to preserve peace:

September 28, 1840: . . . Palmerston said that there would be no sort of difficulty in enforcing the Treaty, and that then France might join if she pleased. Guizot replied that this was out of the question, that France was now ready to join in a transaction fair and honourable to both parties, but she would not stand by, see the question settled without her, and then come in to bolster up an arrangement made by others, and with which she had had no concern.

September 26, 1840: . . . Lady Palmerston . . . spoke with the utmost bitterness and contempt of these proposals, as totally out of the question, not worth a moment's attention, and such as the other powers would not listen to, even if we were disposed to accept them; and that we were now bound to those powers, and must act in concert with them. She told me a great deal, which I knew (from other sources) not to be true, about Metternich's resolution not to make the slightest concession to France and the Pasha; and her brother Frederic's strenuous advice and opinion to that effect. She complained, and said that Frederic complained, of the mischief which was done by Cabinets which only bred difficulties, intrigues, and underhand proceedings, and plainly intimated her opinion that all powers ought to be centred in, and all action proceed from, the Foreign Office alone. I told her that I could not see the proposals in the same light as she did, that some mutual concessions in all affairs must be expected, and that she was so accustomed to look at the matter only in a diplomatic point of view that she was not sufficiently alive to the storm of wrath and indignation



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LORD PALMERSTON
by T. Heaphy

which would burst upon the Government, if war did ensue upon the rejection of such terms as these, which, as far as I had been able to gather opinions, appeared to moderate impartial men fair and reasonable in themselves, and such as we might accept without dishonour.

September 29, Wednesday, 1840: The Cabinet met on Monday evening and sat till seven o'clock. The account of the proceedings which has reached me is to the last degree amusing, but at the same time *pitoyable*. It must have been *à payer les places* to see. They met, and as if all were conscious of something unpleasant in prospect, and all shy, there was for some time a dead silence. At length Melbourne, trying to shuffle off the discussion, but aware that he must say something, began: "We must consider about the time to which Parliament should be prorogued." Upon this Lord John took it up and said, "I presume we must consider whether Parliament should be called together or not, because, as matters are now going on, it seems to me that we may at any moment find ourselves at war, and it is high time to consider the very serious state of affairs. I should like," he added, turning to Melbourne, "to know what is your opinion upon the subject." Nothing, however, could be got from Melbourne, and there was another long pause, which was not broken till somebody asked Palmerston, "What are your last accounts?" On this Palmerston pulled out of his pocket a whole parcel of letters and reports from Ponsonby, Hodges, and others, and began reading them through, in the middle of which operation someone happened to look up, and perceived Melbourne fast asleep in his armchair. At length Palmerston got through his papers, when there was another pause; and at last Lord John, finding that Melbourne would not take the lead or say a word, went at once into the whole subject. He stated both sides of the case with great precision, and in an admirable, though very artful speech, a statement Clarendon said which, if elaborated into a Parliamentary speech and completed as it would be in the House of Commons with illustration, was calculated to produce the greatest effect. He delivered this, speaking for about a quarter of an hour, and then threw himself back in his chair, waiting for what anybody else would say. After some little talk, Palmerston delivered his sentiments the other way, made a violent philippic against

France, talked of her weakness and want of preparation, of the union of all the powers of Europe against her, said that Prussia had 200,000 men on the Rhine, and (as Lord Holland said) exhibited all the violence of '93.

Lord John Russell, when "asked what course he would advise . . . produced a slip of paper on which he had written two or three things." In effect, he proposed a conference. After "a good deal of talk (in which, however, the Prime Minister took no part)":

September 29, Wednesday, 1840: . . . The result was an agreement, that it would be disrespectful to Lord Lansdowne, considering his position, to come to any resolution in his absence; and as he could not arrive before this day, that the discussion should be adjourned till Thursday (to-morrow) by which time he and Morpeth would be here. They were all to dine with Palmerston, and a queer dinner it must have been.

October 1, 1840: Saw Clarendon this morning. No progress made, everything *in statu quo*. The dinner at Palmerston's on Monday after the Cabinet went off well enough. . . . Melbourne, of course, hopped off to Windsor the moment the Cabinet was over, and instead of remaining here, trying to conciliate people and arrange matters, he left everything to shift for itself. Having shown the Queen a letter of John Russell's which she was not intended to see, sent to John a letter of hers, which probably she did not mean him to see either, for it was very impertinent. She said, among other things, that she thought it was rather hard that Lord Palmerston and Lord John could not settle these matters amicably, without introducing their own personal objects, and raising such difficulties. Melbourne told John he must not mind her manner of speaking; he had only sent to Palmerston an extract from her letter omitting the offensive expressions, and John said he did not know why he thought it necessary to treat Palmerston with so much more *ménagement* than him. She added one thing in her letter which may lead to some important consequences. She said that it was her wish that some attempt should be made to open communications with the French Government. If Palmerston chooses to give way, he may make her wishes the pretext for doing so, and yield to them what he refuses to everybody else.

At the next Cabinet, Melbourne was "very nervous"—

October 1, 1840, evening: . . . but ended with referring to a paper delivered some time ago by Metternich, in which he had made certain contingent suggestions, of which the last and most important was, that in the event of "*inefficacité des moyens*" becoming apparent some communication should be made to France for the purpose of drawing her again into the alliance (or something to that effect; I cannot recollect the exact words, but it was a peg on which a communication might be hung), and asking Palmerston if he had not got this paper. Palmerston pulled it, all cut and dry, out of his pocket and read it. A good deal of talk then ensued, and some doubts and suspicions were expressed about France, which drew out Lord Holland, who said, "For God's sake, if you are so full of distrust of France, if you suspect all her acts and all her words, put the worst construction on all she does, and are resolved to be on bad terms with her, call Parliament together, ask for men and money, and fight it out with her manfully. Do this or meet her in a friendly and conciliatory spirit, and cast aside all those suspicions which make such bad blood between the two countries." This appeal (of which I only give the spirit) was very well received.

After "this important Cabinet," Ministers separated:

October 1, 1840, evening: . . . Lord John (to whom it is all due) said very little, Lansdowne not much; Hobhouse was talkative, but nobody listened to him; Melbourne, when it was over, swaggering like any Bobadil, and talking about "fellows being frightened at their own shadows," and a deal of bravery when he began to breathe freely from the danger.

Four powers had signed a treaty, without France. The question was now whether four powers would join with France in a conference to enforce the Treaty. And here, the difficulty was Russia. Brunnow (October 4, 1840) "would not conceal from Palmerston that the Emperor would be exceedingly hurt if any step of the kind was taken without his knowledge or consent."

In a sentence, Russia either declined or—what came to the same thing—delayed. And Reeve suggests that this was what Palmerston expected.

They held the next Cabinet in "Melbourne's bedroom." And by that time (October 4th) things had happened. Beyrout had been bombarded and 12,000 Turks landed, "causing the Treaty to be executed *à outrance*." "And," writes Greville, "Guizot arrived at my house in a great state of excitement."

October 7, 1840: . . . It is now quite clear that Palmerston has completely gained his point. The peace party in the Cabinet are silenced, their efforts paralysed. Clarendon agreed with me that Palmerston has triumphed, and Lord John succumbed. The Cabinet are again dispersed, Palmerston reigns without let or hindrance at the Foreign Office. No attempt is made to conciliate France; the war on the coast of Syria will go on with redoubled vigour; Ponsonby will urge matters to the last extremities at Constantinople. . . . Palmerston alone was resolute; entrenched in a strong position, with unity and determination of purpose, quite unscrupulous, very artful, and in possession of the Foreign Office, and therefore able to communicate in whatever manner and with whomsoever he pleased, and to give exactly the turn he chose to any negotiation or communication, without the possibility of being controlled by any of his colleagues. From the beginning, Lord John seems never to have seen his way clearly, or to have been able to make up his mind how to act.

Not that Britain was as yet out of the wood. Ponsonby had "assembled the Ministers at his house" in Constantinople, had "proposed the immediate *déchéance* of the Pasha," and when "his Russian colleague had objected," "had taken upon himself to say that he would make England responsible for the whole and sole execution of the sentence of deposition."

October 9, 1840: Everything looking black these last two days, funds falling, and general alarm. . . . Lord John has again screwed his courage up to summon the Cabinet, with the determination of making another attempt at accommodation with France. He proposed this to Melbourne, who said "it was too late." This is what he always does: entreats people to *wait* when they first want to move, and then when they have waited, and will wait no longer, he says, "it is too late."

At this point, something gave way. It was the resolution of Louis Philippe. There arrived from France a note that aston-

ished the British Government. It was "ill written, ill put together, and very tame." France had climbed down:

October 10, 1840: . . . The real truth I take to be that the King is the cause of the whole thing. With that wonderful sagacity which renders him the ablest man in France, and enables him sooner or later to carry all his points, and that tact and discernment with which he knows when to yield and when to stand, he allowed Thiers to have his full swing, and to commit himself with the nation, the King himself all the time consenting to put the country in a formidable attitude, but making no secret of his desire for peace; and then, at the decisive moment, when he found there was a division in the Cabinet, throwing all his influence into the pacific scale, and eventually reducing Thiers to the alternative of making a very moderate overture or breaking up the Government. . . . His Majesty looks beyond the present crisis, and sees in the transaction the means of emancipating himself from the domination of Thiers, and either getting rid of him, or, what would probably be more convenient and safe, reducing him to a dependence on himself.

Palmerston read the French Note to the Cabinet and (October 10, 1840) "during the discussion which took place Melbourne hardly said a word, lay sprawling on the sofa and took no part."

Palmerston "immediately showed a disposition to haggle and bargain," so displaying "the spirit of a pedlar rather than of a statesman" but he was "instantly put down by the majority."

October 10, 1840: . . . Somebody had been making mischief with the Queen, and setting her against John Russell, for Melbourne got a letter from Prince Albert full of cuts at John, and saying the Queen was surprised when everything had been settled so satisfactorily at the former meetings, that he should again rip up the question. This is extremely impertinent and exhibits a total ignorance of her duties, and her situation relating to her Ministers, and theirs to the country, but John does not mean to submit to it, and is going down to Windsor to hold a palaver with her Majesty on the subject. This letter was probably not intended for John Russell's inspection, but Melbourne put it into his hands.

Palmerston was suspicious even of felicitations:

Downham, October 24, 1840: . . . He [Clarendon] then goes on to say that Guizot tells him—and his own letters confirm it—that the late *attentat* on the King had made a much stronger impression, and excited more alarm, than any former one, and he had proposed to Melbourne to send a special ambassador to congratulate the King on his escape, who should also be instructed to *peace-make;* and suggested that the Duke of Bedford, Lord Spencer, or himself should go. Melbourne admitted it would be a very good thing to establish some direct communication with the King and Thiers, as well as the truth of all the reasons by which he supported this proposal; but the following day he came down with a whole host of petty objections, "which seemed to prevail in his perplexed and unserviceable mind."

It is an ill wind that blows nobody any good. Guizot "seemed by no means sorry at the idea of Thiers having got into a scrape and a dilemma." It meant that Thiers had to resign and that Guizot became Foreign Minister of France. It was no wonder that he "went to take leave of them [the Palmerstons] in the highest spirits." At breakfast he showed Reeve a letter from Louis Philippe, "written in his own bold hand," in which was the sentence, "*Je compte sur vous, mon cher Ministre, pour m'aider dans ma lutte tenace contre l'anarchie!*"

Melbourne (October 23, 1840) continued to be "frightened at France, hopeless of success in Syria [and] sick to death of the scrape we have got into." And even Palmerston was "annoyed" but "would die rather than own it." Indeed, the Cabinet was (November 7, 1840) "like a Jonathan Wild and his companions playing together in Newgate."

However, all's well that ends well:

December 4, 1840: In the course of the last three weeks, and since I last wrote, a mighty change has taken place; we have had the capture of St. Jean d'Acre and the debate in the French Chambers. Palmerston is triumphant; everything has turned out well for him. . . . His colleagues have nothing more to say; and as Guizot makes a sort of common cause with him in the Chamber, and Thiers makes out a case for himself by declaring

objects and designs which justify Palmerston's policy and acts, and as the Pasha is now reduced to the necessity of submission, the contest is at an end. . . . Mr. Pitt [Chatham] could not have manifested more decision and resource. He [Palmerston] would not hear of delays and difficulties, sent out peremptory orders to attack Acre, and he provided in his instructions with great care and foresight for every contingency. There can be no doubt that it was the capture of Acre which decided the campaign; and the success is much more attributable to Palmerston than to our naval and military commanders, and probably solely to him.

Melbourne amid "a great party" at Woburn was "like a boy escaped from school, in soaring spirits."

December 29, 1840: . . . All Melbourne's alarm and despondency are quickly succeeded by joy at having got out of a scrape, and confidence that all difficulties are surmounted and all opposition will be silenced.

Greville himself began to see the other side that "Thiers has all along been playing a false, shuffling, tricky part," even saying "that he meant to make war by and by," which confessions (December 4, 1840) "afford Palmerston his best justification and are appealed to triumphantly by him and his friends."

As for Guizot, addressing the Chamber, "he told the truth and justified himself by vindicating us." Indeed "what Guizot now wants is to renew the English alliance." The Duke of Wellington also was "anxious for a reconciliation with France." But "the current applause of all the Tory papers" indicated that they were "charmed with a transaction which separates us from France."

Mehemet Ali was left in Egypt:

January 7, 1841: Yesterday arrived (through the French telegraph) the news of the death of the King of Lahore, the surrender of Dost Mahomed, and the settlement of the Chinese quarrel, all coming just in time to swell out the catalogue of successes to be announced in the Queen's Speech. In France the aspect of affairs is improving, the King has given answers on New Year's Day which he would not have ventured to

make a short time ago, and his Majesty assures Lord Granville that the war fever is rapidly diminishing. The French hardly trouble themselves now (except in an occasional undergrowl in some Liberal paper) about Syria.

"Comparative tranquillity" (January 13th) "now prevails in France, the madness of that people having taken another turn and venting itself upon a reckless expenditure and the extravagant project of fortifying Paris."

Greville, who "sat next to Palmerston" at a sheriff's dinner, found that the devil was not so black as he is painted:

February 1, 1841: . . . It must be owned that Palmerston has conducted himself well under the circumstances without any air of triumph or boasting either over his colleagues or his opponents or the French. He has deserved his success by the moderation with which he has taken it.

May 3, 1846: . . . Normanby, who had made Ibrahim Pasha's acquaintance at Florence, took Palmerston to see him; and when he presented him, the Pasha was so diverted at finding himself thus face to face with the great enemy of his house, that he burst out into an uncontrollable fit of laughter, but he received him very well.