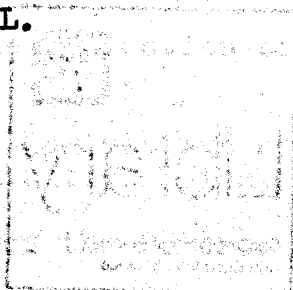


THE CONSTANTINOPLE EMBASSY OF SIR HENRY BULWER, 1858-65.

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ABSTRACT

This is an account of those aspects of British Near Eastern policy which concerned Sir Henry Bulwer at Constantinople. By 1856 the policy of aggregate reforms for the Ottoman Empire had been discarded. Bulwer tried to persuade the Porte to carry out simple administrative reforms, to give the provinces considerable autonomy, and to maintain a nominal suzerainty. The Porte did not see its interests in this way. British policy was reduced to bringing the changes which took place in the relations between the Sultan and his vassals, within the letter of treaties. Russell worked with France as far as possible to accomplish this. Where British interests were especially threatened, in Egypt, he refused to compromise and lost ground to the French. If Bulwer's voice had been hearkened to this would have been avoided. Though he had previously shown a lack of judgment at critical moments, at Constantinople, at the height of his powers, there was a moderation and grasp of realpolitik in his views on the function of the Empire, and on Egypt, which made the occasional instances of of bad judgment, chiefly to do with Moldo-Wallachian affairs, appear no more than odd lapses. Yet, though a reliable agent, he was not the reflex of his government, and this joined with his unfortunate public image brought about his eventual fall. No praise was forthcoming for the intelligent way he worked out adjustments to the new diplomatic situation. Harsh words for his independent line over the Suez canal were inevitable. He had to be hastily consigned to an oblivion from which he has been sometimes recalled as a mythical type which does the real Bulwer more and less than justice.

CHAPTER I

Sir Henry Bulwer and his Office

Sir Henry Bulwer was the accredited ambassador or minister at Madrid, Washington, and Constantinople, at important junctures for a period altogether of fifteen years, sufficiently long for him to deserve more attention than has been given to him. Unfortunately, the aura of silence which uncomfortably surrounds his name is a direct result of inadequate material touching upon the more intimate and more controversial aspects of his life. From C.K. Webster's references to him in his Foreign Policy of Palmerston one may suppose him to have been an efficient subordinate: while from Jones Parry's sketch of him in The Spanish Marriages it appears that he was spasmodically clever, unscrupulous, of ordinary judgment and at critical moments blind: and T.W. Riker in The Making of Rumania makes him seem clever and nasty. Each of these accounts is tentative and with the exception of Jones Parry's study, slight; and of course, had to be owing to the tenuousness of the material which might have provided the substance for a description in depth. To make matters worse the kind of material which there is has to be approached with a scepticism which prevents the drawing of anything more than tentative conclusions¹.

¹. The Dictionary of National Biography is not trustworthy as an interpretation, nor is the only sizeable biography of Bulwer by E.B. D'Auvergne - Envoys Extraordinary any better. For the bare details Burke's Complete Peerage is the best source. The Bulwer Papers offer scant information except on two important issues, namely the sale of the Isle of Plati and the Laing conversion scheme; these having some bearing on Bulwer's eclipse, see below p.34. Otherwise they but give added support to an interpretation of Bulwer which one would have put forward only tentatively without them. The Russell Papers though giving material which adds a little to the picture of Bulwer as a person, are chiefly important for explaining the unsatisfactory relations between, on the one hand, two cantankerous old men in charge of Foreign Affairs, and on the other, perhaps the slyest British representative at any Court then, namely Bulwer.

We have to rely chiefly on what certain contemporaries said about him; and, as he was, for reasons which we shall have to examine, the sort of person who readily excited some sort of comment, and moreover, easily provoked ill-will and irritation, objective observations couched in moderate language are not easily found. Further, Bulwer himself, in his own writings when his own reputation was at stake, did not hesitate to twist the evidence.

Perhaps of less significance, though certainly deepening the mystery, is the impossibility of deciding for or against the criticisms of Bulwer in two books by the American missionaries Cyrus Hamlin and the Reverend G. Washburn, which not only berate Bulwer for what they termed duplicitousness but also make damaging remarks about him as a person. The former, a smaller edition of Benjamin Franklin, saw him as a new Judas. He wrote:

"England showed a strange, unpardonable weakness in falling in with Louis Napoleon's policy, withdrawing Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, and sending as his successor Sir Henry Bulwer, a man of infamous morals, whose whole career in Turkey seemed to be inspired with the mad determination to undo everything de Redcliffe had done...but his notorious reception of a bribe from the Pasha of Egypt, for which he betrayed England's interest, compelled England to recall him...his name and Louis Napoleon's, when they come to the judgment seat of history, will be cast out into outer darkness."¹.

The other missionary, in his Fifty Years at Constantinople, after referring to Bulwer's change of front over Bebec College² went on:

¹. My Life and Times, p.407. Presumably Hamlin connected the sale of the Isle of Plati with Bulwer's Suez policy. Otherwise, I am at a loss to know what he referred to by 'a bribe'.

². All the evidence suggests that Bulwer behaved very properly towards the American missionaries, and supported them in their attempts to set up an American College on the Bosphorus. The Exeter Hall set - and Cyrus Hamlin had close contacts with it - was determined not to forgive Bulwer for not being Stratford.

"This bribery affair cost Bulwer his place, and he was recalled. Bulwer was a man of the most infamous morals, but he was such an adept in his craft and intrigue, and was so successful in cajoling callow statesmen into treaties injurious to them but advantageous to England, that the English Government so valued his services as to condone his moral character."¹

An attempt to solve the mystery, to give a full picture of Bulwer is beyond the scope of this chapter and more than the material available would allow. However, certain aspects of his character need to be dwelt on for two reasons. Since British Near Eastern Policy during the years 1858-65 was so blatantly illiberal, and, in one instance, dangerously unimaginative, an explanation of it requires some knowledge of the kind of man on the spot. An assessment of Bulwer's character and ability naturally involves some reflection on the competence of his chiefs. Secondly a visual impression of the representative is necessary to appreciate fully the nature of British influence in a country where appearances had only second place to real strength in accomplishing things. This is not an attempt to provide a rounded picture of Bulwer, rather a sketch of him as will be most useful for explaining the quality of British diplomacy in the Near East.

It was a time when diplomacy itself was undergoing a vital change. Telegraphic communication with Constantinople and Alexandria was already effective in 1858, the year Bulwer commenced his seven years embassy. Personal dislikes and plain idiosyncrasy were not as likely to affect the implementation of policy, as they had been when Ponsonby and Stratford occupied the magnificent palace at

¹ P.438 and p.11, Fifty Years at Constantinople.

Therapia. In fact the telegraph ushered in an age which demanded of diplomatists a different set of values. The man who refrained from exaggerating his own importance in some particular business and from expanding on his connections, who would not delay in reporting the significant development, whether or not a reverse, and who would unhesitatingly perform the unpleasant task at the risk of losing ground, was the person required under the new system. He did not have to be a policy-maker, rather a good executive with a marked capacity for being loyal to his chief, and sufficiently imaginative to take note of fresh developments and to change ground as soon as policy required it. Stratford de Redcliffe was an unconscionably long time in 'retiring' even though he demonstrably failed to fulfil these exacting requirements. On the other hand, when old habits had been quite discarded, Sir William White would have been quickly dismissed as soon as a divergence between his views and those of his chief became apparent¹. Sir Henry Bulwer's embassy was undoubtedly the transition period in this respect. He was appointed irrespective of the kind of demands which the telegraphic system made and kept at his post by men too long in office and in the old ways to appreciate fully what had happened². A sketch of Bulwer's background is thus particularly germane to an assessment of his merit as a diplomatist as of the quality of British diplomacy. Bulwer was so evidently a misfit.

There was between Russell and Bulwer a marked difference in

¹ He died before Salisbury got round to the unpleasant task.

² Russell dimly perceived the error though Palmerston certainly did not.

intensity in the approach to the general problem of Turkish integrity and reform. Tensions also arose over the implementing of official policy towards the United Principalities and especially towards Egypt with, in the last case, unfortunate results. Though they were stimulated by the complicated and fluid international situation they were emphasised by the peculiar relationship between the representative at Constantinople and the Foreign Minister, responding inadequately to the requirements of diplomacy by telegraph. By the nature of his peculiarities and background Bulwer was condemned to be in a false position some of the time.

There is little we know of Bulwer before he entered Parliament in 1830, beyond the fact that he was educated at Harrow, and Trinity College, and Downing College, Cambridge, which he left in the Autumn of 1824¹. As befitted a young gentleman, a second son with some social standing and small expectations, he became an officer in the 1st. Life Guards, 1824, and two years later in the 58th. Foot². The less formal part of his education might have involved a more or less Grand Tour. However, for lack of funds, one suspects, rather than through lack of inclination, he had to be content with a trip to the Morea, as one of the representatives of the Greek Committee sent to obtain information about conditions in Greece, and to give Prince Mavrocordate the sum of £80,000³. This journey probably quickened

¹ Complete Peerage: D.N.B., suggests that he left at the request of the Greek Committee in London.

² William Henry Lytton Earle Bulwer born in February 1801 was the second son of General William Earle Bulwer of Wood Dalling and Heydon, Norfolk, by Elizabeth Barbara, daughter of Richard Warburton-Lytton of Knebworth, Herts. C.P.

³ D.N.B. Memoirs of William second Viscount Melbourne - W.M. Torrens, Vol. 1, p.213.

his ambition as much as his artistic impulses for he soon published An Autumn in Greece, 'an amusing volume of letters descriptive of his sojourn in the classic land of conflict'¹. Whatever the motivation of this tentative venture into the realm of letters, he did gain 'credit by the good use he had made of his powers of observation and judgment'². He was now persona grata with the Whigs as is evidenced by William Lamb's adoption of him as a candidate in the election for the borough of Hertford in 1826³. It was a rough experience for Bulwer who was easily beaten at the poll in a constituency 'by this time thoroughly demoralised by rancour, money and beer'⁴. 'Rather effeminate in appearance and voice, and with more fine appreciation of sarcasm than capacity for rough-and-ready humour, he was never able to overtake the headway made by his dandy competitor'⁵. A son of the county, Bulwer seems to have taken it for granted that he would win, and passed the time 'reporting progress in delicate little notes to Panshanger and Knebworth, till most of his money was spent, and a good deal of the confidence of his discerning friends'⁶. Bulwer, himself, as Lamb indicated, was at this time already a dandy, a caricature of disciplined Regency elegance. The pencil sketch of him by the Count d'Orsay - 'the last of the dandies as a ruler of young men' - shows us a fashionably dressed young man, with a careless aristocratic hauteur, presumably

¹. D.N.B. Torrens, Vol. 1, p. 214.

². Ibid.

³. Ibid. p. 213.

⁴. Ibid. p. 214. A Radical, a Mr. Duncombe, and a Tory, a Mr. Byron were returned.

⁵. Ibid.

⁶. Ibid.

The photograph on page 9 has not
been digitised at the request of the
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cultivated, adopting a languorous pose¹. The Count d'Orsay lived at the house of Lady Blessington 'which was an agreeable house for men, although not visited by Englishwomen'². Here the Bulwers and Disraeli were frequent visitors³. An intimate attachment grew up between the rootless Jewish rebel and Bulwer. Disraeli first met Henry Bulwer at a dinner party given by Lytton Bulwer at his house in Hertford Street⁴. Disraeli, Bulwer recollected 'wore green velvet trousers, a canary coloured waistcoat, low shoes, silver buckles, lace at his wrists, and his hair in ringlets...If on leaving the table we had been severally taken aside and asked which was the cleverest of the party we should have been obliged to say "the man in the green velvet trousers"⁵. Bulwer was obviously fascinated. The friendship between the two, though in the nature of things operating over long distances, lasted into the '50s, and with profit to both Bulwer and Disraeli, the latter making a point of defending his friend whilst attacking Liberal foreign policy during the critical debates following Bulwer's expulsion from Spain.⁶

Having entered the diplomatic service, he began his apprenticeship as attaché at Berlin 1827, then in Vienna 1829, and finally at the Hague in 1830.⁷ He quickly consolidated his reputation as a dandy, by adding to his other qualities a remarkable skill at gambling⁸. What else he learned, apart from the knowledge of the way

¹. Ibid. The sketch in E.B.D'Auvergne, p.272, shows us an incredibly young looking Bulwer. He was 44 when the sketch was made in '45.

². Torrens, Vol. 1, p.214.

³. Ibid.

⁴. Monypenny and Buckle - Life of Benjamin Disraeli, Vol 1, p.124.

⁵. Ibid.

⁶. Op.cit. Vol.II, p.73, 151; Vol.III, p.399; and for reference to debates Vol. III, p.182.

⁷. D.N.B. & C.P.

⁸. D.N.B.

the office was run, one may only surmise from what Bulwer was thinking on certain problems in the middle 'thirties. Certainly he must have acquired some insight into the psychology of a European middle-class composed chiefly of people of the professions, who were revolutionaries manqués; and, for the cosmopolitan culture then in vogue, a feeling at once respectful and flippant as became a man more interested in history than in theory, and in politics than in ideas. His attitude to the faint stirrings in Europe was a result of very acute observation. His judgments on the contemporary scene in France which he recorded in the Notebook have the kind of moderation and authority which clearly resulted from mature thinking over a period of years.¹

Then while still a Member of Parliament Bulwer was sent on a special mission to report on the growing discontent in the Belgian province. Then he was attached to the Paris Embassy much to Lord Granville's dismay.

'May there not be some inconvenience in Mr. Bulwer (an author as well as an orator) having the privilege of coming over from London to Paris when it suits his fancy, to rummage the archives of the Embassy and then return to his Parliament duties as soon as he has gratified his curiosity?'².

Bulwer had hinted that he did not intend to do much work. Our picture of Bulwer as a man playing at being the dandy, popular enough in the society of wits, but, essentially, a person who liked to play at politics, would be filled in by an examination of his role in

¹ These conclusions are based on Bulwer's 'Notebook, Points written for introduction', Sept. 30th 1832 - Mid. Jan. 1833. Entry Sat. 0 ctober '32, Bulwer Papers, G/1. Evidently the data in this Notebook provided the material for his book, published in 1834, France: Social, Literary, and Political, and another published in 1836, The Monarchy of the Middle Classes.

² Webster-The Foreign Policy of Palmerston Vol. 1, 70.n.1, 26 Nov. '32, Granville-Palmerston. According to one authority a strong friendship between Bulwer & Palmerston dated from this time. See D'Auvergne.

English politics.¹ Bulwer, one may hazard a guess, had slightly extreme views not only because he knew which way the wind was blowing but because they were congenial to his temperament, he being something of the connoisseur.² He was in favour of extending the measure of Catholic emancipation, of the partial disestablishment of the Church in Ireland, and of an Irish Poor Law. He looked favourably on the demands of Dissent, and hoped that Jewish disabilities might be dealt with. It is interesting in view of a certain aspect of Bulwer's diplomatic technique that as early as 1836 he was given to indulging in academic politics, confidently attempting to secure what no one and no party had the inclination or power to secure.³ His pamphlet, 'The Lords, the Government, and the Country. A Letter to a Constituent on the Present State of Affairs', was an irenicon its purpose being to induce the Radicals and others with sympathetic notions to sink their differences with the Whigs in order to present a united front before the danger threatening from the Tories. As a non-party man he felt obliged to justify his own support of the Whigs. The apologia is revealing, illustrating not only Bulwer's general attitude to politics, but also the justification of a technique which was to earn him so much notoriety in the diplomatic world, namely

¹ Bulwer sat in the Commons as a Liberal M.P. for Wilton 1830-1, for Coventry 1837-5, and for Marylebone 1835-7: C.P.

² Bulwer Papers, T/38, Fenton-Bulwer several letters. Perhaps of significance was Bulwer's desire to furnish the Embassy house with copies of portraits of famous men like Dante, Machiavelli, Pietro Perugino, Rembrandt and Rubens.

³ See below p.223. At Madrid Bulwer tried it in 1846, and was disavowed by Aberdeen. At Constantinople during his embassy, he had a marked penchant for this kind of game; witness his attempts to reconcile the irreconcilable Porte and Viceroy, and his taste for constitution making when there was no possibility of the Powers enforcing a new constitution on the Principalities.

that springing from an ability to compromise easily. He wrote:

'I am not one of those who - like the child that throws mamma's gingerbread into the fire, and cries for a piece of the moon, which looks prettier - would refuse what is good and possible, for what might be better and is impossible'.¹

Bulwer's manner in the Commons seems to have struck observers in the way Bulwer himself would have wished it to. The debate concerned the recently concluded Quadruple Alliance of 1834.

'With the easy patronage of an acquired reputation, Bulwer began conveying in muttered interruptions to his more youthful neighbours what he thought might be said in reply to the points brought up by successive orators on the other side.'²

As Bulwer rose to speak so did Lord Leveson who reproduced Bulwer's own arguments.

'It must be added that when Henry Bulwer had recovered from his surprise he enjoyed the joke as much as anybody, and was among the first to join in the general applause accorded to the Member for Morpeth on the success of his maiden effort.'³

Afterwards Bulwer wrote to Lord Granville and, though tempering his praise, suggested 'that the Ambassador had only to give his son a hint as to "chusing" his next time of speaking well to confirm and fix a most favourable impression'.⁴ Here was all the easy grace and insinuating charm which contemporaries found so appealing. Joined with his other qualities, however, it was just as likely to incur suspicion and hostility.⁵

Bulwer's general approach hardly changed with the years. The

1. 'The Lords, the Government etc.'

2. Lord E. Fitzmaurice - The Life of Granville George Leveson Gower Second Earl Granville, Vol. 1, p.27

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

5. See below for Comments by Thouvenel, p.26, by Melbourne p.18, and by Palmerston, p.36 .

waning of his youth meant in his case, however, that what was once appreciated as detachment and grace, albeit grace spiced with a colourful and not unattractive sarcastic manner and cultivated ebullience, came to be regarded as a facade for the concealed motive and a manner too facile to be taken at its face value. Bad temper was a natural development from the earlier sarcasm, if only because of persistent ill-health. It was while Bulwer was at his peak and had the respect of the leading politicians of both large parties, that his manner was imperceptibly becoming the one we recognise in the Ambassador at Constantinople, 1858-65. If we quickly peruse his diplomatic career during these formative years we shall notice traits which were to become those normally associated with Bulwer's name.

During November 1835 Bulwer returned to Brussels as Secretary of the Legation, and as Chargé d'Affaires there negotiated a treaty of commerce with the new kingdom. Palmerston was impressed enough by Bulwer's work to have him sent as Secretary to the Embassy at Constantinople to help Ponsonby bring about a commercial treaty with Turkey.¹ The Treaty of Commerce between the Porte and England was the result. In view of French hostility and the marked lack of co-operation amongst all the embassies, Bulwer was obliged to act in silence and secrecy. His success, chiefly due to Ponsonby's work beforehand, perhaps gave him an unbalanced view of the value of such methods. He described the incident in his Life of Lord Palmerston,

¹. Webster, Vol. II, p.554. Though objecting to a Secretary, Ponsonby liked Bulwer well enough. Bulwer's correspondence with Palmerston acted as a corrective to his chief's reports: Vol. I p.70. To Ponsonby he was useful in getting the right contacts with the Sultan's officials. Bulwer was now initiated into the eastern mysteries of communication.

where he pours scorn on the lack of imagination of the French representative, emphasises how easy it all was to him, and fails to explain how vital the Treaty was for the success of Reschid's plans.¹ Bulwer's interpretation of himself as a kind of Don Juan of diplomacy is adequately illustrated by his emphasis of the minor details in this coup de théâtre of 1838:

'My intentions were seconded by the accident of my having pitched a large Persian tent in one of those beautiful valleys of the Bosphorus which boast a fountain surrounded by centenarian tress; and to this retreat - there not being at that time a great deal of general business in the Chancellerie - I used frequently to resort.

Some verses I had written in two or three ladies' albums gained me credit of being a poet. Pera talked of my romantic tendencies in particular, and of the eccentricities of Englishmen in general'.²

Within the fortnight Bulwer had negotiated the details in the cool of the tent, 'but he never realised the political conditions of his work since he did not believe Mehemet could be overthrown and indeed did not desire it'.³ In short, he simply did as he was told, without being aware of the complexities of the situation.

Subsequently the restored Whigs posted Bulwer, recently recovered from fever, to Paris as Secretary there.⁴ In this position

¹. The value of this book is slight when it is used as a source of material for Bulwer himself. It savours too much, sometimes of special pleading, at other times of righteous self-defence. See Parry, The Spanish Marriages, 280, and Webster, The Foreign Policy of Palmerston, Vol. II, 554, which describes Bulwer's claims to be the principal agent in bringing about the treaty as 'nothing but a fairy tale'.

². Bulwer - Life of Palmerston, 261.

³. Webster, op.cit. Vol. II, 555. An early instance of Bulwer's faulty judgment when it was a question of active politics rather than detached observation. The egotism which seemed to motivate him so strongly would inevitably cripple his judgment sooner or later.

⁴. C.P. 1839-43.

and as chargé d'affaires in the following year, - i.e. 1840 - he was an important moderating influence. Such was his opinion of his own importance confirmed by his natural talent for compromise, that he attempted to assume the role of mediator whenever the opportunity offered, and even when it did not. So from Paris he tried to calm the irritation in London when it was learned that Thiers had encouraged a compromise between Mehemet Ali and the Sultan. Later (September 1840) he sent in a modified version of Thiers' statement to himself at Auteuil, which had been a blunt intimation that a non-acceptance of Mehemet's terms would probably produce a war between France and Britain.¹

We are permitted a single glimpse of Bulwer in action in Paris. His hauteur on this occasion seems almost to have cost him his life.² During an Embassy ball, he offered his services to Lady Cowley who was at a loss to discover the identity of one of the guests. Bulwer is reported as saying:

"I am sent by Lady Cowley to know your name".³

The 'Marquis D-' replied,

'Before I gratify you with mine, perhaps you will let me know yours; for your manner is excessively impertinent, and you require to be made an example of'.

The narrator concluded,

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1. Major J. Hall - England and the Orleans Monarchy, p.245. Bulwer was generally in favour of concession to the French view-point regarding Mehemet. Also Webster, op.cit. Vol.II, 649-50, 669, 718. However, Palmerston depended much on Bulwer now that Granville was failing (Webster, Vol.I, 67) and the relations between Bulwer and Palmerston were very close at this time. (See Hall, p.298, 307).
 2. Bresson in Spain would complain of Bulwer's airs. In 1857 Stratford was greatly irritated by them.
 3. The Reminiscences and Recollections of Captain Gronow, Vol. II, 266.

'The following morning this nobleman called upon me, and mentioned what had occurred the previous evening; he swore that he would run Bulwer through the body for the insult offered him, and requested me to be the bearer of a challenge to the offender'.¹

Gronow tactfully arranged the matter and prevented the two from meeting.

By this time, in the stock-exchange of reputations, the Foreign Service, Bulwer had been assessed and catalogued.² In 1841 Aberdeen and Lord Stanley joined forces to try to persuade Bulwer to go to Canada as Secretary to the Governor.³ Aberdeen, anxious though he was to please Stanley was only too aware of the value of Bulwer in Paris. He wrote to Princess Lieven:

'We were near taking Bulwer from you: but much to my joy he is returned to Paris'.⁴

Having received already a negative reply to his request Lord Stanley wrote to Bulwer again:

'...in the full persuasion that your abilities can no where be exerted more beneficially to the public service, nor with a fairer prospect of adding to your reputation as a public man, than in the situation, at this critical moment, of Secretary to the Governor General of Canada, I have no hesitation in renewing to you the request communicated to you in my former letter, that you would give to the Government the benefit of your services'.⁵

Assurances were freely given that Bulwer's career in the diplomatic service would in no wise be hampered by such a move. On the contrary,

¹. Ibid.

². Melbourne was sufficiently impressed to think that it might be a good idea to send Bulwer to Constantinople again in order to press upon the Sultan the French terms for a settlement of the Eastern question should they prove satisfactory. cf. The Letters of Queen Victoria. Vol. 1, 297, Melbourne-Victoria, 9 October, 1840.

³. Bulwer Papers, S/40, Lord Stanley-Bulwer, 28 Sept. 1841; Aberdeen-Bulwer 16 September '41, S/2.

⁴. Lady Francis Balfour-Life of George Earl of Aberdeen, Vol. II, 124.

⁵. Bulwer Papers, S/40, Lord Stanley-Bulwer, 28 September, '41.

his present sacrifice would win him the favour of Her Majesty's Government whatever its colour. Even so, Bulwer, possibly indulging in a fancy that he was indispensable, had been quick to assume that here was some intrigue to get him safely out of the way, and offered his resignation. Aberdeen responded in the generous manner of which only he was capable in similar circumstances:

'...you will understand that there is no person whom I should so much desire to see at Paris as yourself. You will never be removed from it by me, except to some post of activity and importance.

I have been anxious to say this much, because with the opinions I expressed in my former letter, your proposal of a resignation struck me as singular, and as almost indicating some doubt of my sincerity. On this head, however, I trust that none can now exist; and that you must believe me to be quite incapable of entertaining any other object than that which I profess'. 1

Melbourne writing to the Queen likewise felt that Bulwer was a good man for Canada though his remarks show a keen awareness of the subtleties of his character.

'Your Majesty,' he wrote to the Queen, 'knows Bulwer well. He is clever, keen, active, somewhat bitter and caustic, and rather suspicious. A man of a more straightforward character would have done better, but it would be easy to have found many who would have done worse'. 2

Russell and Palmerston would echo this last sentiment years later when Bulwer's Constantinople embassy was coming to its wretched end.

In our attempt to discover what the quality was of Bulwer as a person, it would be remiss to overlook female opinion which tends to confirm the view that he was basically a mercurial nature.

His acquaintance with a certain Mme. Allart of Monthléry near

1. S/2 Aberdeen-Bulwer, 27 September '41.

2. The Letters of Queen Victoria Vol. I, 419, Melbourne-Victoria, 1st October, '41.

Paris covered most of his career after 1832.¹ This lady, clearly infatuated by Bulwer, never ceased to press upon him the attractions of some idyllic paradise which would be theirs should he agree to live with her in a 'lien intellectuel, au-dessus du mariage'.² In Florence she would pursue her studies while he - apparently of delicate health even in the 'thirties - would write a history of that town, as a kind of positive convalescence. She pleaded:

'I begged you to come here, to see Florence street by street, palazzo by palazzo, for its history is in its streets. Be good and let me lead you. You quite see that there is nothing for me in this but study in Florence for I call you to it, this is the proof, and do not think but that honour always guides me. Come then with confidence, or call on me, and believe that the affections of eight years thus tried and shaped are worth more than the amours of a moment'.³

Bulwer it appears, was more attentive to the demands of his career and perhaps the loves of the moment. But this lady's attachment to Bulwer never seems to have wavered; hence the value of her comments. She once protested at his lack of depth :

'I may not meet a lady without hearing of your galanteries... Mme. Hainchin says that you are a new Don Juan...that you have drawn back the limits of Dandyism, that it is a new Dandyism, limitless, strange; and speaks of the horses ready at eight o'clock for the whole night, and an ease at work, an excellent business mind!...She also says that you are leaner than ever, a shade, a pure ghost...(that) you have taken on the dress, manners and language of our men; there is no more English in you'.⁴

Later she spoke with nostalgia, and presumably exaggeration, of his eyes 'still wandering, never fixed on anything for a second'.⁵

1. The first reference to Mme. Allart is in the Notebook, G/1, 10 Oct. '32. Her correspondence with Bulwer continues almost to the end of
 2. Bulwer's Constantinople embassy.
 3. G/3, Allart-Bulwer, 19 April, and clearly 1838 from internal evidence.
 4. Allart-Bulwer, 26 April '38, *ibid*.
 5. Allart-Bulwer, 1838-50, Personal Letters, *ibid*. This one is evidently of the period of Bulwer's secretaryship in Paris, 1838-43.
- Allart-Bulwer, 23 Sept. '64, (T/81).

The appointment of a man of such slight character to the important embassy of Spain in 1843 when Spain had become the touchstone of Anglo-French relations, would appear to have been a mistake: and no matter what criteria one refers to in order to evaluate his achievements, his career should have finished in 1846. But Aberdeen's choice was severely restricted. Only too conscious of the difficulties inherent in his own policy and of the delicate nature of that tender plant the 'entente cordiale', Aberdeen in any case presumably placed Bulwer's skill at a premium.

He went out to Madrid in December 1843 as Envoy extraordinary and Minister. He had instructions to work in concert with his French colleague and yet 'to promote, if he properly can, the interests of Don Francisco'.¹ Parry neatly sums up the relationship between Bulwer and his French colleague:

'Bresson's passionate, nervous temperament and his jealousy of all interference and opposition made him at best a most difficult colleague to handle...Unhappily, Bulwer's own peculiar qualities were not calculated to promote harmonious co-operation. His conceit, his aristocratic disdain for his colleague's more humble origin, irritated the susceptible Bresson'.²

Given British policy which condemned Bulwer to act as a mere commentator, there was nothing Bulwer could do to further the interests

¹. The conclusions arrived at here are based on Jones Parry - The Spanish Marriages, which contain a fair if speculative analysis of Bulwer. The evidence in the Bulwer Papers might perhaps qualify this appraisal only by emphasising the subtleties of Bulwer's mind and his impatience. See S/44, Bulwer-Clarendon, 12 Sept. '46. This is a particularly explosive letter in which Bulwer soundly berates English politicians for ignoring him, for not having a policy, and at the same time for having the wrong policy. Bulwer's dangerous dallying with a completely Coburg solution, which he should have realised was impossible in the international context, reflected an unhealthy preoccupation with his own dignity, an impression further reinforced by his suggested alternative, a completely French solution.

². Parry, p. 170.

of either Don Francisco, the elder, or later his sons.¹ Where he did attempt a contribution to policy-making he made serious errors of judgment on broad issues. After only a week in Madrid he advocated the return of the Queen-mother, although he had recently convinced Guizot in Paris that he would be embarrassing Aberdeen by promoting such a scheme.² Five months later Bulwer realised that he had taken too 'confident a view of her powers of decision'.³ Again, at a critical juncture, when Aberdeen at the Chateau d'Eu, in September '45, had allowed Guizot to interpret his silence as tacit approval of an eventual Montpensier marriage, Bulwer instead of pointing to all the dangers involved, that is if he was aware of them, expressed pleasure with the development.⁴ During the summer months of 1844 Bulwer, lulled into a sense of security by earning the gratitude of Bresson and Narvaez, counselled Aberdeen not to mistrust French motives

¹. P.169, *ibid.* When at Constantinople Bulwer found everything conspired to reduce him to a similar role, which was particularly galling because he knew that Palmerston, Russell and the swelling number of dissident voices in Parliament were irritated - if for different reasons - by the Turkish administration and therefore by association by Bulwer. Nor did it help that the prop of the ministry, Gladstone, failed to conceal his *arrière pensées*. see Appendix A. It was difficult to know what to expect of a representative in these conditions. Aberdeen 1843-5 was conscious of the difficulties and was generous to Bulwer, even when he would have been justified in not being so. On the other hand Russell in the last period was demanding and suspicious.

². *Ibid.*, p.161-2.

³. *Ibid.*, p.176.

⁴. Until a son - the laws of succession with reference to females were still capable of being changed - of Isabella and a Bourbon husband, not French, had established himself on the throne of Spain, the threat of a French prince ruling at Madrid would always remain. England and the Orleans Monarchy, §.373. Since such a marriage could have been 'safely' contemplated only after a long lapse of time Aberdeen ought to have realised how dangerous it was not to have squashed the idea at the time.

in Spain.¹ He was also ignorant of the urgency of French designs to bring about a quick marriage.² Then returning to Madrid in September he suddenly perceived that he was being made a fool of.³ With unwonted zest he conjured up schemes for bringing the French low.⁴ He conspired to bring about a Government favourable to a Coburg marriage, and sadly misjudging Aberdeen's character,⁵ tried to force the Foreign Minister's hand by presenting him with a fait accompli. Bulwer raised the Coburg bogey. The eclipse of what remained of British prestige was so complete that the French would find it a comparatively easy task to bring about the Montpensier union.

Jones Parry's assessment of Bulwer is judicious and does justice to the extenuating circumstances. He has to conclude however that 'a diplomatic representative who chooses to guide himself by an unscrupulous interpretation of his instructions, obeying one injunction - i.e. not to be active in favour of the French-sponsored Trapani marriage - and disregarding another equally vital to his

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1. Parry, p.188. It is interesting to notice that while there had been a lull in the marriage question during the summer months of '44 Bulwer was able to settle Moroccan problems quickly and with considerable skill. His successes resulted directly from his being able to exploit fully British hegemony in Morocco and the good-will of all parties, France included.
 2. Ibid, pp.199-202.
 3. Ibid, pp.241-2 and p.290. According to the malicious Bresson there was little danger to be apprehended from a man who spent his time in his country-house, away from the capital 'cultivating the last dalias, the last roses of autumn, and less perishable flowers'.
 4. Ibid, p.243.
 5. Ibid, pp.240-1. Aberdeen quickly declined to favour them.
 5. Ibid, pp.279 & 280. Bulwer similarly underestimated Russell's intelligence in 1863. See below Egypt, p.254, and Chapter IV, p.169.

Government's policy, - i.e. to remain strictly neutral - is deserving of the most severe censure. Bulwer...must be condemned for rank disobedience'.¹ Lastly he comments on the Coburg project 'if it be not permissible to entertain a suspicion that he had hoped the scheme would be too far advanced to permit his Government to countermand it, then he must be indicated as a blunderer as well as an insubordinate diplomatist'.²

What happened afterwards is not relevant here, though it is significant that Bulwer continued in his dangerous ways, but this time with Palmerston's approval.³ Aberdeen, strangely enough, magnanimous to a ridiculous degree, maintained his favourable impression of Bulwer.

Nevertheless, the unfavourable impression others were forming about him were confirmed by his activities 1846-8. Peel had already become critical, though in 1848 he held back from attacking Bulwer's part in the affair.⁴ In 1848, after his expulsion, which was chiefly a consequence of Palmerston's handiwork, Stanley too, was to be found unfavourably disposed.⁵ Palmerston and the Court, which was already incensed by the 1846 débâcle, were violent against him,⁶ Palmerston unjustifiably so considering how he allowed Bulwer so much licence in Spanish internal politics.⁷ Even though Bulwer had ignored instructions

1. Parry, p.289. The paranthetical clauses are mine.

2. Ibid, p.290.

3. Hall, p.327, and p.411: 'French and British rivalry was actively maintained by Bresson and Bulwer, who, with the full knowledge of Palmerston, was deeply involved in all the intrigues of the palace'.

4. Parry, p.290, and Greville, Vol.VI, 174.

5. Greville, Vol. VI, 174.

6. Prince Albert-Duke Ernest, 26 May '46, Letters of Prince Consort, p.102-3.

7. Palmerston-Bulwer, 8 May, S/1: 'You have roused a monstrous clatter about your own head and mine by your Note of 7 April to Sotomayor.

Palmerston-Bulwer, 10 May '48, No.49, S/1. Palmerston-Bulwer, 12 May '48, S/1: 'You really are too bad'.

he had not been expelled from Spain for this but for Palmerston's interference. The Queen hit off the whole situation in a blunt but not exaggerated summary of Bulwer's last three years in Spain:

'He invariably boasted of at least being in the confidence of every conspiracy, though he was taking care not to be personally mixed up in them, and after their various failures generally harboured the chief actors in his house under the plea of humanity. At every crisis he gave us to understand that he had to choose between 'a revolution and a palace intrigue', and not long ago only he wrote to Lord Palmerston, that if the Monarchy with the Montpensier succession was inconvenient to us, he could get up a Republic. Such principles are sure to be known in Spain, the more so when one considers the extreme vanity of Sir H. Bulwer, and his probable imprudence in the not very creditable company which he is said to keep. Lord Palmerston will remember that the Queen has often addressed herself to him and Lord John, in fear of Sir H. getting us into some scrape; and if our diplomatists are not kept in better order, the Queen may at any moment be exposed to similar insults as she has received now in the person of Sir H. Bulwer; for in whatever way one may wish to look at it, Sir Henry still is her Minister.' ¹

And the Queen refused to consider having Sir Henry Bulwer at Madrid again.² Greville called on Bulwer just after his arrival from Spain and heard him giving his account of events to Delane. Greville commented: 'The thing that struck me was the knowledge which he betrayed of the plots or intrigues that were going on against the Government, and it does not appear...that he ever gave the benefit of his information to the Spanish Ministers. For example, he knew of the military insurrection, the day on which, the place at which, it was to take place, who was to command it, and

¹. Victoria-Palmerston, 23 May '48, Letters of Queen Victoria, Vol. II, 207-8.

². Ibid, p.211, 15 June '48.

in short, particulars which implied familiarity, if not complicity with the conspirators'.¹

But he survived primarily, one suspects, because Palmerston's own prestige was involved in his survival.² Bulwer went to Washington as Minister to negotiate an agreement to do with commercial relations, especially those between Canada and America.³

Characteristically, without instructions he came to an agreement, the Clayton-Bulwer Treaty of 19 April 1850, which was an attempt to determine the attitude of both Powers to actual problems and questions which were likely to arise as their interests clashed in the Central American zone.⁴ The treaty was a compliment to Bulwer's finesse.

In spite of the weakness and vacillation of the administration — and to an extent because of this — and in spite of his own lack of guidance on the subject, though presumably he must have previously known Palmerston's personal predilections, Bulwer achieved a settlement which after years of haggling provided America and Britain with a means of dealing with their problems in Central America in a peaceful way. Bulwer's success may be attributed chiefly to that talent for backstairs diplomacy which had brought about his downfall in 1848.

¹ Greville, Vol. VI, 185, and see Lord Canning to Malmesbury, from Madrid, Entry 21 Oct. '47, Memoirs of an ex-Minister, Vol. 1, 200.

² See above, p.23.

³ By this time Bulwer had married, Dec. '48, Georgiana Charlotte Mary, daughter of Henry Wellesley, 1st Baron Cowley and grand-daughter of James Cecil, 1st Marquis of Salisbury C.P. This might have been a useful match for Bulwer, but in the event it was a never ending source of friction, not only taxing Bulwer's strength but also one suspects acting as a bar to the furtherance of his social ambitions. The Palmerston Papers may one day reveal the importance of the constant and ill-concealed friction between Bulwer and his wife in preventing the former obtaining the peerage he so ardently sought during the last three years of the Constantinople Embassy.

⁴ R.W. Von Alstyne, 'British Diplomacy and the Clayton-Bulwer Treaty', Journal of Mod. Hist. XI (1939) p.155.

Later he himself wrote:

'In America nothing is done with the Government. One must influence the people who influence the Government, without which the papers that pass between the Secretary and the British minister were better thrown into the fire'.¹

Acting upon this precept Bulwer had quickly ingratiated himself with potential enemies.² By his success and quite possibly because of the valuable information on the Mosquito Question he continued to give several ministers, notably Lords Granville, Clarendon and Palmerston, even as late as 1854, Bulwer may have overcome to some extent the suspicions which had been entertained against him before he left for Washington.³ Be that as it may, after a quiet but successful interlude at Florence as Minister 1852-55, he retired in anticipation of the Embassy at Constantinople which was his great ambition.⁴ Instead of this, however, several diplomatic missions were entrusted to him in the Levant, the most important of which was as Britain's representative in the Commission appointed to implement the 23rd Article of the Treaty of Paris. The Commission was to examine the conditions of the Danubian Principalities.

As a participant in the actual working out of the details of the Treaty of Paris, Bulwer in a very real sense was quickly brought up against the new facts of the international situation. They were such

¹. Bulwer-Clarendon, 24 Jan. '45, Ibid, p.155.

². Alstyne, p.155-6, and see Envoys, and Levant Herald, 4 Oct. '65, in an article on Bulwer's retirement explains that for his successful diplomacy on this occasion he was made a G.C.B.

³. Alstyne, p.152-3, 175 and 179.

⁴. With reference to Florence see Monypenny and Buckle, Vol.III, 399-401. Levant Herald, 4 Oct.'65, suggests that Bulwer went to Florence at his own request for reasons of health. For reference to Constantinople see Memoirs of an ex-Minister, Vol. II, 118, Entry 11 May '58, and Stanley (Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs)- Bulwer, 6 Sept. '46, S/40: 'I would certainly have been very glad to have done everything in my power to have promoted your wishes with regard to Constantinople'.

as to render his influence nugatory. For two reasons Bulwer reacted strongly against the inertia enforced on the Commission: he was loath¹ to co-operate with Stratford de Redcliffe, hoping to make him seem, if not foolish, at least inadequate; and secondly, he genuinely resented the false position in which the Commission was placed.¹ The upshot was that Bulwer distinguished himself during this period in a way which further underlined his incapacity for an important post such as the Embassy at Constantinople. Not only was he disloyal to his immediate superior - as he had been to Granville and Ponsonby - he also made a point of demonstrating the divergence of opinion existing between himself and Stratford. Warranted was his anxiety to be given the documents which concerned the problems in hand, and to be informed about British policy, especially in view of its ambiguity; less justified was his provocation of Lord Stratford in front of all the European commissioners and the corps diplomatique when the Firman relative to the Convocation of the Divans was read.²

Reduced to powerlessness, Bulwer tried to maintain his own dignity during the crisis of the early months of 1857, by losing his temper in the sittings of the Commission, absenting himself entirely

1. Riker, p.109. Palmerston-Russell, 10 May '65, PRO.30/22.22: 'Bulwer is a great intriguer. He worked hard to upset Stratford and get his place'.

2. This was before the Commissioners left for Jassy. Thouvenel shrewdly commented: 'Sir Henry Bulwer and Lord Stratford have given us the entertaining spectacle of the struggle of a serpent with a lion'. Thouvenel-Benedetti, 8 Jan. '57, Trois Années, p.65. Riker - The Making of Rumania, p.82, makes the point: 'It would have behoved the new arrival to seek his end by personal interviews, instead of writing wordy and meticulous complaints'.

from Bucarest,¹ attempting to act the role of mediator between the factions there, and trying to point out to Stratford and his Government the mockery which was the policy he was expected to uphold.² Bulwer objected to the hastening of the election while there was the least suspicion of irregularity.³ However, because of the limitations imposed upon him by official policy Bulwer could only insist that the Commission could not take action by itself, but must await instructions from Constantinople. In this manner he gratified his desire to play a distinctive role, and to keep within the letter of his own instructions.⁴ During his stay in the Principalities we may remark Bulwer's penchant for attempting the smart manoeuvre, and for trying for a middle position which he lacked substantial power to sustain. It is significant that Bulwer was already reacting to the diplomatic situation by becoming something of a legalist, a trait which we shall have cause frequently to observe during his seven years as ambassador.⁵

1. Riker, p.98 and 101. April 1857. His ignorance in the interpretation of the Firman-which had failed to comprehend the differences between Wallachia and Moldavia,-assisted those influences-Austrian, Turkish, and Stratford-hastening the elections in spite of the general knowledge that the Moldavian electoral lists had been faked. See Riker, p.105-7.

2. Clarendon, to whom Bulwer had expressed his fears without reserve, was ready to accept the result of the elections to the divans ad hoc in spite of irregularities. Riker, p.114 and 113.

3. Riker, p.117. Yet Bulwer wrote to Stratford about the suspect nature of the lists, and told him that Prokesch was not to be hearkened to. Quotes Bulwer-Stratford, no.96, 8 July '57, FO.78/1281: 'My impression is that if the Russians, French, Sardinian, and Prussian cabinets carry out the positive threats of their commissioners not to recognise the Moldavian divan, they will have a strong case for the public, while the Porte will stand in an awkward position'.

4. Riker, p.84, 119, 94 and p.109: '...Bulwer, chafing as he did under the restrictions thus imposed, was nevertheless so anxious to preserve his 'balance of power' that he preferred to shelter himself behind a screen of academic rectitude instead of joining those members of the Commission who chose to subserve the letter of their instructions to the spirit'.

5. See below, p.578.

From the first Thouvenel had been able to count on the differences between Bulwer and Stratford.¹ The French agent in Jassy, commenting on the strange unanimity of the Commission, rejoiced in 'the savoury spectacle of Sir Henry Bulwer at Bucarest lending his support to a view violently attacked by Lord Stratford at Constantinople.'² Baron Talleyrand-Perigord, amused with Bulwer, described him as one 'who searched a quarrel with everyone in his fits of crotchety temper.'³

Riker, though pointing to Bulwer's deranged liver as an extenuating circumstance, submits that Bulwer was 'something of a busybody' and 'oversensitive on the point of dignity'.⁴ And whatever the merits of Bulwer as a diplomatist at this time, and these would seem not to have been extraordinary, the impression we receive of him as a person does nothing to make one question the image already in mind. Sly, disloyal and a little ridiculous, he lacked the qualities to be expected in a reliable representative. A lack of integrity was a considerable failing not to be excused by the conditions under which Bulwer laboured, the difficulties with Lord Stratford, and his own ill-health.

Bulwer's marriage to Georgiana Charlotte Mary Wellesley⁵ only brought serious disadvantages which in turn influenced his health

1. Trois Années p.65, Thouvenel-Benedetti, 8 Jan '57.

2. Ibid, p.109.

3. Ibid, p.129.

4. Riker, p.82 and 83: 'Bulwer's liver was periodically deranged'.

5. See above, p25, note 3.

and temper. It has to be said, however, that as far as one can tell, this had no adverse effect on his actions during his Constantinople Embassy.¹ But it almost certainly influenced Bulwer's relations with Palmerston and Russell who must have known about the state of Bulwer's marriage.

Lady Bulwer turned out to be as extravagant as her husband who was himself extravagant and constantly beset by money troubles.² The financial advantages which Bulwer anticipated from the marriage, causing ^{him} to increase his wife's allowance and to allow himself some greater luxuries, were never forthcoming. The situation which developed as a

1. On one occasion his absenting himself at Scutari for health reasons laid him open to charges of conspiracy against the Sultan. See below, p.32 n. 2 .

2. Stanley (Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs) - Bulwer, 8 March '47 and others T/40. Stanley was evidently alarmed at the expenditure of Bulwer on his residence, see Jones Parry, p.289: 'Bulwer's pride was engaged in this enterprise (i.e. the Coburg match); and he no doubt had visions of putting to good use the grand equipage, consisting of eight horses, a chariot, and a state coach, which he had brought back with him in 1845 in preparation for the Queen's wedding day'.

Meynell (Banker) - Bulwer, St. Remo, 8 May '63 and others T/8: 'I cannot consent to accept by instalments the money I lent to you on bloc...'

H.P. Fenton-Bulwer, several, T/38, for post-1861. Bulwer had this agent rummaging around for the best copies of famous portraits. In his situation, thus to furnish a house on an island which he seldom saw, was, to say the least, Bohemian.

Judging from the reference in Sir E. Hornby- Autobiography p.153, Bulwer also kept a stable for horse-racing.

consequence showed up Bulwer in a mean light.¹ As time passed his health ^{er}deteriorated,² and his marital relations became more sharply disturbed, with the result that he spent many a night at Pera unable to sleep because of his intense

¹. Bulwer- Lord Salisbury, 15 May '61 T/52: 'You know that during Lady Cowley's life-time I had to meet all the expenses of our joint establishment. This together with my being some time out of employment and having to pay from my official income when at Washington, occasioned debts which for the last three years I have been endeavouring to, and succeeding in paying off. At Lady Cowley's death I expected a great increase of income, and allowed Lady Bulwer to augment the expenses of the House in consequence, and was not so scrupulous as to my own - not one farthing however has yet reached me! Counting, as I have said... (on an increase in fortune)...(having otherwise allotted as I have stated my official income) I made engagements with the Bankers here accordingly. These by the present unexpected delays I break, and the only thing I can do is to settle them by paying from 8 to 10 per cent for the advance'.

Bulwer - William Bulwer, 29 May '61: 'It is all very well talking of my interest but it was not my interest to take the interest... Neither is it my interest to delay the payment of Lady B's annuity in order to throw a greater burden on me. The whole affair of the family is to screw me down to the last point and has always been so, both in the marriage settlement and Lady Cowley's will, which was in fact a swindling evasion of an agreement. I must say Lady B. joins in nothing of this kind, but the family should know that if they act in this way they separate Lady B. and myself because I will not be so treated, and then, because I am ruined by the expenses of a marriedmenage reproached for extravagance. Either Lady B's income must assist mine, or she must not create a charge upon it. ...in the meantime...we are in great distress since I have gone on apportioning my own income to the settlement of old accounts, and spent nevertheless more in the Household, conceiving I had a larger income which has been taken from me'. It was not until late in 1864 that the difficulties arising from the marriage were settled. See Barnes and Elliss (Bulwer's lawyers) - Bulwer, 22 Sept. '64, T/81.

². There are several letters from different sources commiserating with him, or complimenting him on a recent recovery. Especially warm were the letters from Baron Prokesch, the Austrian Internuncio. e.g. to Bulwer 23 Nov. '64, and 7 Dec. T/77. The letters cover the whole of the Constantinople Embassy. see also Bulwer - A'ali Pasha, 20 Feb. 65 T/105 and Bulwer - Layard, 9 July '63, and Hyde Clarke from Smyrna, 28 Oct. '64, T/84 which suggest Bulwer to have been a martyr to sciatica.

irritability.¹ How far this diminished his efficiency it is impossible to discover. Certainly the sudden flurry of activity with which, much to his personal credit, he brought the Servian difficulties to a satisfactory conclusion, followed immediately on a nearly fatal illness.² The anxiety to travel to different parts of the Empire, chiefly to Syria and Egypt, seems to have been caused at least in part by his genuine need for a better climate and his hypochondria.³ Further he was far better informed as a

¹ Bulwer - Lady Bulwer, 5 May 1861, T/52. 'I passed the whole night with fever in consequence of this constant agitation. ...I...suggested merely as a friendly and practical expedient your going to London to settle our affairs, since you said you were always so bored here - or if that did not suit, taking for the summer months a small house at the islands - so that one might find some excuse for breaking up the establishment:... I am in hopes your good sense and reflection will ultimately come to your aid, and that through these means you will not render a casual difference which I have not desired to provoke, one of a very serious nature, which it would naturally become if you persevered in your present behaviour'.

Ibid, 4 May, Bulwer - Lady Bulwer: 'I cannot bear this conduct any longer and will not see you again whilst here, if you continue to behave in this way...I beg you to allow me to shut up the house for a short time.

...Is there any idea or plan which strikes you? I am willing to agree to all that is possible or reasonable - but I cannot assent to keeping up a large establishment, because it will not only prevent my getting quit of the debts here which ought really to be paid, but because I could not meet the demands which it would occasion.

...Has any wife even the least blameable a right to treat her husband as you do me?...to be worried and teased and abused without a rational motive, I will not and cannot (submit)...

² See below Ch. IV, p. 213 .

³ Eg. B.P., Bulwer - Layard, 9 July '63, T/70: 'I am not quite certain whether I shall go to European waters which Doctors advise for two months...or whether I shall content myself with a short Turkish trip. I want some break in this daily work. Perhaps in Winter I could go to Egypt'.

And Bulwer - Nubar Pasha, 29 Nov. '64, T/83. Bulwer intended to go to Egypt for health reasons; and Bulwer - A'ali, 20 Feb. '65, T/102, from Suez, and Prokesch - Bulwer, 5 July '64, T/77. The internuncio expressed satisfaction that Bulwer had gone to the Archipelago, for he felt Bulwer was too depressed these days.

consequence. Even so, one wonders how much more efficient he might have been with good health and more orthodoxy.¹ He would not have been obliged to visit Scutari so often. A natural consequence might have been improved relations with the Sultan.² The sudden outbreaks of irritation and temper over some petty mistake of a member of the embassy staff might have been less frequent.³ And since British prestige in the Levant was so much a question of 'face' a more solid, healthier, and less capricious person might have succeeded better in preserving the dignity and respectability the lack of which could provide useful material for gossip in official

1. Bulwer - Lord Cowley, 16 Oct. '61 T/52. Bulwer had been on a trip to various parts of the country around Broussa in spite of his own admission that he had more work piling up than he was capable of dealing with. 'One finishes however by becoming like the Hackney coach horse, who has hardly a leg to stand upon, but is sustained by his harness'.

2. Exactly what influence an Ambassador had in this respect one cannot discover. On one occasion only we are allowed a keyhole glimpse into the life of the corps diplomatique. We see the effects mere absence could entail in an atmosphere peculiarly tense owing to the psychological in-breeding, induced by too close proximity in a locality where it was indeed difficult enough for Europeans to keep unimpaired their sense of proportion and western civility.

The events took place later in August. (See Bulwer - Ludolf 17 and 19 Sept. and Bulwer Memo, T/91). Bulwer had a habit of going to Scutari on Tuesdays or Wednesdays, chiefly to find the fresh air. He states himself (see Memo, *ibid*): 'I had there the tranquility that is not always at Therapia; I had no Pera hills to climb under a burning sun...As the air and the situation of Scutari pleased me and as it is nearer to the Porte and affairs than Therapia, I stayed sometimes a day more than what was really necessary'. Unfortunately for Bulwer he was entertained there by Dr. Picipio (usually referred to as Marco Bey) himself, Aziz Effendi's own doctor. Previous to this Bulwer had arranged at El-Hami Pasha's house (the Sultan's brother-in-law) to meet him on his yacht the next day. On leaving the Pasha, Bulwer, walking home in the gloom of the night had accosted, as he thought, the captain of El-Hami's yacht as he passed the ship, and told him that he and El-Hami would join him the next day. It was however Aziz Effendi's yacht. The Sultan of course, linking together Bulwer's intimacy with the doctor of the heir-apparent and this incident, expressed displeasure and asked for an explanation. Rumour had it that Bulwer had been mixed up in a conspiracy against the Sultan.

3. See Appendix A.

circles. The urgent need for a peerage from 1862 surely reflected Bulwer's awareness of something lacking in his ambassadorial equipment. The tense relations with Russell were also in part a consequence of the Foreign Minister's deeply felt dissatisfaction with Bulwer's 'goings on'.¹

If Bulwer explained correctly regarding the intrigues against him,² and Russell obtained his information from reliable sources, one may only conclude that Bulwer's dismissal, was a mere matter of time after 1862. Though the reasons expressed as justifying it were completely at odds with the actual facts, they were nevertheless a response to a sure intuition on Russell's part that Bulwer did not fit into the Victorian social cosmology.

It was unfortunate that Bulwer's policy towards Egypt, though more intelligent and imaginative than the official one, diverged from Russell's and especially Palmerston's views.³ Again Bulwer had an approach to the general problems of Turkish reform that was decidedly more experimental than Palmerston's, Russell being somewhat indifferent.⁴

Yet these differences might easily have been overlooked by

¹. Bulwer - Russell, 29 Jan '63, T/70. Russell had referred Bulwer's request to Lord Palmerston, who had strong feelings in the matter. Palmerston - Russell, 10 Jan. '63, PRO.30/22 14: 'You may tell Bulwer I cannot make him a Peer, but I have already told him so. Upon reading his letter to you about his wish to be made a Peer I wrote to him to say you had shown it me: and that it bid me to do what I had long intended but had always put off as a disagreeable thing, namely to tell him the unfavourable reports of his private goings on which almost everybody who comes from Constantinople brought with them, but I urged him to mend his ways...You asked me to write to him about these matters a year ago, but I am sorry to say I put it off from time to time till the other day'.

². See Appendix A.

³. See below Ch. V, p.237

⁴. See below Ch. III, p.113.

Russell had the tension between himself and his agent been less rooted in the deeper, ineradicable, personal antipathy. In the event both Russell and Layard,¹ reacted violently to Bulwer's rumoured participation in a private scheme for converting the public debt of Turkey, and to his alleged dunning of the Viceroy in the sale of the Isle of Plati. Their immediate desire was to see Bulwer as a culprit, and they gave him short shrift.² Here no

¹. A.H. Layard, Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs.

². Bulwer had discussed with Mallet and Hottinguer in Paris in general terms the idea of a Conversion of the Debt of Turkey. On 31 March '65, a Contract was signed between the General Credit Co. and the Turkish Government. A few careless words from some acquaintances of Bulwer, especially S. Laing of the London Offices, and Sir H. Drummond Wolff, though harmless in themselves, persuaded suspicious minds that Bulwer had taken part in negotiations on the side of the General Credit Co. to produce the scheme which was eventually successful in spite of the hostility of the British backed Imperial Ottoman Bank. In fact, of course, Bulwer's chat with Mallet had no connection whatsoever with other developments taking place simultaneously. Bulwer judiciously refrained from interference. Layard's first accused Bulwer and later asked for explanations, finally making a lame apology. Bulwer returned with interest accusing Layard, perhaps rightly, of being privy to his own notice of dismissal, and of not being a gentleman, Bulwer-Layard, 23 Sept. '65, T/102.

Concerning the Isle of Plati which Bulwer received as a gift from the Sultan, there is not a doubt that Bulwer sold it at a price which merely covered his expenses in improving the island and the residence on it.

Regarding the Laing Conversion Scheme the case for Bulwer may be found in the following letters: T/102, Bulwer - Philip Rose, 1 July '65; Bulwer - Russell, 12 April '65 no. 38; A'ali Pasha - Bulwer, 26 April '65; Bulwer - Merton 25 Aug. '65; Louis Merton - Bulwer, 28 Aug. '65 which is the definitive explanation of all the events; Mr. Sansom - Bulwer, 22 Aug. '65; Bulwer - Layard, 20 May '65; Wolff - Laing 14 April '65; Bulwer - Wolff, copy, 19 May '65; Wolff - Bulwer, 22 Feb and 2 Feb: against Bulwer: S. Laing - Palmerston, 17 March '65; S. Laing - Palmerston, 30 March '65; Russell - Bulwer, 30 April '65, no.9: extract from Mr. Layard's private letter of 20 July '65.

The explanation of the Isle of Plati deal may be found in the following letters: T/99, Henri Oppenheim - Bulwer, 1 Aug. '65; R.L. Stevens - Bulwer 28 Feb. '65; Alberti Oppenheim, 23 July '64; H. Oppenheim, 25 Jan. '65, and most important G & D 30/22 14, 12 July '65, Palmerston to Russell, where the former assumes Bulwer's innocence.

question of policy was involved. Justified as were Bulwer's heat and intensity, as he tried in vain to exculpate himself, there was something hypocritical in his righteous indignation. He had been no paragon of virtue; he had not invited respect. Russell and Layard did not need to have sound pretexts. Bulwer was an easy victim.

Bulwer was a hangover from the Regency period, the sort of headache which Queen Victoria and the newly conformed Palmerston could hardly forgive. Respectability seemed to have taken him unawares. His way of living brought him into conflict with Russell, and Palmerston, and Layard, while the Queen had never liked him.¹ The above sketch of Bulwer's public image - rather than his character - is confirmed by contemporary opinion which is consistent and tells its own tale.

Bulwer's talents are unquestioned but there is a general agreement that as a person he was not all that he might have been. 'A brilliant but unprincipled man', he was in the Reverend Washburn's eyes.² Lord Clarendon seemed to have expected the worst, and said so in a letter to Bulwer's brother-in-law, Lord Cowley:

'...it would be impossible not to feel that the state of the Embassy and the doings of Bulwer were a scandal and that the name and interests of England in the East were grievously injured. I have not heard what

¹ Palmerston - Russell, 27 July 1865, (G & D 30/22 22).

² Fifty Years at Constantinople, p.438, and p.11.

was the determining point of the Earl's resolution - whether it was some particular act of Bulwer's or the accumulation of them, but he has more than once told me that he would recall him, only Palmerston would not hear of it'.¹

Russell thought Bulwer's talents 'very considerable', but wondered that he could not have been 'more discreet, more prudent, and more moral'.² Palmerston had to tell Bulwer in January of 1863 what he had been intending to say for the previous twelve months, namely that everybody knew of his private goings-on at Constantinople and that he should mend his ways. He was appalled by Bulwer's lack of dignity of character and his tremendous conceit.²

An appraisal of Bulwer's embassy 1858-65 would be incomplete without this picture of Bulwer. It contributes to an explanation why, for example, he was slow in winning over the Foreign Office to his Suez policies, and more generally, why his voice was not so impressive at home as it might have been in the matter of Turkish

1. The Paris Embassy during the Second Empire, p.285. As Clarendon remarks, Palmerston and Russell were divided over Bulwer. The last was the wrong man for the post as I have already pointed out (above, p.6.), and Russell must have dimly perceived why. Palmerston tended to approve of Bulwer's interference in the forming and unforming of Turkish cabinets. Palmerston also viewed with a good deal of scepticism the rumours about Bulwer in connection with the sale of the Isle of Plati. In the letter quoted above Clarendon went on to say: 'I suppose, however, that Palmerston got afraid of upholding him any longer for Delane is, or pretends to be, in possession of some ugly facts about money matters, and secrets in such keeping might at any moment become public. B. must have been living in a fool's Paradise, and (sic) believing that he had made la pluie et le beau temps at Constantinople'.

2. Ibid. Why his talents were unquestioned one is at a loss to discover. The Tories, of course, lacked men for diplomatic posts; hence Bulwer's promotion at their hands was explicable. The Queen thought he was a shady intriguer, Melbourne considered him to be clever, keen, and suspicious, by which he may have meant too clever by far, and Palmerston in 1865 had misgivings about Bulwer as an effective diplomatist. Palmerston-Russell, 12 July '65, (G&D 30/22 14): 'As to Bulwer I very much agree with you. He is a very clever man, and according to his own statements he directs everything: all that goes aright is due to him, all that goes wrong is the fault of others. He has no dignity of character and it may be doubted, whether he has as much influence at Constantinople as he represents. Russell for a change was being generous. After 1841 the Whigs always inherited Bulwer.'

reform. It explains his actual downfall, consequent on those qualities in his make-up which in the full-tide of Victorian humbug could not but make a man unpopular. At a time when another concept of the good diplomatist was being acknowledged, if only subconsciously, a man like Bulwer of necessity acted like grit in the diplomatic machine. The image which he projected on to the diplomatic screen was not one likely to make the hard business of daily routine, so much a part of the representative's task, an easy one.

Yet, despite the contemporary opinion, it will be seen that Bulwer's achievement at Constantinople was not unpraiseworthy, even though it brought him no acclaim. From the analyses of his contribution to the problems which arose, it will become apparent that with the assumption of power at Constantinople, Bulwer, at the age of fifty-seven, had reached the peak of his powers. His astuteness in negotiations remained, likewise his talent for producing compromise solutions. The inability to take the large view, the bad tactical judgment which he had shown in Spain, and his tendency to be disloyal would all be in evidence in the final phase. Yet, by reason of the telegraph Bulwer was kept very much under Russell's keen surveillance. Further, on occasions, Bulwer showed a breadth of view, chiefly in his attitude to the general problem of Turkey's continued existence, and in the prolonged Suez crises, which may be explained only by the experience which he acquired at that most responsible of posts.

This does not answer a less important question which naturally poses itself. How had Bulwer, despite the known weaknesses in his

character, been able to rise to such an eminence? This is answered simply. He was lucky. After 1841 the Whigs always inherited Bulwer.¹ And, generally, he was more whole-heartedly appreciated by Tory-ish politicians like Lord Stanley, Aberdeen, and Disraeli, than by the Whigs. The tone of familiarity and confidence which Aberdeen 1843-46, even Sir Robert Peel, and then Disraeli,² adopted towards Bulwer contrasts strikingly with Palmerston's casual and official attitude 1846-48,³ and, later, with Russell's aloofness and readiness to carp. The Tories, it has to be said, suffered from the disadvantage of having few candidates to choose from.⁴ In 1856, the Whigs considered sending Bulwer to Victoria as Governor, which as far as Bulwer was concerned would have been a disappearing act par excellence. He declined.⁵ I mention this because Bulwer is traditionally associated with Palmerston as 'one of Palmerston's most brilliant,

¹. See above, p. 36 n. 2.

². See Monypenny & Buckle, Vol. I, 124; Vol. III, 182, and 399-400.

³. After a brief and impulsive consideration of the idea of returning Bulwer to Spain in 1849, a scheme squashed by the Queen, Palmerston discreetly disposed of Bulwer by sending him to Washington as Envoy extraordinary and Minister. He wrote: 'I am authorised to offer you this post, and under existing circumstances I strongly advise you to accept it....though you would not wish under ordinary circumstances to cross the Atlantic yet it would have the advantage of getting you honourably out of all embarrassment as to the question of returning or not returning to Madrid. It would be a public proof of the confidence which H.M.'s Government reposed in you...' (S/1, 26 January '49). From this one might gather that it was Bulwer and not Palmerston that was the object of the attacks in the Commons. (See Greville Memoirs Vol. VI, 194 and S/2, Aberdeen-Bulwer, 23 June '48; 'You must have seen that there is no disposition in any quarter to fix the blame personally on you').

⁴. Even so, it was a Conservative minister that enabled Bulwer to return to an epicentre of international affairs in 1858-after a period in the wilderness from Bulwer's point of view.

⁵. Letters of Queen Victoria, Vol. II, 242.

if also unsafest, pupils'.¹ In fact, though Bulwer's notions on politics, as indicated in his writings, corresponded very closely with a recognisable core of liberal-Whiggish notions which were the inheritance of both the Conservative and the Whig parties, it is significant that he had an admiration for Sir Robert Peel only surpassed by his veneration of Canning, both Tories and one a great hater of Palmerston.²

From this story of his career, to complete the analysis, perhaps some conclusions may be drawn about him as a person. Tradition has it that he was in some way an oddity, while the more substantial studies³ of him make him seem unattractive and of ordinary talent. On the whole the last part of the description is fairly accurate. To explain the first part it is necessary to make one or two inferences about Bulwer in his social context.

He was a product of a time when sense and sensibility were competing for the soul of the ruling clique. Romanticism acted on a society essentially cynical, rational and earthy, to induce in the short run a startling subversion of ideas of social responsibility. The effects on genius might have been felicitous, but on mere competence they were distinctly unfortunate. Bulwer, an adequate person who in another age would have achieved nothing in politics, might have become a political commentator or collector of specimens. His writings on the social and political scene, especially the sociological ones, indicate a power for mature and

¹ D.L. Murray-Edmund Hornby, An Autobiography, Intro. p.9.

² 'Sir Robert Peel', 'Canning', in Historical Characters-H.L. Bulwer,

³ Jones Parry and Riker.

detached observation. Bulwer was at his best when he was not involved. As soon as he became involved his sense of reality deserted him. In the positions which he attained this had resulted occasionally in a willingness to compromise when it was weakness to do so,¹ or in sophistry in the interpretation of instructions,² or in intrigue.³

The young Bulwer's cultivated high spirits, his caustic wit and sarcastic manner - likewise the marital and financial extravaganzas - were possibly reactions to an inner frustration, an inability to find those cerebral pleasures which in another time he might have been obliged to cultivate. The dandy affectations were a poor substitute for the delights of the imagination which he had neither the will nor perhaps the funds to seek after. Further they covered up his limited talent.

His progress, too rapid for a man of his quality, accentuated what one surmises was a feeling of insecurity. He praised his triumphs as unusual ones, and elevated his own importance, when in fact the successes would be small, and his contribution to affairs not indispensable.⁴ His reports on his immediate superiors, whether Granville, Ponsonby, or Stratford de Redcliffe, compensated for his relative insignificance. During his last embassy, when a quiet assurance and moderation characterised his general conduct of affairs, even then the pains he took to paint a picture of

¹. See above, p. 15, n. 3, p. 16, n. 1, and p. 21.

². See above, p. 22, and below Ch. V, p. 288-9 and Ch. IV, p. 167-8.

³. See above, p. 24.

⁴. See above, p. 15, for description of the 1838 negotiations and below Ch. V, p. 292, for his reactions to his dismissal.

himself surrounded by intrigues, disloyalty, and of himself, ill but triumphing over all by a manly straightforwardness, revealed again his inner dissatisfaction. Probably a similar motivation kept him actively moving around the Levant, acting as an agent for the Société des Travaux publics et Banque d'Orient, till his death in Naples in 1872.

The basic egotism tended to prevent him achieving an harmonious working relationship with people outside the narrow circle of the corps diplomatique. Fortunately for his own reputation, the coming of the telegraph meant that the preoccupation with dignity could not involve him in the kind of embarrassments which were a feature of his Spanish embassy.

As will be seen, his period of office at Constantinople, was one of relative quiescence in which negotiations tended to resolve themselves into small-change bartering.¹ Bulwer was thus not entirely unsuited to his post at Constantinople. His previous success had all been a consequence of his talent for hard bargaining. He had been able to intrigue and manoeuvre to his heart's content to settle the Central American and Moroccan problems.² Especially had he excelled in the latter when the personal element had been reduced to a bare minimum. It was to his advantage in 1858 that he had an opportunistic approach to all problems. In every way he was a light allegretto after the ponderous, and searching andante of Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, a great initial advantage. These were

¹ Lords Cowley and Dufferin settled the major problems, the Principalities and the Lebanon, while even the Suez business was ultimately transferred to Paris.

² See above, p.22, n.1.

reasons why he should have achieved some success at Constantinople. Thirty years in the diplomatic service had equipped him with the techniques necessary in such a place. Given the growing French ascendancy and England's general impotence in Europe, his profuseness in devices would be very useful. Despite his bouts of ill-temper, he generally succeeded in maintaining a sophisticated facade. Even at the end of his Embassy when he was eaten up by the thought of having to leave, Lord Lyons had to remark:

'He has been so friendly and agreeable, that I half blame myself for not being more willing to see him again here.' ¹

¹. To Russell, 25 October 1865, G & D 30/22.

CHAPTER II

Factors of British Foreign Policy

A significant change took place in the Near Eastern situation during the years 1854-6. France ousted Britain from its preeminent place in Turkish councils. French victories and efficiency in the war had impressed the Turks, most sensitive to arguments based on power. The remarkable drive shown by French diplomatists, during the years immediately following the Treaty of Paris, reinforced Napoleon III's diplomatic strength based on the intimacy developing between Paris and Turin, and Paris and St. Petersburg. At Constantinople, Thouvenel, despite his wit and good humour, fought a grim battle with Stratford de Redcliffe for influence over the Porte. Some time before de Redcliffe's dismissal the Turkish ministers, including the most pro-British, Reschid Pasha, were irritated by the English ambassador's bullying methods. His eventual withdrawal from the scene of his triumphs was welcomed by them. The manner in which it came about underlined the triumph of French policy in establishing the hegemony of France in the area.

The period of transition, thus, might be considered as terminated with the change of English ambassadors. For, significantly, Sir Henry Bulwer, almost certainly chosen for the Constantinople embassy because of his practical acquaintance with the difficulties inherent in the new situation which had developed, was not the strong man in the traditional mould, like Ponsonby and

Stratford de Redcliffe. He was a man with remarkable powers of endurance in committee, and, perhaps, an even more valuable facility in finding compromise solutions. Certainly Sir Henry Bulwer saw himself cast in this role; and, however much his policies may be criticised, his diagnosis of the diplomatic situation was sound. In explaining the difficulty he had in trying to persuade the Porte to do something about reform, Bulwer remarked that up to the Crimean War Stratford de Redcliffe and Reschid Pasha had had things their own way, but unfortunately the tremendous increase in the reputation of the French arms had encouraged the young and aspiring politicians to look to the French ambassador for patronage. He went on:

'I arrived here at that time. Had I been disposed to pursue the previous policy of Lord Stratford I should have committed an anachronism (sic), for the grounds on which that policy had been based and supported no longer existed'.¹

To attempt a friendly understanding with Thouvenel, French ambassador, and the politicians whose star was in the ascendant, was naturally Bulwer's interest.

Of course, neither Bulwer nor any other person of affairs could have appreciated how radical was the change taking place in European politics. And only experience would show how it would affect British interests. Adjustment would have to be slow owing to the weight of that heritage, traditional policy towards the Ottoman Empire. It had been formed to cope with different contingencies. Bulwer himself at least sensed this when he emphasised

¹. Bulwer - Russell, 20 August '60, FO. 78/1637.

how different Russian methods were, though not their objectives.¹

An analysis here of the factors in British foreign policy in the Near East, and then of the altered international situation in 1854-6 will explain Bulwer's difficulties, and provide a means of assessing the ambassador's own reactions to a novel problem.

From 1827-33 Russo-phobia had been the dominating influence in British policy towards the Ottoman Empire. The advance into Georgia and upon Erzeroum, the key to Asia Minor, and the defeat of Persia making the Caspian Sea into a Russian lake, had brought Russia dangerously close to the lines of communication with India. The Treaty of Unkiar Skelessi completed Russian triumphs by giving the Tsar's government a diplomatic ascendancy at Constantinople. The threat to Bagdad and the influence Russia acquired by the Treaty of 1833 had persuaded Palmerston that Turkish integrity was vital to the security of the British Empire. During the years 1839-41 Palmerston acted upon this assumption, seizing the opportunity not only to undermine Russian hegemony, but also to curtail French influence in the area, which though of secondary importance, was nevertheless hostile to British interests in the Mediterranean.²

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1. Bulwer-Malmesbury, 21 June '59, PRO 30/22 88: 'Egypt, the Principalities, and Servia, might easily be severed from the Ottoman rule by foreign interference. Serious troubles might in the same way be excited in Bosnia and Bulgaria. In short, if one or more great European Powers were to attack Turkey, and others did not come to her support, she would fall to pieces... I do not believe that the Russian Government will lose an opportunity like the present of regaining the position she occupied previous to the late war... whatever may be the course she may finally adopt, to maintain a state of things menacing to the Turkish Empire, and to soothe the Turkish Cabinet by friendly assurances appears not unnaturally her policy for the moment'.
 2. Puryear-France and the Levant, p. 143. Wellington and Aberdeen made a similar choice.

The Russian thrust through Georgia, and the Egyptian acquisition of the four pashaliks, had emphasised the strategic significance of the area where the Mesopotamian lands adjoined Syria and eastern Anatolia. This region assumed an importance which it was not to lose until the construction of the Suez Canal. Confronted by the difficulties involved in the preservation of a favourable political authority over these territories, Palmerston's determination had been that a rejuvenated Turkish Empire, directed from Constantinople, should be the guardian rather than Egypt sponsored by France.¹

Developments in the 1840s gave further justification to this policy. At this time the Suez Canal projects became plausible. The Foreign Office quickly showed its hostility by pushing forward the idea of an Alexandria-Cairo-Suez rail-track. Then in the mid-fifties a Mediterranean-Persian Gulf line through the Euphrates Valley, a revival of a plan discarded in the '30s, was advocated. The political significance of this was as a piece to counter French influence in Egypt and Syria, and to forestall the Russian advance on the Persian Gulf.²

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1. Puryear, *ibid*, though failing to establish a connection between the increase in French trade in the Ottoman Empire and particularly in Egypt, and Anglo-French hostility, shows clearly the conflicting political and strategic interests of the two Powers. Throughout the period up to the denouement of 1841 French interests and prestige required a reassertion of the traditional authority of France in the Mediterranean. North Africa was the sphere to which her efforts were directed for there French and Egyptian power could be extended without dangerously compromising Turkish integrity. These were pernicious developments for Britain, for from the late months of 1829 the possibilities of transporting mail to India, via Syria and Mesopotamia, were being seriously considered.
 2. cf. Hoskins, -British Routes to India, which gives a too complicated interpretation of the effects on railway strategy of the Osborne meeting. It was simply the traditional dislike of guaranteeing future returns on capital outlay that prevented these schemes from ever becoming practicable in England.

Thus, the strategic interests of Britain determined that policy which required Turkish control over the Straits, and over an irreducible minimum of territory, if not necessarily over the whole of the region traditionally under Ottoman sway. During the period under consideration the area controlling the routes of communication, actual and probable, coincided with Egypt, Syria, Iraq, the Persian Gulf, and the south-west of the Arabian Peninsula. By 1841 the broad lines of policy had been settled, and were not to change until after 1880.

The policy had necessitated vigorous diplomatic activity against Russia at Constantinople. It precluded sympathy for communities struggling for independence, for it was felt that the Turkish Empire could not long survive any violent shock.¹ The fate of the whole was involved in the fortunes of the parts. It had meant keeping a watchful eye on French activities in Egypt and Syria, countries where, traditionally, France had taken a great interest for commercial reasons, and in the latter case because of a religious sympathy. The divergence between French ambitions and British interests, which was scarcely hidden by international complications such as the Greek Revolution and the Egyptian advance into Asia Minor, would manifest itself during the Syrian crises of the 'forties, during the Crimean War, and increasingly so afterwards when it would become clear that France did not place much faith in Turkish integrity as the best means of furthering her interests.²

¹. cf. Puryear-International Economics and Diplomacy in the Near East, p. 25.

². See below, p. 55 .

In a word, while the maintenance of Turkish integrity, and the support of Turkish power at the Straits provided the ideal solution to problems involved in the threats to British strategic interests whether from France and Egypt, or Russia, such a policy demanded a favourable political situation for it to be feasible as in 1841 and 1854. An adverse diplomatic situation, as in 1833, would counter-balance maritime supremacy.

The flourishing state of British commerce profited from the policy which laid so much emphasis on the Porte's maintenance of the capitulatory system and a trade tariff remarkably favourable to foreign commerce, as part of the price for British friendship. However, this was incidental, and not a determining factor in British foreign policy.¹

¹. In 1825 Britain's ^{favourable} trade balance equalled some £12,111,389 of which the trade with Turkey contributed some 1%. By 1853 Britain's trade ~~surplus~~ amounted to £118,893,000. The ~~surplus of exports to~~ Turkey in 1852 was over six million pounds sterling, some 6%. After the Hansa towns and Holland, Turkey was the most important export market for English goods.

The political implications of this growth in trade were incidental to policy rather than causative. Undoubtedly, for example, if Russia won first place in the central Asian markets, political domination might follow, and not only would Britain's transit trade through Trebizond be destroyed, but the security of the route to India would be gravely imperilled.

After 1854 trade with Egypt became especially important. cf. Landes - Bankers and Pashas, p.329, for the complete table of Egyptian exports and imports, 1849-75.

Landes, *ibid*, p.85 n.1. Egypt was ⁱⁿ the twelfth place as a British customer in 1860, compared with 1848 when it ranked as twenty-sixth as an importer of British products. Between 1854-60 Egypt rose from the tenth to the sixth position as a source of British imports.

Its importance in French trade was reflected in the rise from 15th to 12th as an exporter from 1847-56 to 1857-66, and from 15th to 11th as an importer during these years. French trade in Turkey as a whole had doubled during the two decades previous to the war. Here was clearly grist for the mill of traditional Anglo-French rivalry and conflict in the area.

After 1856 the political and diplomatic context did change drastically. Because of the new situation Britain's influence in Turkey would be seriously curtailed. However, the dominating influence in Europe, the Franco-Russian alliance, would be so uncertain as to leave considerable room for manoeuvre to Britain. A brief analysis of the post-1856 situation will explain this.

At Constantinople, by reason of their preoccupation with the central European questions, France, Prussia and Russia would work towards new diplomatic alignments. Prussia, anti-Austrian in German affairs, by the same token was inclined to support the Franco-Russian entente in the east, especially during Bulwer's embassy when a rabid Turco-phobe, Goltz, was the Prussian representative at Constantinople. In Russia's case it would only be through the French alliance that the Tsar's government could prevent a deterioration of its interests in Europe, and achieve a revision of the humiliating neutralisation clause in the Paris Treaty. Otherwise, the alliance with France would be embarrassing. For the Tsar's government, Naples, Italy, and then Poland, marked successive stages of disillusionment with France. Napoleon III could not afford to abandon altogether the English tie, nor give over Italy to the exclusive influence of Britain. In any case, France would no more view with unconcern an increase in Russian power and prestige in the Balkans and at Constantinople, than a Russian government could passively look on should France wish to destroy the 1815 settlement of Europe.

There was, thus, a constant tension in the relationship between the two imperial governments. From April 1858, after troubles in Bosnia, Herzegovina and Montenegro,¹ Russia tried to have the general question of the condition of the Christians dealt with by the Powers. Prince Napoleon's visit to Warsaw (September 1858), the two missions of La Roncière le Noury (January 1859), and the talks between Colonel Reilly (September '59) and the Tsar, 'kept Russia in the hope, forever put off, of finding a premium for a deal over the East'.² The disturbances of March 1860 amongst the Slavs of Bosnia-Herzegovina and Montenegro,³ stimulated the Russian government to take diplomatic action. It placed Thouvenel in an embarrassing dilemma. To prevent a radical break with Britain and to preserve French preponderance at Constantinople, he could not afford to go all the way with Gortchakoff whose proposals for an international enquiry, and reorganisation of the provinces with effective guarantees for their security, were too drastic.⁴ Similarly in the settlement of the Lebanon, 1860-1, Gortchakoff created difficulties for France, justifiably believing that there was one law for eastern Turkey and another for the western half.⁵ Symptomatic of the precarious nature of this Franco-Russian rapprochement was Thouvenel's Memorandum of September 1860, prompted by fears of a revival of Austro-Russian friendship, and to keep Gortchakoff in line.⁶

¹. See below, Ch. IV. p. 190.

². Charles-Roux, Alexandre II, Gortchakoff, et Napoleon III, p. 288.

³. See below, Ch. IV, p. 192.

⁴. See below, Ch. III.

⁵. Charles-Roux, *op.cit.*, p. 295.

⁶. W.E. Mosse - The European Powers and the German Question, 1848-71, p. 89

However, in spite of Russian resentment against French hegemony at Constantinople, and towards certain policies, namely towards the Christians generally, reform, and the Catholicising movement in Bulgaria and Crete, the agreement worked well enough over matters related to the Principalities - that is, until the final developments in the Dedicated Convents question - and in Montenegro, Servia and Syria.

As far as Britain was concerned, the situation at Constantinople tended to reduce the role of England to one of accepting the substantial changes in certain parts of the Empire, while fighting to preserve Turkish nominal sovereignty over them. A short survey here of the way the Powers grouped themselves over the important issues will illustrate the necessity of a policy, which, as will be seen later,¹ was occasionally irksome to Bulwer, but yet was rationalised by him and made to appear a fairly liberal policy.

In the settlement of the Syrian issue, Russia, France, and Prussia eventually came together in support of one policy, but Lavalette and Lobanoff had difficulty in co-operating with one another, so Bulwer was still able to insist on the ambassadors' accepting in toto the report of the Syrian

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See below, pp.65-8.

Commissioners.¹ At a preliminary meeting of the Representatives Austria clearly supported the French idea of a native prince, with a native army and without the three local councils for the Maronite,

¹. An examination in detail of British policy towards Syria is not within the scope of this thesis, for the tasks of settling the administration of the Lebanon, and of working with Fuad Pasha for the pacification of the province, were confided to Commissioners on the spot. Lord Dufferin of Ava represented Britain. The accounts in H. Nicolson - Helen's Tower, and in C.H. of British Foreign Policy Vol. II, Ch. X, are not to the point as accounts of British foreign policy and what it achieved over this matter. Mange - The Near Eastern Policy of Napoleon III is better on this count. The settlement of the 1841-5 Lebanon crisis deprived the country of its autonomy under the native Shehab dynasty - a direct result of British policy. By force of circumstances Britain had become the patron of the Druses to counter French influence over the expanding Maronite tribes. In 1860 the Druses, much provoked, had, with Turkish connivance, massacred the Christians. Though Fuad Pasha, with Turkish troops, had quickly pacified the country, France insisted on a European expedition to secure order, and Russell apprehensive of joint Russo-French action had to agree eventually, (Mange, *ibid* p.88 n.88). The expedition was entirely French, though the other Powers could have contributed troops. As was to be expected, advantage was taken of this to harry the Druses, and generally to attach the Maronites to France by ties of gratitude. Whatever the paper guarantees, nothing would off-set this palpable gain by France. The second defeat, again occasioned by French and Russian pressure, enabled France to extend the period of her occupation, which should have ended in February, according to the Protocol signed 3 Aug. '60, to 5 June according to the Convention of 15 March '61 (Mange, *ibid*, p.97). French and Turkish objections to setting up a Syrian vice-royalty, of which the Lebanon would have been an administrative sub-division, provided the third defeat (Dufferin-Russell, 20 April 1861. PRO 30/22 94). By May '61 France had succeeded in bringing all the Powers to agree to one Governor for the Lebanon, though Dufferin had been able to temper their success somewhat by having the Commissioners favour an administrative arrangement dividing the country between Maronites, the Greek Orthodox, and the Druses. The inexperienced Dufferin, though he had achieved a considerable success in thwarting the French project of a native Shehab as Governor for the Mountain. Dufferin - Russell, 20 April, PRO. 30/22 94. Bulwer was rightly sceptical. 'My own opinion', he wrote, 'is that the efforts made by France in favour of a Shehab are not sincere. She knows these will not be successful, and her policy is to push apparently for something which she will afterwards concede: her object is to unite the whole Mountain under a Christian whom she would name here'. Bulwer - Russell, 15 May '61, PRO. 30/22 89. If Bulwer's view was right then the French were completely successful.

Druse and Greek Orthodox elements.¹ Lobanov strongly supported Bulwer against tampering with the Commissioners' second Report. Goltz claimed not to have instructions.² A week later, at a full meeting of the Representatives of the Powers and of the Porte, Lobanov and Goltz backed the French advocacy of a native Christian Governor.³ Bulwer made the most of the strain between Lobanov, obviously chafing under the restraint of his instructions, and Lavalette, and supported A'ali against every measure tending to give legal sanction to future discussions of the question of a native ruler for the Lebanon. The upshot was that Goltz and Lobanov naturally assumed the role of mediators between the two extreme views.⁴ The success in preventing the adoption of the principle of a native prince, was slight, but it gave time,⁵ three years, at the end of which there was no telling how the several Powers would view their interests in Syria.⁶

French ascendancy in Bucarest was too complete to be vulnerable to the shifting and uncertain nature of the international situation, though, even here, France was remarkably lucky in the way the balance of diplomatic pressure favoured her policies. From June 1860, when in a detailed and cogently reasoned Memorandum Couza explained to his agent in Constantinople, Costache Negri, the difficulties of

1. See above, p.52 n. 1 .

2. Bulwer-Russell, 29 May '61, PRO.30/22 89.

3. Ibid, 29 May.

4. Bulwer-Russell, 12 June, no. 412, FO.78/1570.

5. Mange, op.cit.p.105. According to the Firman, 9 June '61, the Governor, a Christian, was to be selected by the Sultan for a term of 3 years. 3 months before this period would elapse the Porte would seek the advice of the Powers on the question of the success of the new regime.

6. In the event French influence increased in this region. See Mange, *ibid*. The autonomy of the area had been secured, and the British attempt to deprive it of its immunities and to subordinate it to the Pasha at Saida had failed. As a last resort, to counter French influence, the idea of a Greek Orthodox candidate as Christian Governor of the Lebanon was mooted! Russell-Bulwer, 17 May 1861, FO.78/1571.

governing with two administrations, to the late months of 1862, Russian policy towards the Principalities was very erratic owing to the distinct incompatibility of Russian and French interests in the area. Afterwards, from the moment Couza pocketed the Convents' funds, Russia consistently opposed the regime of Couza, so blatantly pro-French and anti-Russian. However, to counter this, Britain strongly supported the Couza government until the expropriation of conventual properties in November 1862, and even this did not make Britain immediately hostile, owing to Bulwer's sympathetic understanding of Couza's internal difficulties. In addition, Austria tended to support France in the Convents question.¹

In the matter of reform the Powers took the line of least resistance, countering the efforts of each other so that no one Power should obtain too much influence with the Porte. France and Russia failed to co-operate owing to the disposition of the former not to alienate Britain unduly.² In fact, the only concrete attempt to do anything about the chronic inefficiency of Turkish administration resulted from the friendly co-operation of Britain and France in a Financial Commission (1861)³, and in the Imperial Ottoman Bank, established in 1863.

Clearly, so fluid was the political situation at Constantinople that, as Bulwer recognised, there was little to be done, especially in view of French hegemony. There was no way of maintaining a strict observance of the status quo as it was in 1858 when Bulwer

¹•Bulwer - Russell, 1 Jan. '63, No. 2. FO.78/1732.

²•Mosse, pp.89-93.

³•See below, Ch. III, p.86-7.

took up his post. The administrative and financial ineffectiveness of Turkish rule, giving rise to disturbances in the various provinces, kept the Near Eastern situation simmering, to the advantage of the nationalist movements and their patron, France.¹ Further, the Treaty of Paris had placed Serbia and Moldo-Wallachia behind a wall of immunities. Austro-Russian rivalry for political predominance in Montenegro made the fate of that country almost exclusively the business of those two Powers, so that even after the Turkish victories over the mountaineers in 1862, Turkey could not alter anything. Britain remained, of necessity, aloof, Egypt and Syria² were the special concern of France, and there, again, British policy would not be able to subtract anything from the solid French gains.

An account of Bulwer's reactions to what was going on, the ideas which he wished to implement, and what effect, if any, the adverse political context had on his ideas, will serve as an introduction to the succeeding chapters where the policies actually adopted to meet certain contingencies will be examined.

The striking feature of Bulwer's general approach was the paternalism, which was not so much temperamental as calculated. There were three contributing factors. Particularist tendencies in the Empire engendered, perforce, a legalistic approach to Turkish integrity. For this to be plausible Bulwer had to believe that the

¹ Debidour - Histoire Diplomatique, Vol. II, 159.

² See Dufferin - Russell, PRO 30/22 94 several, commenting on the effectiveness of French consular representation compared with British lethargy.

several vassals would be glad to do their duty towards Turkey in return for certain favours from the Porte. Secondly, Bulwer's solutions to the problems of reform all depended on the Porte's being aided by Europeans. Indeed, the Porte's administration and finances would have to be under European direction. Lastly, Bulwer found that the only way a Turkish representative could be persuaded to stand his ground on certain issues was by constant moral support and prompting from himself.

To take the last point first, the instances unrecorded must have been far more numerous than the ones recorded of Turkish representatives having to be truly held up to take a stand upon issues which affected the welfare of the Ottoman Empire. It would seem that Turkey, oppressed as much by the European States as by internal discontent which, given a free hand, it could have speedily crushed, had withdrawn within itself. Maybe the Porte had resigned itself to the loss of the outer portions of the territory nominally subject to the Sultan. As early as June '61 Bulwer, describing his efforts to check Moustier's exuberance in the Committees on the Lebanon at Constantinople, had to remark:

'I myself may have exhibited some warmth, but the quiet and somewhat passive manner of A'ali Pasha rendered it necessary....' ¹

Throughout 1863-4 his handling of the Porte and the Viceroy was nothing short of patronising.² Similarly over the Servian fortresses issue, Bulwer was as much embarrassed as strengthened by

¹. Bulwer - Russell, 12 June '61, PRO. 30/22 89.

². See below Ch. V, Egypt, p. 269-72

the Porte's absolute reliance on his resolution and single-mindedness in the committees. Bulwer commented, as he had had occasion to many times:

'The Sultan and the Porte are likely to accept whatever I propose, and I am therefore bound within reasonable limits to sustain their interests'. 1

On the subject of Reform, which is dealt with in the next chapter, it will suffice to note here that from very early in his Embassy to the last, Bulwer insisted that nothing would be done if Turkey were left to its own devices. As financial reform preceded everything else, in Bulwer's mind, so European expertise would have to be used to ensure that good measures did not founder in the morass of Turkish corruption and sheer incapacity. An examination of all the factors involved forced him to conclude:

'Turkey has in fact to be Europeanised to cope with its enemies or rivals in Europe; and I own I do not see any way in which it can be so with sufficient rapidity to be in time to meet coming events, unless by the agency of Europeans'. 2

And by this he meant the employment of Europeans at every level in the administration.

To come to the first point, the basic idea was the preservation of Turkish sovereignty.³ There were historical reasons, Bulwer was willing to admit, that justified a fair measure of independence for the different communities, the meaning of this independence defined by hatts and treaties in all cases. In addition, the interest

¹ Bulwer - Russell, 6 August '62, PRO.30/22 90, and see Bulwer - Russell, 27 June '62 Tele. FO.78/1644, and Bulwer - Russell, 9 July '62, PRO.30/22 90.

² Bulwer-Russell, 26 July '59, FO.78/1637.

³ Though Bulwer did not explain his notions in detail, evidently he gradually reacted to a difficult situation by substituting in his own mind sovereignty for integrity in the phrase 'the maintenance of Turkish integrity'. It was a legalistic approach, a rationalising of weakness, and in the circumstances, very intelligent.

of certain Powers made more urgent the question of the growth in national feeling among the Balkan races. A sensible interpretation of the treaties would quiet the provinces. The great object, the elevation of the importance of Turkey, could readily be achieved, Bulwer thought, by a generous attitude towards those treaties which governed the Sultan's relations with his vassals. By allowing the latter to develop in peace and without embarrassment to the Empire as a whole, foreign intrigue and violent nationalism would be nullified. The circumstances which encouraged both would have disappeared.

In the Principalities, for example, the issue at stake was not whether the Roumanians should be unified in a national state, but rather should the Roumanian people be allowed with impunity to provoke international tensions. Bulwer did not object to unity as such, which he thought to be neither here nor there, but rather to letting the Roumanians defy treaties, and the wishes of the Porte and the Powers. Should national unity be a desirable end, which he doubted, Bulwer was for granting it immediately and with independence. Otherwise the Porte, as he foresaw, was going to be humiliated, and the Powers periodically thrown into a state of disturbance; friction between France and England would be persistent, while the upshot would be the predominance of France or Russia, not only in that area but throughout the empire. In February 1859 he was recommending:

'...standing firmly by the late Convention¹, inducing the Porte to propose modifications in it under the proviso that the execution of the Convention thus modified will be clearly provided for by a special arrangement as to intervention, or the total abrogation of the guarantee of

1. Convention of 19 Aug. 1859 determining fresh elections for the Divans ad hoc which would express the wishes of the inhabitants.

the Convention in favour of much extended concessions as may give the Principalities at once all that they desire; and which if neither restrained nor satisfied they will assuredly seek to obtain'.¹

In Serbia, which Bulwer feared would be only too easily affected by the evil example of the Roumanians, Bulwer was quick to advise his government that it would be wise for both it and the Porte to give as great a latitude as possible to the Servians in their choice of rules and the framing of their institutions. It was not a subject of great importance that the election of Milosh might involve independence for Serbia. The question did not present itself to Bulwer in those terms. He assumed the Porte could be persuaded to use tact and discretion in its relations with the various vassals, Milosh included, and give them no cause for feeling the Sultan's suzerainty to be irksome. The Porte was obliged by its treaties just as much as the vassal states, and should in the difficult circumstances give them a generous interpretation. What was of greatest importance, as Bulwer saw it, was the prospect of the Powers' constant interference in Turkey's internal affairs, the results of which were so evident in the Principalities. With characteristic over-simplification Bulwer posed the problem to Malmesbury:

'If the Porte can resist the Milosh family it is by the present reigning family. All other combinations seem to me mere intrigues. Milosh would soon lose his popularity if accepted; but his family may become a national watchword for Independence if he is refused. This Government, however, seems disposed to the deposition of Prince Alexander, and refusal of Milosh, and establishment of a Kaimacamie, and appeal to the guaranteeing powers: thus losing its identity by referring everything to foreign interference, which if hostile defeats its

¹. Bulwer - Malmesbury, 22 February 1859, FO.78/1423.

immediate object, and if friendly, destroys its Sovereign independence and individual prestige'.¹

Bulwer's thinking in 1862 in the next Servian crisis was along similar lines. It was important that the Turks and not the Serbs should determine which works were necessary for the defence of the Belgrade citadel. The Porte could have no motive for locking up in Belgrade a larger force than was necessary, so Bulwer would reason. This being the case there was plenty of room for compromise, and the Sultan might be maintained still in his suzerain rights, and the Serbs might be pacified by the settlement of other details in their favour.

A similar attitude conditioned his thinking on Montenegrin issues 1861-2 when, though instructed to keep a silence on the topic, Bulwer hoped the Porte would have the sense to give the mountaineers an outlet to the Sea, and some territory for which the Prince would do homage and, needless to say, for which the Prince would be everlastingly grateful to the Porte.²

Concerning Egypt the official line emphasised the need to maintain the connection between the Sultanate and Egypt. Bulwer, on the other hand, strained to have Egypt treated as if it were as independent as in fact it was, and to have its rulers paid the respect it was in British interests to pay them. Naturally the Viceroy would repay this attention by placing himself in a more agreeable relationship with his suzerain.³ At least Bulwer was hopeful of such a result until his prolonged stay in Egypt (Jan-July

¹•Bulwer-Malmesbury, 26 December '58, FO.78/1352. See below Ch. IV p. .

²•See below Ch. IV, p. 196.

³•See below Ch. V, p. 260.

'65), when he at last acknowledged:

'As to Turkey indeed, she has now but a faint interest in Egypt. She is here a shadow'. 1

Then, having seen the fruits of his previous year's efforts to bring the Porte and the Viceroy together, wasted by the nerveless diplomacy of the Porte at Paris, he decided the only way to remedy the weakness springing from the Porte's and the Viceroy's subordination to France, was for Britain to state bluntly to the French government that it could not allow the fate of Egypt to be controlled solely by France. Cowley's agreement to the French demand for a French representative on the Commission, which was to decide how much land the Canal Company was to have along the Canal banks, incensed Bulwer who had suggested that a Commission be composed of representatives of the Viceroy, the Porte and the Company. He could hardly refrain from directly criticising Russell:

'I should never have admitted in the eyes of the world and the East that France had in the matter a greater interest than England...we may be compromising by diplomacy what we shall subsequently be obliged to contend for at the point of a bayonet'. 2

However, by this late date Bulwer had long been aware of the ineffectiveness of his notions. From the early Summer of 1864 when developments in the Dedicated Convents Question were at a critical stage,³ when the Lebanon settlement was due for reconsideration, and when the Porte and the Viceroy were dancing to a tune called by the French piper, Bulwer's earlier pessimism had soured into irascibility, an admission of failure. The tentative alignment of Austria with

1. Bulwer-Russell, 26 April '65, PRO. 30/22 93.

2. Bulwer-Russell, *ibid.*

3. See below, Ch. IV, p. 188, n. 1.

Russia and France over Montenegro in the Winter of 1862-3, had become in the Spring of '64 an Austro-Russian alignment over the Syrian and Dedicated Convents questions. Drouyn de Lluys, French Foreign Minister, anxious lest there might be a direct Russian interference in the Principalities, caused Moustier to be obstinate in the committees on the Convents, and later to be more conciliatory, in the hope that in one way or another a settlement between the Convents and Couza might be quickly brought about. Perhaps, too, it was already suspected that French predominance at Constantinople was slipping away. Moustier overplayed his part. Bulwer wrote of him:

'Apart from the usual obliquities and presumptions of a French diplomatist, Moustier is par excellence a *casuist* who can never look at any matter in a plain straightforward way, and constantly undertakes to show you that a horse-chestnut and a chestnut horse are one and the same thing'.¹

At first Bulwer resented the 'bullying of the French, on all matters', which made it 'necessary to show every now and then that we are not all miel or disposed to let the flies eat us up'.² He warned A'ali that he should march in step with him if the Porte wanted his approval on Egyptian affairs.³ Yet Bulwer soon learned that Moustier's performance was not directed towards him. It reflected his fears of Austrian and Russian action in the Principalities.⁴ Owing to Fuad Pasha's unfortunate position between the two obstinate parties, Bulwer had to take his part, less from

¹•Bulwer-Russell, 16 March '64, PRO. 30/22 93.

²•Bulwer-Russell, 24 March '64, *ibid*.

³•Bulwer-Russell, *ibid*.

⁴•Bulwer-Russell, *ibid*.

inclination - though Moustier certainly provoked him - than to support Turkish authority, which, in the struggle, seemed likely to be dispensed with.¹ In the event Bulwer and Russell were forced to admit that there was no British interest involved, and policy altered accordingly. The deeper feelings, however, betrayed that Bulwer was simply recognising his own helplessness to effect anything.² Jean Alecsandri, in a letter to Couza reporting on his mission to Paris and London to persuade these two governments to see Couza's coup d'etat in a favourable light, expressed astonishment at the strength of feeling shown by Russell and Palmerston at Couza's policies. Though Russell tended to be restrained and politic, Palmerston launched into a tirade. On the Convents question he declared:

'He (Couza) has despoiled the Orthodox Patriarchs of their legitimate properties by acts which, in civil law, would have received the condemnation of the courts, and which in the eyes of the guaranteeing Powers have been equally signs of an unprincipled policy (une politique sans probité).' 3

Though by August the problem had been narrowed down to a matter of how much indemnity the Principalities should pay the Convents,⁴ still Couza's inability to co-operate worried Bulwer because of the false position it placed the Porte in and therefore himself.

'What is the Porte to do?' he queried. 'She cannot please the Convents and please the Principalities, any more than she can please France and Russia'. 5

More and more Bulwer looked to a withdrawal from the business.⁶

¹ Bulwer-Russell, 24 March '64, *ibid.*

² See below, Ch. IV, p. 186.

³ ~~Bulwer-Russell~~, *op. cit.* Palmerston - Alecsandri, cf. P. Henry, *L'Abdication*, p. 122.

⁴ Bulwer-Russell, 17 Aug. '64, PRO.30/22 93.

⁵ Bulwer-Russell, 16 Oct. /93 - PRO.30/22 93

⁶ Bulwer-Russell, 12 and 16 Oct. '64, PRO.30/22 93.

The occasion to review the Lebanon settlement and, if necessary, to provide another Governor, stimulated a similar grouping: France vehement against Austria and Russia, and the Porte too hard pressed to be able to take a middle course such as had provided Bulwer, on other occasions, with his small triumphs. Bulwer wrote:

'I should say, as to the affairs of Syria, that the French will keep Daoud if they can, since, in spite of the praise of Eldridge⁺ who is in his pocket, he is the best agent France can have: and he and Hecquart and Outrey⁺⁺ are gaining over all the populations as against the Turks'.¹

Austria and Russia were anxious to see this Armenian Catholic Governor, the French protégé, replaced. But the situation allowed no room for manoeuvre, and it was easier to let things remain as they were.²

Finally, all hope of reforming Turkey had gone. The obstacles in the way of reform loomed even more hugely than before. European loans had accomplished little, and the administration remained as inefficient as it was when Bulwer first arrived on the scene. He had always advocated the concentration of authority: now, despairing, he suggested dividing the Empire up into four or five autonomous provinces. He argued:

'The only possible mode of introducing order is by dividing European Turkey into four or five divisions with a semi-central Government in each, thus relieving the Porte from the business it never attends to, and constituting on general principles, subject to some local modification, a new system of taxation and administrations.'

He then went on to make a serious admission:

¹. Bulwer-Russell, 14 April '64, *ibid*.

². Bulwer-Russell, April-June several, *ibid*. In June '64 Daoud was appointed for another five years.

+ English Consul. ++ French Consuls.

'Economy beyond a certain point is impossible in a great Empire, surrounded in Europe by military states and in Asia by warlike and nomadic tribes. What Turkey has to do as the sole condition of her existence is to seek for revenue, and work it out of the improved and improvable condition of the country. A plan of this kind cannot even be attempted under the existing organization'.¹

What Bulwer said, that the concern was too large and unwieldy and indefensible, was substantially what Gladstone and Salisbury would be thinking in the late '70s.² Oddly enough, Bulwer had never been very enthusiastic about the prospects of Turkish reform.³ Further the paternal policies, even if he had been given the opportunity to enforce them, would have depended for their successful application on harmony between the Powers, if not on the good-will of the local rulers in the Balkans, the Lebanon and Egypt. Bulwer had never been deluded on the first score.⁴ Yet, during the years 1858-63, when, judging from his activity and general reports, he appears to have been inspired by a quiet assumption that he would achieve some modest successes congenial to his ideas, there was always a peculiar inhibition which prevented his ever resolving the tension between what was and what might be.

Couza's domestic troubles, Prince Michael's need to be assured that he could pursue a provocative policy with impunity, the weakness of Montenegro before a determined Turkey, and Said's need for money, these and other considerations implanted in Bulwer's mind a false appreciation of the importance of European good-will

¹. Bulwer-Russell, 28 April '64, PRO.30/22 93.

². cf. Life of Robert, Marquis of Salisbury, Vol. II, 85-87

³. See below, Ch. III.

⁴. He almost certainly did not consider the second point important.

to the provincial rulers. Unfortunately^{too} for Bulwer, Constantinople was the most conspicuous centre for the rivalries of the Powers, and his policy depended on their co-operation. It was to give the provinces considerable autonomy in internal affairs; to reduce as much as possible the interference of the Sultan; and thereby to secure the friendship of these provinces, which would then make common cause with the Sultan in defending the integrity of the Empire. It was a policy conceived in a paternal spirit; to inculcate afresh into the provinces, not at an awkward stage in their development like the difficult adolescent, the necessary duty of filial respect. Whatever might be said about this policy, that it was an illiberal one is a criticism which may not apply for it would be an over-simplification. That it was too idealistic is a valid criticism. Bulwer was not quick to react to changes in the international situation which he was nevertheless quick to see.¹

Such factors never induced Bulwer to modify his vision of a multi-

¹. During the Italian war Bulwer sensed the slight unease of the Russian representative at French policy. He wrote to Malmesbury, 21 June '59, PRO.30/22 88: 'I have thought that I have lately observed some symptoms of difference between Count Lallemand and Prince Lobanoff', and to Russell, 20 July '59, *ibid*: 'The swift and decided successes of the French army here have evidently taken the Court of St. Petersburg, as other parties by surprise'. Again, after the eventful Winter of 1859-60, Bulwer wrote, perhaps with too much emphasis: 'Here it would be perhaps wrong to judge from appearance, but I should say Austria and Russia seem less adverse and Russia and France less friendly'. Bulwer-Russell, 28 Feb. *ibid*. Bulwer's comments on Prussian activities were uniformly critical and resentful, e.g. Bulwer-Russell, 28 Feb '60, *ibid*: 'The Prussian Minister here, Goltz, 'tho I do not dislike him personally, he is too evidently in all matters Russian, and I ought to say that so are all the second rate Prussian functionaries in these countries'. Bulwer obviously sensed those tensions in the Prussian-French-Russian relationship which Bismarck would so easily exploit later. There are numerous letters on the same theme and on the growing intimacy between Prussia and Russia. Bulwer advised a connection with France to counter the Russian attraction (Bulwer-Russell, 25 July, *op. cit.*). These and similar comments reflected the practical working out of the fair degree of co-operation between Russell and Thouvenel
cont...

racial Rechtstaat. Apparently, for a time he hoped it would come to pass in spite of these rivalries.

However, this is entirely to do with the intellectual basis of Bulwer's attitudes. His actions and his practical suggestions were always imbued with a pronounced pessimism, even quite early in his Embassy. In 1860 he was writing:

'What I confess I am most afraid of, is this Empire slipping away, as it were, by degrees, the consequence of successive incidents, over the guidance of which we should have no control. ...the defence of Turkey is confided to the hands of a body, the greater portion of which is, perhaps, predisposed to destroy it, and its prolonged existence depends upon so great and so prompt a change in its internal condition as it requires no common degree of energy to produce, and no common hopefulness to expect.' 1.

Further, Austrian influence had been 'annihilated',² and in any case she wavered in her policy. When an idea of Bulwer's was acquiesced in by Russia and France, the Porte immediately suspected it.³ These considerations made Bulwer emphasise haste in coming to the Porte's aid with a loan, and made him occasionally remind Russell of the necessity of his getting the Powers to agree on something or of:

'taking a separate line with her (Turkey), by saying clearly, "We will support you against such and such contingencies, providing you do such and such things"; making it evident to the Turks that they must do what we tell them to do, and assuring them that if they do, they may then rely upon us'. 4

(N.1, p.66, conts) in the affairs of the Balkans, and at the same time the consistent preoccupation with breaking the Franco-Russian alignment. (eg. Russell-Bulwer, 26 April '61, FO.78/1560, and Bulwer-Russell, PRO 30/22 88 1 May '61).

1. Bulwer-Russell, 16 Nov. '60, FO.78/1637.

2. Bulwer-Russell, 22 Jan. '61, *ibid*.

3. Bulwer-Russell, *ibid*.

4. Bulwer-Russell, 22 Jan '61, PRO.30/22 88.

This pessimism did not have the astringent affect on Malmesbury's and Russell's extraordinary detachment which, perhaps, Bulwer may have hoped.

When Turkey was not seriously and directly threatened by Russia, a British Foreign Minister had always to consider, unlike his ambassador, the latent hostility in England to Turkish rule over the Christian races. During Bulwer's embassy there was also considerable irritation, shared by Russell himself, at the thought of the large sums of money which were being poured into the Sultan's coffers.¹ The absence of a direct Russian threat naturally encouraged the Liberal Ministry not to be violent over Eastern issues, though, of course, Gladstone and Russell, as members of Palmerston's ministry quietly accepted the general lines of policy based on the experience of preceding years. This was despite Gladstone's and Russell's espousal of anti-Turkish policies, in their support of Moldo-Wallachian union and the construction of the Suez Canal, when they were out of power.² No amount of fatalism on the part of an ambassador could persuade a government to change from a known policy to one untried; certainly nothing could make it attempt what it had not the power to accomplish. There was, too, something to be

¹. See Hansard Vol. 171, p. 136, for a characteristic debate, a remarkable feature of which was the brilliance of Cobden in utterly confounding the House with statistics and logic in support of his thesis, which was that Turkey would collapse as soon as western capitalists ceased to participate in Near Eastern floatations. The irritation partly resulted from the feeling that since they were financing the Empire they were also responsible for its good government. See Hansard Vol. 171, May-June 1863 from p. 6, for an especially good illustration of this point.

². Hansard Vol. 150, 44-104, for a debate on Union in 1857; and Hansard Vol. 150, 1360 for debate on the Canal. Even Disraeli favoured its construction.

said for the maintenance of traditional policy, while, unobtrusively, the practical alterations and adjustments were made by the man on the spot. No matter how great the odds against Britain, or how futile might appear the orthodox line, no statesman could have afforded to advertise Britain's withdrawal from the Near Eastern arena. New changes and fresh European alignments might once again offer new opportunities.

In the event, during Bulwer's embassy, the Empire did slip away by degrees; and Bulwer could do nothing other than negotiate over the details when the substance had already been achieved by the discontented party, Prince, Viceroy, a Company, or a whole people. The succeeding chapters will illustrate this point.

CHAPTER III

Reform

Bulwer's approach to the general question of the reform of the Turkish Empire was conditioned by the needs of British diplomacy, especially in the years 1860-61, and by Bulwer's awareness that little could be done to save the Empire. It is clear he did not understand, any more than his contemporaries did, the enormity of the task which confronted the few enlightened Turks who were trying to modernise their country. It will be useful here to glance at the history of the Turkish reform movement in order to see Bulwer's ideas in their proper perspective.

The basic difficulties in the way of real and lasting reforms sprang from the manner in which Turkey had been obliged to tackle the problem of military weakness. The initial impulse had come, late in the day, from defeat at the hands of Russia, 1770-74. During the ensuing years, witnessing the apparent disintegration of their realm in Asia and Europe, Sultan Selim III, 1798-1807, and more notably Mahmud II, 1808-39, had turned to Western military ideas in the hope of improving Ottoman fighting strength and of modernising tactics. The immediate need was a military one. However, military reform involved administrative, financial and social changes, for a professional fighting force on a western model was expensive, and, since it was a western model, the long-established habits of the ruling caste had to be changed. Mahmud, seeking to achieve his ends by concentrating all power in his own hands, broke

the resistance of those privileged groups determined to defend the old ways.¹ To reinforce the central government, and in the hope of obtaining an increased revenue, certain drastic administrative reforms were carried out. By 1839, the year of the Hatti-Scheriff of Gulhané, or Law of Tanzimat,² the tempo had speeded up under Reschid Pasha, chiefly because the urgent need was to impress the Western Powers, whose alliance Reschid looked for to counter the threat from Mehemet Ali of Egypt. Yet, though the work of subjugating the Asian provinces went forward successfully, by 1850, Kurdistan, the provinces of Syria, Armenia, Erzeroum, Mosul, and Bagdad having been secured by Turkish arms or European diplomacy; and the army reorganised in 1843; and fresh measures taken to improve provincial administration and to make the revenues more productive, by the time the Crimean war had broken out the results of so much effort by a few progressive individuals were very disappointing from the Western point of view.

How far Reschid's ruthless suppression of corruption had really affected traditional ways had to be judged from the collusion of Turkish officials with the marauding Druses, in 1841 and 1845, in the massacres of the Maronites. Though the western model of army service had been adopted, -five years in active service (Nizam), and seven years in the regional reserves (Redif), this creating a standing army of 120,000 regulars- it meant no more than a change of forms. Officer cadres there were none. A general staff, a supplies and medical system, transport, all the services and administrative

¹. The details of this background account are from Engelhardt - La Turquie et le Tanzimat, Vol. 1.

². Text in Holland - The European Concert in the Eastern Question: p.323.

expertise upon which the western army depended, were non-existent.

To summarise, the half-century prior to the Crimean war witnessed an attempt, at first on the part of a Sultan, then of a few ministers around the Sultan carrying on the Mahmudian tradition, to centralise administration, to increase revenue, and for the sake of the west, to liberalise institutions, practices and manners. When the war broke out Turkey was in dire financial straits, its administration was in a chaotic state, the local officials corrupt, weak, or bewildered because of the new local councils' constant interference, and finally the Mussulman population was restive. For all the frock coats, fezes and black boots some of the officials wore, Turkish reform remained pretty much at the chrysalis stage. Great principles had been announced in the Law of Tanzimat¹ which declared that new institutions must have reference to three ideas:

1. The guarantees which ensure our subjects a perfect security as to life, honour, and property;
2. A regular mode of assessment and of collection of taxes;
3. An equally regular system for recruitment and determining the duration of service. 2

But a whole complex of difficulties prevented these aspirations from being realised. A society so removed from the days of its pristine vigour, and whose vitality had depended on the continuance of war, how could it be rejuvenated by a handful of men at odds with the whole of society, Mussulman and rayah, and, more immediately, with the forces behind the Sovereign, the harim and the favourites? The problem was bigger than anyone imagined. An industrial and agricultural revolution

¹. The word meant orders or organisation.

². See Holland, p.323.

directed by a powerful leader were the bases for successful reform.¹ Only by these means could Turkey have overcome the serious disadvantages arising from underpopulation and a lack of cheap credit facilities.² Further, the drain on Turkish manpower continued, for the army preserved its exclusive Islam character, drawing constantly on the cream of Turkish manhood while the non-Mussulmans prospered and increased.

Even before the period 1854-65,³ which might conveniently be described the prelude to European financial control, Turkey was being undermined by Western economic penetration.⁴ The advent of the steamer naturally changed the trade routes to their former horizontal direction across the Mediterranean. It was an event which might have revived the Levant, but for two conditions. One was the Anglo-Turkish commercial Treaty of 1838 which formed the basis of subsequent treaties between Turkey and other European Powers. The other was the capitulatory regime. By the first, in lieu of the various duties on goods on entry and in transit, Turkey imposed a flat

¹. See Toynbee - A Study of History, Vol. VIII, p.249.

². See Pavet de Courteille et Ubicini - Etat present de l'Empire Ottoman, p .19-20. The non-Mussulman races increased in numbers, but this merely underlined the problem. In 1866 there would be about 28½ million people in the Empire, more than half of whom were non-Mussulman, and of the 13 millions of the conquering race only 2 millions were to be found in European Turkey. The rest were in Asia Minor. Toynbee, Vol. II, 228, emphasises that the Turks were originally a handful of refugees amongst an Orthodox Christian people whom it was their policy to assimilate. They had only imperfectly succeeded in this.

³. From the first loan from the West to the general conversion of the public debt.

⁴. See Woodward - War and Peace in Europe, 1815-70: 'It is possible to see most clearly in the Near East the disastrous effects of the policy of laissez-faire and the transition between the earlier and later developments of the century. Here on the fringes of Europe and the borderland of western civilisation some measure of international control was most necessary'.

rate of 3% 'ad valorem' on all imports, leaving the internal duties on her own produce as they were and adding an extra 9% export duty on such produce. As Puryear puts it, 'the foreign problem was how to extend "the most favoured nation" idea until it placed foreign merchants on a "most favoured subject" status'.¹ The implications for British trade were far-reaching, especially after the repeal of the Corn Laws in 1846. By 1851 imports of Turkish grain had risen from a negligible quantity in 1838 to equal those from Russia. The consequences for Turkey were disastrous. As she paid her creditors with products valued in their own currency, the returns on the nation's exports were reduced, for the exchange was always against her.² Turned into a veritable free-trade area, the first step towards economic dependence on the West had been taken. So restricted by Treaty, also by the same measure denied valuable revenues from its former monopolies, the Porte was forever denied the opportunity of encouraging home industries.³ In time of war it would not be able to raise extra revenues from the customs. Further, owing to the tremendous physical obstacles, not to mention the internal duties, in the way of internal trade, cereals

1. International Economics and Diplomacy in the Near East, p.122.

2. Bailey - British Policy and the Turkish Reform Movement, p 77-8.

3. See Toynbee and Kirkwood - Turkey, p.50: 'It is true that the level of productivity and the volume of foreign trade increased as the 19th century advanced; but this increase was due to the efforts of the subject Christian elements and of Western entrepreneurs rather than to the efforts of Turks and Egyptians'. In short, by reason of their exemption from army service, their greater industry, their financial strength and business acumen, the Greeks, Armenians, Jews, and certain privileged communities like the Maronites of Syria, were bound to reap what few advantages there were to be had from this dependence on those Western countries increasingly in need of grain.

and other foods tended to leave the country, thus reducing Turkey's self-supporting capacity, and, other things being equal, making its incorporation into the Western economy a matter of time. More to be apprehended, the day was not too distant when because of this treaty Turkey would be dependent on the Western money markets - as the Turks certainly realised.¹

The second condition, the capitulatory system, likewise diminished the real possibilities for reform.² Foreigners under this regime were exempted from all taxes except the export and import duties. As they - or the protégés -³ had the biggest share of the trade in their own hands, the loss to the Turkish revenue was incalculable. Indigenous merchants who were unable to obtain

¹ See F.S. Rodkey, 'Ottoman Concern About Western Penetration in the Levant, 1849-56', J.M.H. vol. XXX, no.4 Dec. '58, p.348: '(the Turks) had to be on guard against Western economic penetration of the Levant, as well as against the political and military challenge of the Russians. As a result, the Ottomans moved circumspectly in making commitments to the West for loans - the 'sine qua non' of reforms and of active participation in the Crimean war - and especially in the years 1849-50'. See Puryear - International Economies, p.104: 'Turkey, therefore, later became a borrowing power'.

² The juridical significance of it will be discussed in connection with Bulwer's views on reform. See P.M. Brown, 'The Capitulations', Foreign Affairs, Vol. I, 72: 'The regime of the Capitulations has sometimes been characterised inaccurately as one of ex-territoriality, implying that foreigners by a legal fiction were on their own territory and subject only to their own laws. (They are) more correctly to be characterised as immunities of jurisdiction such as were subsequently conceded to other foreigners'. In fact, the privileged position of foreigners and protégés was such that the former definition more accurately describes how the system worked in practice.

The Sultan after 1535 had granted as a favour certain 'capitula' or articles, primarily to encourage the commercial development of Turkey with the help of foreign assistance. Privileges had to be granted then to attract western entrepreneurs. As the Sultan also regulated his own tariff and was feared too much for his favours to be abused, the system benefited his realm until the Ottoman Empire began to decline.

³ A dissatisfied subject could become a subject of a foreign power by obtaining a passport from a consul. It was not difficult, if a man were rich enough, to acquire one. A common Greek practice was simply to send a son abroad to set up a branch of the family business.

foreign protection could not compete on such unfair terms, so that what little home industry struggled on in the early part of the century disappeared. Moreover they could hardly succeed against the low prices of western manufactures. Enjoying tax-free the few municipal amenities a town might provide, perhaps, even, through a legal fiction possessing property in Turkey, for which however the fictitious owner had to pay a tax, foreigners had become a liability to the Empire.

There were other reasons, which Bulwer would have to concentrate on,¹ why the Empire grew weaker, but the ones above indicate the radical causes of the failure of the reforming movement. The Empire, already exploited by the West, could not afford to pay for its new army.² The concomitant administrative reforms outran the amount of administrative talent available. Islam society reacted strongly against the subversion of its culture, and the old order became reactionary as it was forced on to the defensive. Least important in view of the other considerations, too much depended on too few which would become more apparent on the accession of the wayward Sultan Abdul Aziz in 1861.

The Palmerstonian belief, therefore, was a mistaken one, that fiscal, administrative and military reforms would revitalise the Empire. It was a mistaken assumption also, that Turkey was capable of administrative reform without a constitutional revolution. In the 'thirties Palmerston had thought the Sultan Mahmud the living proof that Turkey could be given a new lease of life without any radical

¹ Clearly a diplomatist had no business to be pressing for violent change.

² Hence it was unfortunate, though inevitable, that westernization had to begin with the army. See Toynbee - Study, Vol. VIII, 249.

constitutional change.¹ However, long before the outbreak of the war, even Palmerston had come to realise that it was impolitic and pointless to press for any 'great or aggregate system of reform'.² 'The great game of improvement is altogether up for the present', commented Stratford de Redcliffe, by which he meant that as far as British foreign policy was concerned the subject should be avoided.³

During Bulwer's embassy neither Russell nor his ambassador showed any awareness of the fundamental issues mentioned above. Yet, their comments on the subject of Turkish reform betrayed a pessimism indicative of what they actually expected. They did not even expect the Turks to overcome what they took to be the difficulties in the way of the Empire's salvation. As Bulwer put it, the continued existence of Turkey 'depends upon so great and so prompt a change in its internal condition as it requires no common degree of energy to produce, and no common hopefulness to expect'.⁴ Further, in the diplomatic context⁵ there was little to be done except to check any Russian attempt to embarrass the Porte on the subject. The Porte itself, now a member of the European Concert resented any

¹ Since, in any case, the integrity of Turkey had become an important factor in British foreign policy, constitutional reform, even if feasible - which was doubtful owing to the limited number of capable men - was dangerous and consequently not to be encouraged.

² Temperley - England and the Near East, p.242.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Bulwer - Russell, 16 Nov. '60, FO.78/1637.

⁵ See above, Chapter II, p.54.

attempted interference in its domestic concerns.¹ This situation forced upon Bulwer the policy he would have to pursue. It would mean that his influence, likewise that of the French ambassador,

¹. The very manner in which the Turks had conceded the famous Hatti-Humayoun of 18 February 1856 illustrated their sensitivity on this score. Stratford had tried to substitute for the pledges to Russia before the war a pledge to all the European Powers that rayahs should be given full rights of citizenship. See Rodkey, 'Ottoman Concern about Western Penetration in the Levant, 1849-56', J.M.H. no.4 Dec. 1958, Vol. XXX, 352. Only with great difficulty was the compromise solution embodied in Article 9 of the Treaty of Paris agreed upon. By this, 'The Contracting Powers recognise the high value of this communication (i.e. the Hatti-Humayoun). It is clearly understood that it cannot, in any case, give to the said Powers the right to interfere, either collectively or separately, in the relations of His Majesty the Sultan with his subjects, nor in the internal administration of his Empire.' The old shibboleths were repeated in that Firman for the comfort of Turkey's allies - just as the edict of 1839 had been part of a diplomatic manoeuvre. Article 1 reaffirmed the validity of the ideals of Gulhané and Article 8 stated explicitly that, 'Any word or expression or appellation tending to render one class of my subjects inferior to another, by reason of religion, language or race, are forever abolished and effaced from administrative protocol'. See Holland, p.329 for text of the Firman. Apart from these and similar ones emphasising the equality of treatment to be handed out in judicial tribunals (Art. 16), educational institutions (Art. 15), and the civil and military schools of the government (Art. 13), the clauses more likely to cause difficulties in the near future were those pertaining to the millet system, taxation, and the possession of property by foreigners, to the establishing of banks and a reform of the monetary system. How the Porte tried to fulfil its promises on these subjects will be seen above. It is sufficient to remark here, with regard to property, that alterations in the laws affecting property holding were so closely linked with the Porte's desire to change the capitulatory system that the subject was not seriously tackled. The Porte could hardly have allowed foreigners to own lands without their being subject to Ottoman laws. See Article 28, Treaty of Paris. As for the reforms to be effected in the organisation of the non-Mussulman communities, the millets, and in their relations with the Sovereign power, these were naturally a subject entirely outside the scope of foreign interference. The greatest obstacle in the way of the development of fresh ideas was, after the ignorance of the mass of Muslims, the Greek Orthodox Church, a state within the State. It would take the Bulgarian agitation of the years 1860-1 to induce it to agree to a new organisation in 1862, this despite its propaganda and appeals abroad. See Engelhardt, p.146. This reform topped in importance even the establishment of the Imperial Ottoman Bank in 1863.

would be limited to financial questions on which he would be able to offer his advice with some effect. Thus, the following account of Bulwer's contribution to British policy on reform will be mainly concerned with his ideas. It will show him to have been a keen observer, and willing to accept the logic of his situation. A loan guaranteed by France and Britain, Bulwer would reason, would enable Turkey to overcome its temporary indebtedness, provided Turkish finances were supervised by a European commission. This was the first step. Then, as Turkey could not reform its administration owing to the lack of capable men, its government must employ Europeans - a condition of a loan - in all branches of the administration. The natural corollary of this would be the abolition or drastic revision of the capitulations. In short, he considered European interference 'should either be direct, clear, and effective for fixed objects, or altogether avoided'.¹ 'All indirect and inefficient interference', he went on, 'will do harm rather than good'.²

Briefly, his notions on Turkish reform and the actual policy he implemented put Bulwer's embassy at the end³ of that phase of British policy begun in 1830, and made it the tentative beginning of a development which would be dramatised in 1881 with establishment of European control of the finances.

The first occasion for the Powers to be concerned at the lack of Turkish initiative in working out reforms was in the late months of

¹ Bulwer-Russell, 12 Nov. '60, FO.78/1513.

² Ibid.

³ Engelhardt, p.221. In the Near Eastern crisis of 1867 Britain abstained from broaching the subject of reform and invited the other Powers to follow her example.

1858. The excessive issue of paper money in the war, and its gradual depreciation, had caused a critical situation after the peace. Discontent focussed on the Sultan. Bulwer noted 'the serious causes for alarm in the state of the public mind'. Unfortunately the ministers lacked the courage 'to make it known to His Majesty the dangers, that were to be apprehended from a persistence in the system of reckless extravagance which has been, especially for the last two years, pursued'.¹ Bulwer and Thouvenel who, despite Moldo-Wallachian difficulties, tended to act together on the subject of consular pretensions² in the provinces and kindred affairs, obliged A'ali to present a memoir to the Sultan³. Subsequently, the Sultan issued an edict curtailing the expenses of his Household.⁴ He explained to Bulwer that he had just been informed of the extravagance of his Court.⁵ Yet despite the ambassadors' efforts, the relatives

¹. Bulwer-Malmesbury, 18 Aug. 1858, FO.78/1366.

². A certain scepticism coloured Bulwer's attitude to consuls and their efforts. Consequently he tried to restrict the scope of their activities. The example of De Redcliffe, always energetic in keeping the Porte on its toes, had left an evil legacy. It was Bulwer's policy to bring his agents more immediately under his surveillance. The idea behind it was to enhance Turkish authority. See Bulwer-Malmesbury, 28 Aug. '58 FO.78/1367: 'The Consular body indeed, though animated by the best intentions, is, generally speaking, a little too apt to assume the powers which more properly belong to the local Governments, and to depreciate their means of performing the governing functions with which they are entrusted'. Malmesbury - Bulwer, 11 Nov. '58, FO 78/1352, accepted all Bulwer's suggestions providing the usual system of consular correspondence was carried on.

³. Bulwer-Malmesbury, 20 July '58 FO.78/1365, speaks of the 'understanding M. Thouvenel and myself have come to, that in all matters which seem properly to admit of it, we should act as much as possible in concert'.

⁴. Bulwer-Malmesbury, 18 Aug. '58 FO.78/1366. See Engelhardt, p.156-7.

⁵. Bulwer-Malmesbury, 19 Aug. '58 FO.78/1350. This latest edict is in Bulwer-Malmesbury, 27 Aug. FO.78/1367. It expressed characteristically penitent sentiments: 'Numerous unnecessary disbursements, delapidations, donations, and salaries have occupied the place of such useful and fruitful outlays (on reforms), whilst even Ministers of State, plunging into extravagance beyond their means, have contributed to impoverish the public Exchequer'.

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quickly returned to office, and Bulwer, exasperated, considered it 'all fatal to the Sultan's character and public affairs' and consequently a 'swindle upon English bondholders'.¹ He expressed the hope that English officers be withdrawn from the Turkish navy to teach the Sultan a lesson,² and that Malmesbury should insist on the reconstruction of the Ottoman Ministry as Bulwer proposed.³ 'A resolute stand must be made against a combination of tricksters', he declared.⁴ The advice did not receive a ready hearing in London and the upshot was that Bulwer had learned his real function. He could only be little more than a commentator. He might discuss schemes of reform with the Porte, and make suggestions, but the methods of Stratford were no longer in vogue. Also he had taken full measure of the Turkish ministers and their master, not appearing over-impressed by the combination, though for Fuad and A'ali Pashas individually he had great respect.⁵

'To give the abilities of these men their full value', he wrote, 'a firm, honest, and intelligent man should connect and control both. Were the Sultan such a man, things here would soon assume a different aspect, but, with good intentions as to things, his manner of dealing with persons is that of the Harem. He employs one man against the other... The union in his cabinet which would make

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1. Bulwer - Malmesbury, 22 October, FO.78/1369.
 2. Ibid.
 3. Bulwer - Malmesbury, 6 February '59 FO.78/1422.
 4. Ibid.
 5. Bulwer - Malmesbury, 2 February '59, FO.78/1428.

it powerful, would make it, in his opinion, dangerous'. 1

Unaided by his Government, Bulwer resorted to intrigue, successfully getting Safeti Pasha, 'Minister of Finance', dismissed.²

1. Exactly how essential A'ali and Fuad were it is impossible to know. The confidence of the Powers was their great asset. It is to be suspected that more than anything else this kept them in power most of the time in spite of intrigues by the fanatical party to get rid of them. Certainly they did little enough in the years 1856-59 to earn them the posthumous praise which has been accorded to them. See Engelhardt, p.156: 'Yet, while admitting the good intentions of A'ali and Fuad Pashas, it is justifiable to complain of the continuance of a system of government which, in centralising affairs in the hands of the chief of the State, left them at the mercy of his erratic will and the subterfuges of an entourage of intriguers'. This is simplified, perhaps; nevertheless, as Fuad had fought to keep his Sovereign's will absolute in internal affairs he and A'ali must share the blame for the apathy of the years 1856-9. They should have known what obstacles would have to be overcome to make the Sultan co-operate in their work. Apart from the counter-influence of the Harem and relatives, there was the friction in the reforming party. Riza Pasha and Mehemet Kibrisli lead the traditionalist group which wanted reform in small instalments. Reschid, A'ali, Fuad and their nominees at the European courts favoured more drastic measures, See Ubicini - La Turquie Actuelle, p.161. See also *ibid* p.168-9 and pp.177-182 for excellent pen sketches of Fuad and A'ali. From these it becomes clear that neither man had the right qualities for leading the country. Fuad's excessive *laissez-aller* attitude and A'ali's weak constitution reduced their effectiveness.
2. Bulwer-Malmesbury, 2 Feb. '59, FO.78/1428. Bulwer complained of his corruption. Bulwer-Malmesbury, 7 March FO.78/1429. The Minister of Finance was really the Treasurer. Bulwer evidently co-operated with the traditionalist faction to get rid of Safeti, likewise to have appointed the Mixed Financial Commission. See L. Thouvenel - Trois Années p.323-4. The French ambassador commented: 'Safeti Pasha, minister of finance, has given in his resignation as a consequence of Bulwer's intrigues. He knew Safeti to be stubborn, refusing to lend his hand to any underhand dealing. Mucktar Pasha has declined the honour of assuming control of the finances in the difficult circumstances in which they are at the moment... (the Sultan), his harem, and his entourage, were overjoyed with the opportunity to bring back Hassib. You know how detestable his administration was! He was the friend of Reschid...' From this and the comment that Bulwer had co-operated with Mehemet Ali, the Captain Pasha, it becomes evident that the British ambassador did not quietly accept the position Stratford bequeathed him - see above, Chapter II, p.44. Further, if all the men Bulwer and Thouvenel considered corrupt or inefficient had been exiled to Bagdad, only A'ali and Fuad would have been left in Constantinople.

This change he hoped would facilitate certain reforms he had been turning over in his mind, and which, during the next two years, he would develop at length in his despatches to Russell.¹ In view of the fact that, with the exception of the institution of a Conseil du Trésor, they were not translated into measures, to do justice to these ideas in the same generous manner of Bulwer, would be pointless. However, the following resumé may give a good idea of his line of thought.

Already Turkey was in the throes of the financial crisis which would only abate in the summer of 1862 with the withdrawal of most of the paper money. With the prospect of an Austro-French war before him Bulwer pressed the Porte to take measures to re-establish its credit.² The Mixed Commission had been suggested with this in view for to it, 'he wished to be immediately paid the customs at Constantinople, then in the Government hands, and which were pledged as a guarantee for the last loan raised in England'.³ This body would also have had the duty of paying the interest on that loan. He suggested a scheme for withdrawing some of the paper money, the caimés, with the aid of the above-mentioned loan, while with a part of the loan, he wished to constitute a 'sort of "caisse" or bank 'whose notes would have driven the devalued currency out of circulation. By a similar procedure in the provinces the debased metallic currency, he hoped, would be withdrawn. Thus the basis of the National Bank, envisaged in the Hatti-Humayoun, would have

¹. Safeti's dismissal heralded the appointment, entirely at Bulwer's instance, of a Commission 'for introducing reforms and improvements in the financial system of Turkey'. Bulwer-Malmesbury, 7 March FO.78/1429. The Commission would duly become the Conseil du Trésor

². Bulwer-Russell, 20 July, FO.78/1433.

³. Ibid.

been made. He added:

'It would be necessary, however, that the execution of such a scheme should be confided to able, honest, and experienced men such as could only be found in France, Germany or England'. 1

There was a great deal of public or ecclesiastical property which he believed ought to be put on the market instead of being left idle. A new loan ought to be obtained by allowing the Mixed Commission to collect additional taxes, and this would be used to facilitate additional monetary reforms. More money would be acquired, he thought, if each province had not to send revenues, in specie, all the way to Constantinople whence, in all probability, it would be transferred to another province to discharge its debts there. Though he expected no Turkish official could obtain as much from the revenues as the Armenians and Greeks did by the system of farming,² he wished the Turkish government would hand over certain pashaliks to Europeans who would operate them as 'model systems'. The most important suggestion was that the capitulations should be thoroughly examined 'with a view to lowering the duty on exports and raising that on imports, the latter to no great degree'. But, he warned, 'I would not recommend Europe to listen to Turkey on such questions, unless under circumstances that made it likely the temporary aid required would be permanently useful'.³ Bulwer meant that European supervision and control in the manner he had suggested must be effective before loans could be. Had his proposals been taken up he anticipated an improvement in the Government's credit and immediate gains to the Treasury by means

1. Ibid.

2. The ilitzams had been resumed at the same time as the Firman of 1852 had reinforced the authority of the local Valis. Mahmud's centralising measures had broken down.

3. Bulwer-Russell, 20 July.FO.78/1433.

of which the salaries of public servants would be increased, the army kept in a better condition, and certain public works begun.¹

In the ensuing months Bulwer continued to argue in this vein, concentrating on two things, a loan to release the Porte from its onerous short-term obligations to local bankers, and persuading Russell to reconsider the capitulatory system.² Yet it needed the stimulation of the discovery of a conspiracy against the Sultan to galvanise the Turkish ministers into making a display of energy.³ And that passed. Conceding the Sultan's tastes to be extravagant, Bulwer still felt that 'even the expensive tastes Abdul Medjid indulges in would be but of small importance, if the Porte would only introduce general order into its economy'.⁴ He and the other

1. Ibid.

2. Bulwer keenly felt the injustice of it, apart from believing it prevented the release of potential energies in the Turks. He remarked on foreigners' exemption from taxation: 'I cannot think it for a moment tenable that foreigners should have, in a country not theirs and which is independent, benefits the nature of which must be to place all the branches of native industry in their hands to the exclusion of the people of the country. I do not think such a pretension is consistent with the ordinary notions of justice or International Law, nor sustainable in the present state of public opinion in Europe'. Bulwer-Russell, 24 Aug. '59, FO.78/1434. Russell conceded that foreigners should be taxed and Turkish export tariffs lowered. Russell-Bulwer, 8 March '60, FO.78/2436.

3. As A'ali, Grand Vizir, and Fuad Pasha threatened to resign should the representatives address a collective Note on the need for reforms (Bulwer-Russell, 4 Oct. '59, FO.78/1637), the representatives, at Thouvenel's instance, merely addressed the Grand Vizier separately. See Engelhardt, p.158, on the conspiracy: 'I could prove that most of the high functionaries in the provinces were morally implicated in the movement prepared in the Capital'. Neither reactionary Turks nor progressive ones seemed to have inspired it. It was a blind reflex of popular discontent.

4. Bulwer-Russell, 14 Sept. FO.78/1637. Thouvenel disagreed entirely with this view, judging from his remarks in his letters to Paris. See Trois Années p.357-8, Thouvenel-Benedetti, (director of political affairs in the French Foreign Office): 'The Turks, who see the bottom of their treasury empty, begin to get restive, and I am present on a sad occasion, that of a penitent dying. In the East dead things stay up, and the Ottoman Empire may continue, mummified, for a few years. Some accuse the Sultan; others the Grand Vizir. The truth

ambassadors made separate remonstrances, and communicated to the Grand Vizir a short memorandum expressing, 'regret at seeing Turkey did not help itself, that it did not proceed to a gradual and determined application of reforms, and that it showed no energy in pursuing the goal indicated by the Firman of 1856'.¹ The Sultan's ordering an investigation of financial conditions by a new Conseil du Trésor which was actually constituted in November, and consisted of most of the members of the Mixed Financial Commission, raised Bulwer's hopes.² But already it was too late. More urgent business confronted the Turkish ministers.

With the moves by Gortchakoff in May to have the condition of the Balkan Christians investigated by a European commission, and the

(note 4, p.85. cont.): is that nothing is being done while everything disintegrates. Lately, there was a great stir at the discovery of a vast conspiracy which menaced the days and power of the Sultan, neither of which, between you and me, deserving of much respect... Turkey has many ills, but it is by its Sultan it is menaced with death'. See p.361 for details of the Sultan's lunatic expenditure on his daughters, on purchases of land sanctified by their marriage on them, and gifts to the doctors.

1. Engelhardt, p.161.

2. The leading members were Falconnet, director of the Ottoman Bank, Lachenbacher, of the Austrian ministry of Finance, and the Marquis de Ploëuc, the French delegate. The Turkish 'Minister of Finance' had ignored entirely the previous commission. Bulwer thought things would now move. Bulwer-Russell, 21 Feb. '60, FO.78/1637: 'The Turkish government has recently been acting up to its promises, and in some degree according to the system I some time since suggested, that is to say, a regular budget is being drawn up through the aid of the Mixed Financial Commission appointed last year at my recommendation, and the depreciated paper money called caimés, the existence of which has tended so prejudicially to influence the exchange, is on the point of being withdrawn; an arrangement being also made for withdrawing gradually, and, as I think, too gradually, the beshliks, or present silver currency which is current in the provinces, and which ranks much higher than the caimé, though it is considerably lower in real value than the sum for which it passes'. An optimistic assessment this proved to be. In 1865 the paper money and the metallic currency, still causing the Treasury much embarrassment, circulated despite perennial loans contracted with the object of withdrawing them.

news coming into the capital of terrible massacres of Christians in Syria, government credit slumped. In an effort to bolster it and to make a loan more feasible to western capitalists the Conseil du Trésor was yet again reconstituted, in June, 'with considerable solemnity, and with the understanding, expressed publicly and to foreign Powers, that it was to take an active and most important part in the administration of affairs, as a deliberative body, especially charged with the reform of the fiscal system, and with the future control and regulations of the Empire'.¹ By itself it was a futile gesture, and fooled none as to Turkish intentions, as Bulwer knew. He consequently strained every nerve to make good this deficiency in Turkish credit, hoping Russell would come forward with a proposal of a guaranteed loan with conditions as to its employment. He never lost an opportunity of raising the question in this form, and never hesitated to give a slightly misleading picture of Turkish opinions.

'I can', he explained, 'see no way out of the existing embarrassments but a general plan reposing on the better management of the public resources, and on augmentation given to those resources on the one hand, and an immediate supply to meet immediate and urgent wants, to be found from foreign capital on the other...But, however necessary this supply is, I could only advise or encourage its being given, if it were part and complement of a general system which, if really adopted with a probability of being persisted in, would produce a totally new condition in Turkish finances'.²

He promised A'ali he would use his influence with Russell if Turkey's mines, forests and special securities were given over to a Mixed Commission.³ He also angrily warned the Porte that he would

¹ 'Report on the Financial Condition of Turkey by Mr Foster and Lord Hobart', 7 Dec. '61, Parliamentary Papers, 1862 (2972) LXIV, 475.
² Bulwer-Russell, 4 July '60, FO.78/1637.
³ Bulwer-Russell, 18 July, *ibid*.

withdraw entirely from all discussion of financial affairs unless it 'fairly' exposed its whole condition to the European members of the Financial commission or Conseil, and used their advice.¹ And with an extraordinary confidence in the possibility of his success,² he expressed to Russell his certainty of Turkish co-operation in giving the requisite securities for a loan which, then, 'might be safely advanced, and would assist the Government in its new reforms, as well as relieve it from its present distress'.³ Russell's laconicism was quite equal to Bulwer's urgent manner. He replied:

'If no money is obtained by loan, there may come a day of reform; if money is obtained by loan, and there is no change of system, there will surely come a day of revolution'. 4

In the event Bulwer's extravagant demands⁵ and Russell's unhelpful attitude, obliged A'ali, acting Grand Vizir, to resort to a second-rate French banker, Mirès, for a loan.⁶ Turkey would have had

¹. Bulwer-Russell, 15 Oct. '60, FO.78/1512. See also Du Velay-Histoire Financière de la Turquie, p.156.

². He realised Turkish objections could not be overcome. Bulwer-Russell, 11 July PRO.30/22 88.

³. Bulwer-Russell, 18 July, FO.78/1637. Moreover, the loan should be ostensibly Anglo-French 'to keep the Governments together'. Bulwer-Russell, 27 Aug. '60, FO.78/1510.

⁴. Russell-Bulwer, 11 Sept. FO.78/1637. He added later that the reform of the Turkish finances 'ought to be an easy matter'. To Bulwer, 18 Oct. *ibid.* He was more interested in Turkey's continuing to pay dividends on the private loan of 1858. Bulwer-Russell, 2 Dec. '61. FO.78/2433.

⁵. See Du Velay, Histoire Financière p.156.

⁶. Despite the 1858 loan to effect their liquidation, an official communication by the Porte had indicated, 20 Feb. '60, that 15 million francs worth (£500,000) of *caimés* circulated in the capital. In May 1860 the pound sterling equalled 200 piastres, i.e. it was at 85% above its value in January. In the previous 12 months to pay the debts of the Sultan a great deal of stock had to be issued on such generous terms that a further depreciation in the currency resulted. Needing 200-250 million francs to liquidate the internal debt and to pay the dividends on foreign loans, the Porte, frightened by Bulwer's exacting demands, had to accept Mirès' offer. Nominally totalling 200 million francs, it would have furnished 164 million francs. Bulwer was staggered by the enormity of this gross extortion, tersely describing it as follows:

to pay 13% for this loan. However, in February 1861, Mires was arrested in Paris. Panic resulted. Galata merchants began to shift their specie to Marseilles, at the same time pressing the Treasury for payment on matured coupons. Under this pressure all Turkish securities weakened, finally the Turkish exchanges in London and Paris collapsing under the strain of heavy selling of discounted bills.¹ Confronted with the total collapse of Turkish credit, France and Britain stepped in at this point.² Russell had already yielded enough to suggest that he contemplated sending someone, possibly Sir Charles Trevelyan, to advise the Government, should it determine to reform its finances according to Bulwer's proposals.³ Presumably he had been impressed by the drawing up of the budget,⁴ and by Bulwer's highly coloured account of distress in the capital.⁵

(Cont. note 6, p. 88):
 During the first year it (the Porte) will furnish £1 million out of the £6 millions it receives'. Bulwer-Russell, 16 Nov. '60, 'Correspondence on Reforms in Turkey, 1858-61', Parl. Papers, 1861, LXVII, 599. He surmised a close connection between a continuance of the French occupation in Syria and the willingness of France to come to Turkey's aid with money. Bulwer-Russell, 30 Aug. '60, FO.78/1510.

1. See Du Velay, p.164.

2. See Du Velay, p.166.

3. Russell-Bulwer, 23 July and 19 Sept. '60, FO.78/2436.

4. It was not a budget at all, merely a general statement of the expenditure and income for the year 1860-61. Inevitably, it balanced, Bulwer-Russell, 20 July '59, FO.78/1433. Russell, less anxious than his agent to obtain a loan for the Turks, had no illusions about this statement: 'The budget is moreover a fallacious one as far as the statement of income is concerned, inasmuch as the revenue for several months, if not for a whole year, is made over by anticipation as security for loans raised and already spent'. Russell-Bulwer, 17 Jan. '61, FO.78/2436.

5. Bulwer-Russell, 16 June '60, FO.78/2436: 'It is no exaggeration to say that almost all the capitalists and tradesmen in this city are at this time creditors, directly or indirectly, of the State. On the other hand, the poorer class depends almost entirely on the capitalists and tradesmen, and thus from the highest to the lowest there is a general cry on the Government for money, and a general discontent at not getting it. The army and navy are likewise dissatisfied and badly off, and the funds coming in which should go to their support are already in the hands of parties to whom they are given for old accounts'.

In May, at Russell's request, Lord Hobart and Mr Foster arrived to co-operate with the Conseil du Trésor to examine the financial situation. This and the accession of the new Sultan Aziz, in June, temporarily relieved the pressure. By December of that year the commissioners had produced an economic survey of the Empire whose favourable conclusions helped France and Britain to induce their capitalists to support a loan for the withdrawal of the paper money. Russell would contribute to the success of this loan by allowing a letter of his to appear in the prospectus given out by Devaux and Company of London, March 1862.¹ The survey should have opened the eyes of European statesmen to the real situation in Turkey.² Hobart and Foster made the usual remarks and criticisms, such as Bulwer had been expounding for two years; that the verghi (income tax) bore heavily on the poorer people, while its reassessment and reapportionment would increase its yield; that the dîmes and aghnams (taxes on sheep and pigs) be collected, not by farmers but by local conseils de dîmes composed of all the cultivators who paid the tax; and that the duty of 2½% on all goods of native manufacture be abolished. All taxes, it was considered, should be collected by government officials,³ and stiffer penalties be inflicted for smuggling. It proposed that all mines, and forests be sold to western capitalists. This would

¹ Despite denials in Parliament (see Hansard CLXVL, May 1862), he clearly did feel partly responsible for the success of this loan-it was oversubscribed- and subsequently bracketed it with the guaranteed loan of 1855 in his future communications to Constantinople on the subject of dividends. e.g. Russell-Stuart (Chargé d'affaires) 3 May 1865, FO.78/1853: 'I had used all my personal influence to facilitate the advance made by British Capitalists to Turkey. ...you will state to his Excellency (A'ali Pasha) that whatever liabilities the Porte may have incurred, the Revenues already assigned for the payment of the charges of the guaranteed loan and that of 1862 shall be strictly appropriated to the discharge of the obligations contracted by the Porte under those loans'.

² 'Report on the Financial Condition of Turkey', 7 Dec. '61 Parl. Cont....

increase the revenue considerably, according to the Report. The remedy for administrative inefficiency and downright corruption, of which the Report gives several instances, would be a Finance Minister in the English style, without whose sanction no expenditure would be permitted. The Report concluded:

'It only remains for us to express our confident hope that the Porte will, without further delay, by a prompt, systematic and comprehensive measure of reform, avail itself of the ample means at its disposal for the re-establishment of its credit and the permanent improvement of its financial condition. The case with which it has to deal is not the hopeless one of a tax-imposing power stretched to its utmost limit, and yet inadequate to meet the demands of a large and inevitable expenditure; but simply of financial disorder, caused chiefly by inattention to the ordinary rules of political economy and fiscal administration'.¹

The easy confidence of the report and the letters of Hobart to Russell,² belied the evidence in the report. In the absence of statistics, the whole thing had been conjectural. Even so, it made apparent that the major sector of the economy was inelastic, and too dependent on good weather. Half the taxes were taken in kind, half in cash, the latter always taking a long time to be collected since a commodity had to be sold first, which was no easy matter in the provinces. Secondly 'the indirect taxes were of negligible importance, and could not be made more remunerative'.³ In fine, the Turkish Treasury was incapable of taking for long the strain of the

(cont. note 2, p. 90.): Papers, 1862 (2972) LXIV.475, cf. Du Velay, p. 183.

(cont. note 3, p. 90.): From the days of Sultan Mahmud attempts had been made to abolish the iltizams system. Not until 1862-3 would it be restricted so that it only operated in Asia Minor.

¹ 'It is to be suspected that the whole bent of the Commissioners' thinking had been conditioned by the knowledge that expenditure had to be increased greatly if brigandage, and smuggling were to be checked, and if the army were to be increased to a size which would enable it to defend the frontiers against marauding tribes. They could only have looked to the obvious means of increasing revenue.

² 'Report, etc.' op.cit. p. 503.

³ Cf. Du Velay, p. 184.

real floating debt with its exorbitant rates of interest. Every small war would necessitate a fresh loan, until in a short time the whole structure, overweighted by the strain of the western style army, the vicious capitulatory regime, and the perennial wars killing off the best Turks and sapping the national will, would collapse leaving the European creditors only one resource.¹ Bulwer never lost sight of this possibility. At the height of the crisis in 1860 he had warned, as he did on other occasions:

'If the Porte keeps its engagements, which chiefly concern English houses, as to the bills given on the revenue, it will be in the difficult situation of employing soldiers and functionaries to collect funds which are at once handed over to others, whilst they, already in arrears, will receive nothing from these funds'.²

As Bulwer added, either a loan or bankruptcy was the logical corollary. He never appreciated that this would always be the situation.

By policy, or through simple inadvertence the Porte had burdened the money markets in Europe with the Turkish internal debt.³ To deal with the mischievous *caimés*⁴, it had resorted to

¹. The Galata merchants were less fortunate in this respect.

². Bulwer-Russell, 14 July '60, FO.78/2436.

³. In the summer of 1865, Fuad implemented his scheme for converting it. See Poulgy, p.54-55. The intention was that the bonds of the consolidated internal debt should circulate in the European markets, like other securities. Fuad anticipated that in time this would result in the influx of foreign currency into the Empire. A more important consequence, if the scheme had succeeded, which it did not, would have been the flooding of Europe with securities of progressively decreasing value. This was not inadvertence.

⁴. See Dictionary of Islam on the history of these short-term stocks.

western loans.¹ At last in 1865, a loan of 150 million francs (£6 million), contracted by the Imperial Ottoman Bank² rang the final alarm, if only speculators and statesmen had been able to hear it. It was the first loan to pay the dividends on previous external loans. Yet, though by 1865 it had mortgaged its entire revenues in the effort to liquidate the pernicious internal debt, the financial situation remained unsatisfactory. The great change from 1858 lay in the fact that Turkey could not even call its revenues its own.³ Worse, the financial situation hardly corresponded with a far more serious economic one.⁴ Moreover, for all Bulwer's

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1. Cf: Poulgy - Les Emprunts de l'Etat Ottoman, p.43. Western loans were cheaper. 'The minimum interest on the loans of the period which begins in 1854, and the year of the first Ottoman loan, to 1876, oscillates between 7 and 12% for the external debt and rises up to 20 to 25% for the internal debt'. The loans were: a) 1854:£5 million actually producing £2½ million; security was the Egyptian Tribute. b) 1855:Guaranteed,£5 million secured on revenues of Smyrna and Syrian customs and remainder of Egyptian tribute. c) 1858,£5 million secured on octroi and customs of Constantinople. d) 1861,£2 million. e) 1862,£10 million supported unofficially by the British Government, yielding little more than £5 million, and secured on salt, stamps, tobacco, stamps and patents taxes, i.e. the new taxes imposed in 1862 to bring in more revenue. f) ¹⁸⁶³Two loans totalling £8 million secured on the revenues not already pledged.
2. In the Report of December 1861, Hobart admitted the urgent need for a National Bank. Otherwise the 'vacuum in the public treasury' at the beginning of each financial year would have to be filled in by ruinous internal loans, or only less ruinous external loans, or a resumption of the ilitzams, ^{shortly to be} then restricted to the collection of dimes in Asia Minor. Evidently, ^{in 1863}the Imperial Bank had not fulfilled its role. In fact it had given the government a fictitious credit.
3. Cobden told the House of Commons in 1863 that 'from the moment you cease to lend to Turkey she must cease to pay the interest on her debt'. Hansard Vol. 171, 136.
4. The 1862-3 budget had balanced, but had nothing to do with economic facts. It grossly flattered the financial situation too. eg. Hobart who had helped to compose this budget said of it: 'The estimate of the receipts is far from being verified by the actual experience of the year. The measures respecting tobacco and salt were to a great extent anticipated by dealers in those articles; and others of the new taxes...will produce considerably (my underlining) less than was anticipated'. Hobart-Russell, 27 Nov.'62, FO.78/1790.cf Du Velay p.179.

expenditure of ink, mere modifications had been effected in the capitulatory regime, and these were in the new trade tariff of 1861, the main features of which were the 8% duty on imports, and, diminishing yearly at the rate of 1%, an 8% tax on exports. So the economic plight of the Ottoman Empire, as described earlier, persisted. Bulwer had posed the only possible solution, a loan from the governments of Europe, in effect from France and Britain, to be employed by their own agents to projects decided upon by these same governments. Russell rejected an idea which, though the ambassador failed to perceive this implication, meant subjecting the Sultan to European control.¹ In 1859 Bulwer had hoped that a little might be done. He wrote:

'The most that we can hope from Turkey is that within the next few years it will establish a regular system of finance, a tolerable army, and tribunals more adequate for the end of justice'.²

Sound finance was the basis for all other reforms. By 1863 the follies of the Sultan, the lack of energy of his ministers, and the only too obvious inadequacies in the military administration,³ especially in the matter of the mere payment of troops, had destroyed

¹ Temperley's description of British policy up to 1914 states the dilemma: 'Because British statesmen did not believe in economic imperialism or financial penetration, they prevented any such foreign control over Turkey while renouncing it for themselves'. 'British Policy towards Parliament Rule and Constitutionalism in Turkey, 1830-1914', C.H.J. 1933, Vol. IV, No. 2, p.165.

² Bulwer-Russell, 16 Aug. '59, FO.78/1637.

³ Turkish fighting strength did not concern the Foreign Office in this period as much as the administration of the army, and the payment of troops. The few comments on the forces were uniformly critical, e.g. Bulwer-Russell, 21 Aug. '60, FO.78/1510: 'As to the forces of Turkey in the present condition of the Empire, they are hardly to be counted upon...' E.C. Grenville Murray (Consul at Odessa) - Bulwer 28 Nov. '63. T/67: 'There is nothing at all to prevent Russia repeating the Sinope business any moment. I doubt whether there are more than one or two Turkish admirals who could hold these waters against her'.

Bulwer's optimism, and even his interest. In any case British policy did not contemplate any more, it seemed than keeping before the Turk the need to pay its debts. He had realised from the first that nothing would be done without either foreign control, or 'a Sovereign or a Grand Vizier with great power, stern, just and enlightened'.¹ Later, he appreciated that, as the strong ruler, the saviour, had not appeared, then radical decentralisation and autarky were the only solutions to the administrative and financial problems. 'What Turkey has to do', he declared, 'as the sole condition of her existence is to seek for revenue and work it out of the improved and improvable condition of the country. A plan of this kind cannot even be attempted under the existing organization'.²

There was a certain contradiction between Bulwer's idea of reforming the finances by means of a European directorate holding Turkish sovereignty in trust, and his schemes for judicial and local government reform where the major preoccupation was with making a reality of Turkish sovereignty. However, by playing down the subject of Christian privileges, paying great attention to the Porte's rights in the diplomatic crises, and by emphasising the role the Turks had to play in his schemes for reforming the Empire, Bulwer appears to have been satisfied, not, presumably, that he had an intellectually sound position, but that he had a strong moral one. For Bulwer, the diplomatist, this was sufficient.

¹ Bulwer-Russell, 30 Nov '59, FO.78/1437.

² Bulwer-Russell, 28 April '64, PRO 30/22 93.

His thinking was Metternichian in its scope, if not in thoroughness, embracing questions of consular interference,¹ the dragoman system,² the British legal establishment in the Levant, and the protégés, questions tending to be the exclusive concern of himself and his own government. With Turkish deficiencies he concerned himself more urgently. He felt it was imperative the Porte should provide criminal and civil courts where rayahs and Muslims alike would receive justice. He hoped for an improvement in local government and that opportunities would be given to all races of taking up high administrative posts.³ The central problem was how to hold the allegiance of the various races nominally under Turkish rule: and the solution which presented itself required, in Bulwer's opinion, this broad, and, in the event, impractically broad, view of the Turks' plight. As the exercise of sovereignty was impeded at

¹. See above, p. 80, n. 2 & 3.

². Bulwer wished to preserve the dragoman system whereby most of the preliminary work requiring the ambassador's interference, was done by accomplished orientalist. As much of this work required conversations with the Capudan Pasha, or the Seraskier, or the Minister of Finance, posts filled by men not so fluent in French as Fuad Pasha, the dragomans were a vital part of the diplomatic machine. Both Malmesbury and Russell wished and insisted that political business be carried out as much as possible by the ambassador and the Grand Vizir. They looked forward to the disappearance of the dragomans. Bulwer fought against a change. Apart from the mass of business it would place in his hands, by making him something of a maid of all work it made the representative lose caste and influence. This was the argument of Fuad who feared the Sultan would resent too intimate a relationship between his own minister and a foreigner. Bulwer, throughout his embassy, never ceased explaining the ways the dragoman system could be improved, but it was of no avail. In this as on other topics he tried to keep Turkish susceptibilities to the forefront. Evidently the Porte did dislike the changes. Bulwer-Russell, 29 Oct. '59, FO. 78/1436.

³. It has to be remembered that Bulwer had a different policy for those provinces which had almost achieved independence, namely Serbia, Moldo-Wallachia, and Egypt. See above, Chapter II, p. 57-8. Diplomatic exigencies also obliged him to overlook a good deal in respect of the application of the capitulations in these same provinces. See below p. 179-80.

every level, Bulwer considered the Porte could hardly be expected to exert itself unless it was, by the co-operation of the Powers, given the opportunity to resume a practical, as distinct from a nominal, sovereignty. At the diplomatic level the proper task of the British agent was to see to it that the initiative of the Powers never went beyond the giving of advice. As far as it was possible the rayah population should not be encouraged by the example of European interference, to look for other masters.

A brief description here of the ends Bulwer had in mind, followed by a glance at his participation in 1860 in the work of keeping before the Porte the need to fulfil its promises, will explain the assumptions underlying Bulwer's thinking on the Near Eastern question in all its aspects. We shall observe that Russell and Bulwer, anxious to see Turkish sovereignty buttressed, would refuse to harry the Turks, and made a point of adhering strictly to the 1856 settlement. Even so it will be evident that Bulwer was intenser than Russell on the subject of reform. This would result from his holding that France and Britain together should make their financial co-operation dependent on Turkey's willingness to employ European administrators on a large scale. Russell never entertained such a notion though he would have been glad if Turkey, of its own accord, had used European skills. Moreover, Russell's faith in the Empire's continued existence, never very pronounced, was seriously undermined by the Syrian massacres,¹ and he was more disgusted than Bulwer, by Sultan Aziz's

¹ Russell-Bulwer, 25 Aug. '60, FO.78/2436, expressing his horror at Turkish collusion in the massacres, went on: 'nor would it be of any use to conceal from the Porte that either the whole system of Ottoman Government must be replaced by one founded on integrity and justice, or the Sultan must prepare himself for the abandonment of his cause by his best and most persevering allies'.

incompetent handling of his ministers.¹ However, the ambassador's ray of hope would be extinguished by his failure to persuade his government to guarantee a loan.

Bulwer probed to the heart of the matter when he insisted that the Turks had been frightened by the publicity given to far-fetched principles of equality. 'What has alarmed them', he wrote, 'has been the theory that the rayah and the Turk are equal, and the deduction drawn from it, that consequently the rayahs, being most numerous in many places, would, were such a theory acted upon, be ere long masters, in which case the Moslem knows well he could not long enjoy the toleration he would have practised'.² To stop making a fuss about principles, and raising false hopes, seemed to Bulwer the obvious thing to do. Unspectacular but useful changes might then be gradually worked out. As it was, the declarations of ideas were actual impediments in the way of reforms. Referring to the Hatti-Humayoun, he explained:

'It did nothing in the way of legislation, and I doubt much whether, by pointing too suddenly and extensively at an entire alteration in manners and feelings, it did not give rise to many of the evils which usually follow such experiments'.³

The reform the Porte ought to be encouraged to make, in Bulwer's opinion, should rest upon the fundamental assumption that the Ottomans would remain for a considerable time the ruling race. The centres

¹ Russell-Bulwer, 27 Jan. '62, FO.78/1637. He was sceptical of the ability of the ruling clique and with 'the character of those who have hitherto been entrusted with the management of public affairs'. He added, tentatively: 'The want of technical knowledge and experience on the part of Turkish statesmen may render it advisable to employ foreigners of known character and ability in the administration of the finances of the empire and of public accounts'.

² Bulwer-Russell, 8 Jan. '61, FO.78/1637.

³ Bulwer-Russell, 16 Nov. '60, FO.78/1657.

of power had to be retained by them, otherwise the doctrine of the maintenance of Turkish integrity was so much verbiage.¹ He wrote:

'It will be impossible, moreover, to attempt to carry a plan into effect with the assent of the ruling race, which should have for its evident object the placing of any other race over it'. 2

In any case the Turks alone could maintain the uneasy truce existing between sect and sect.³ As for the manner in which the Turkish supremacy should be consolidated, Bulwer held it should be through the agency of the institutions in being. An amalgamation could not usefully entail more than this. He confessed:

'I think it would be vain to attempt to amalgamate entirely into one common system the different sects and races. Each now in a great measure governs itself and is accustomed to its own habits and mode of administration; and whenever it is possible for this still to be the case, it should be so'. 4

As part of his scheme for winning the respect of all subjects, he held the Porte should take immediate steps to adjust its judicial and local government system. The importance of such reforms being small and progressively, but gradually, applied, he could never sufficiently emphasise. Aside from Turkish fears and the incubus of rayah and Muslim prejudice, one more obvious factor restricted the

¹. Bulwer-Russell, 12 Nov. '60, FO.78/1513.

². Bulwer-Russell, 26 July '59, FO.78/1637.

³. Criticising the philanthropic element in British Near Eastern policy, he commented: 'Whether there was much consistency in the attempt to maintain the Turkish Empire and to sap its foundations is one thing - but whether, when you have done so much as you have done in one direction you can stop short, is another. The experiment of amalgamating the various races and religions of the Ottoman Empire, has been commenced and must continue'. Bulwer-Russell, 12 Nov. '60, FO.78/1513.

⁴. Bulwer-Russell, 26 July '59, FO.78/1637. The obverse side of this was the laicisation of the organisation of the various millets and the secularisation of their property, which were effected by 1862. In this way the power of the patriarchs and rabbis would be mediatised, and thus the rayahs brought more immediately under Turkish rule. In Engelhardt's words the Hatti-Humayoun 'established a close correlation between the religious rights of the rayahs and their political duties'. p.138.

opportunities for reform, namely the lack of able Turks, aggravated by the struggle inside the ruling clique. This conditioned Bulwer's approach to administrative reform more than anything else. He declared:

'It is likewise to be considered that the reformers in Turkey are, after all, as yet but a very small body of men in Constantinople;...but partly from a jealousy of younger aspirants, partly from an actual want of any number of persons fit for public employment, there are few to whom they can confide the execution of their designs, and thus they are either themselves overpowered by the multitude of details which crowd upon them, or they see their wishes frustrated by the incompetence of the agents they employ'. 1

The practical details he had in mind were limited to four, the separation of local justice from administration, the increase of the power of the pashas,² the appointment of Christian vice-governors especially in predominantly Christian areas, and lastly, the enforcement of stiffer penalties on Turkish officials convicted of any sort of corruption. As he put it himself, 'responsibility must be concentrated, punishment inflicted, and rewards given, speculation discounted, adequate salaries afforded, and a class of honest and capable officials formed', a task of which he really despaired.³

1. Bulwer-Russell, 26 July '59, FO.78/1637. Five years later he considered it 'the difficulty to vanquish'. Bulwer-Russell, 12 May '64, PRO.30/22 93.

2. They were hampered by local councils or Medjlisses, products of Mahmoudian reforming efforts; see Engelhardt, p.255, and Bulwer-Russell, 7 March '59, FO.78/1429: 'In each province there is at present a sort of Council placed by the side of the Pasha. All matters of every kind are or may be indifferently brought before this council. A portion of its attributes is judicial. In theory this institution seemed likely to be beneficial but in practice it has proved exactly the reverse. When the Pasha is a man of influence and ability, the council is generally a mere engine in his hands. ...When he is a weak man, on the contrary, the central authority which he represents is completely absorbed by the local authority... and thus the orders which the Porte gives in a general and enlightened spirit, are counteracted or disregarded by the narrow views and bigoted passions of a particular district'.

3. Bulwer-Russell, 16 Aug. '59, FO.78/1637.

'The only chance of introducing good government into Turkey', he explained, 'is, for a time, from the centre; because there alone the influence of enlightened Europe is felt. The plan to pursue is to make the Government of the Porte responsible for its agents; to make agents responsible for their conduct to the Porte; and....by individualising, as much as possible, responsibility, keeping things clearly in a particular direction'.¹

He was, too, 'for placing Rayahs as the Representatives of the central authority in responsible situations in the Provinces'.² 'These would', he considered, 'in the end discipline their own race, and at the same time...teach by degrees the dominant one to respect it'.³ Feelings of nationality on the one side would join them to the Christian communities, while on the other, 'linked by position and interest with the ruling Government...they would finally become a constituted and moderating power'.⁴ As for the councils, in effect Bulwer looked forward to their disappearance as executive and judicial bodies. They should function entirely as consultative assemblies.⁵ Instead he wanted to see established separate tribunals, civil and criminal, while religious tribunals - one for each sect, and mixed ones for mixed cases - would deal with matters such as marriage, divorce, and property.⁶ To supervise the work Bulwer realised an enlightened and somewhat ruthless man was essential.⁷ Lacking such a person the reform of the Empire ought to be entrusted to a special council of, say, six Mussulmans and two Christians. Four of them would stay in the capital to sift the complaints and reports of the

¹ Bulwer-Russell, 5 Dec. '60, *ibid.*

² Bulwer-Russell, 8 Jan. '61, FO.78/1637.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ Bulwer-Russell, 26 July '59, *ibid.*

⁶ Bulwer-Russell, 7 March '59, FO.78/1429.

⁷ Bulwer-Russell, 30 Nov. '59, FO.78/1437.

other four, who would separately investigate four districts into which the country would be divided for this purpose. Occasionally the itinerant commissioners would exercise extraordinary authority if they found some particularly blatant instance of bad government.¹ 'It seems to me', he concluded, 'this system would have the double advantages attending on provincial and central authority; and it is authority now which they are wanting, for if the defects of a Government is a bad thing - the effect of having no government is a worse one'.²

Such were the ideas Bulwer turned over in his head during his first two years of office.³ They were simple, directed as they were merely to providing a swift and uncomplicated means of giving justice and security. For in many areas the Hatti-Humayoun had not even been published, and ^{government} was either venal or non-existent. More often, in other districts, 'perhaps, in most, its provisions are disregarded'.⁴ They were practical suggestions based on undoc-trinaire assumptions, and a knowledge that the prevalent mood of the Turks, no less than the social situation, prevented anything more elaborate. Above all they constituted the first coherent and

1. Bulwer-Russell, 8 Aug. '60, FO.78/1510.

2. Ibid.

3. Bulwer-Russell, 26 July '59, FO.78/1637. He looked forward, not with much hope, to withdrawing other branches of administration from Turkish supervision. With an assurance which was immediately condemnatory, he explained: 'On the other hand, as to many branches of administration, namely those which concern Finance, the Army Navy, Telegraphs, Public Works etc., these can only, in my opinion, be placed on an European basis with sufficient rapidity to meet the crisis with which Turkey is threatened, by the employment of competent Europeans; and the great thing is to persuade the Turks of this necessity, and to facilitate, as far as we can, the removal of obstacles that exist, or any prejudices they entertain against it'.

4. Russell - Bulwer, 18 Oct. '60, FO.78/2436

studied attempt by ambassador or Foreign Minister, to harmonise ideas on reform with the pre-eminent demands of British foreign policy. It was an intelligent synthesis, based on the need to make the ideas complement interests. Three factors prevented the ideas being realised. As mentioned above the diplomatic situation after 1856 prevented any individual ambassador pressing his schemes beyond the bounds of courtesy. Secondly the several representatives were very careful to check anything which might enable a colleague to increase his prestige and influence. For instance, after the experience of those critical months following Gortchakoff's proposals for the Balkan Christians, Bulwer, complaining of the hopelessness of a situation in which France, Prussia and Russia antagonised Turkey, and where Austrian influence was 'in a great degree annihilated', went on to say:

'Nor is this all: if any measure I suggested did obtain the adhesion of Russia and those Powers who act with her, it would immediately become suspicious in the eyes of the Porte'.¹

As a solution to this problem he offered the usual advice to Russell; how seriously it is difficult to be certain about. A close Anglo-Turkish alliance, he felt, would meet his difficulties, 'making it evident to the Turks that they must do what we tell them to do, and assuring them, that if they do, they may then rely upon us'.²

1. Bulwer-Russell, 22 Jan '61, FO.78/1637.

2. Ibid. To make matters worse, Russell disapproved of Bulwer's attempts by intrigue or personal representations to the Sultan, to make ground. Only when asked advice was Bulwer to address the Padishah on reforms, and then only in the most innocuous and general language - 'rather than expatiate on the details of a Firman, or the nomination of a Minister'. Russell-Bulwer, 24 Sept. '61, FO.78/2436. Palmerston on this issue was more realistic. He wrote to Russell: 'I saw the other day that you have cautioned Bulwer against being too active in placing and displacing ministers at Constantinople. Your caution is very just in itself; but in a place like Constantinople, one is sure that somebody or other will be trying to influence such changes, and if our man does not use his influence for good, the Frenchman, or the Russian, or some cont..

The third factor was the existence of the capitulatory regime.

On this last subject Bulwer had especially strong views.¹ 'If foreign Governments wish to do anything seriously for the benefit of Turkey', he wrote, 'I mean, of Turkey as an independent national Power, they must occupy themselves seriously with this question, and the sooner they do so the better'.² It was not just that he perceived the illogicality of a system which made nonsense of a basic tenet of the Treaty of Paris, that Turkey was an equal member of the European Concert. More to the point, if the Porte were to be encouraged to reform its administration, and make it equitable so that rayahs and Muslim would respect it, then the Powers would have to take the necessary steps to place their own subjects and the protégés under Ottoman jurisdiction.

'The Turkish Government is called independent', he declared, 'yet there is not the smallest vice-consul who does not pretend to control it, and in the simplest action of life a foreign hand intervenes to prevent the national authority from maintaining order and administering justice according to its own usages and laws'.³

As he pointed out, the Turkish reforming movement, after the initial efforts of Mahmud, had been to gain Europe.⁴ The Porte was now in a

(cont. note 2, p. 103.): Turkish intriguer will be sure to use his influence.' 12 Oct., PRO.30/22 21.

1. See Nasim Sousa-The Capitulatory Regime of Turkey for a very lucid account of the capitulations in their judicial as well as their economic bearing. By them most consulates had civil and criminal courts where they tried their nationals. By Treaty they had no jurisdiction over cases involving Ottomans, but by the nineteenth century the European Powers claimed the privilege of trying a mixed case if the accused was a European national. By the Porte's consent there were also mixed commercial courts where the verdict had to be given in the presence of a dragoman. The authority of the Ottoman criminal courts over foreigners was in practice denied by the practice of the consular courts. However, when cases involving foreigners did appear before such courts, a consular delegate had to be present before a sentence could be effective.

2. Bulwer-Russell, 30 Nov. '59, FO.78/1437.

3. Bulwer-Russell, 16 Nov. '60, FO.78/1637.

4. Ibid.

bewildered state and the Powers owed it to themselves to show in a practical way that they were in earnest about reform. He explained that a blunt intimation by the Powers of their intentions as to reform, joined with a 'reconsideration of our Capitulations, with a view to their gradual modification', would stimulate action on the part of the Porte.¹ He did not expect anything to come of his promptings, no matter how moderately worded they were.² Nevertheless, by his persistence and with the co-operation of the French ambassador he succeeded in bringing the representatives to agree upon the general principles laid down by the Porte in its Note, 11 September 1860, to the effect that Ottomans who renounced their allegiance must leave the country after three months during which time they had to sell their property.³ But, except in its long term effects, this was of peripheral significance.⁴ Too many Ottomans had already become 'foreigners'. Russell for his part never showed any inclination to modify the capitulations themselves. While Bulwer, on the one hand, was 'to obtain the equality of Europeans with the native population' he had also to remember that 'the capitulations rest on the principle that Turkish rule and Turkish justice are so barbarous that exceptional privileges are required'.⁵ In a more explicit statement he countered all Bulwer's reasoning in favour of change, by an extraordinarily

¹. Bulwer-Russell, 26 July '59, FO.78/1637.

². At one stage he asked Russell to consider giving the representatives the power to modify the capitulations so that they could deal 'with difficulties as they practically arose'. Bulwer-Russell, 28 Feb. '60, FO.78/1637.

³. Note in Bulwer-Russell, 26 Sept. '60, FO.78/1511.

⁴. See Sousa, p.101-2. The appointment of a mixed commission to consider how far the agreement should be retroactive was decided upon. Nothing came of it.

⁵. Russell - Bulwer, 12 May '60, FO.78/1638.

insular argument, which, given Russell's terms of reference was unanswerable. He stated that a state of conflicting jurisdictions 'admits of no present remedy; and as long as it exists, it must be the duty of every British functionary...to maintain intact the privileges which he is appointed to watch over; and although this should be done temperately, it should be done firmly as the best means of avoiding angry discussion with the Porte'.¹ He added, referring to Bulwer's repeated suggestions in favour of a common jurisdiction for all foreigners:

'The institution of the Consular court at Constantinople will not only be an invaluable boon to British subjects, but will also hold out an example to foreign Powers and to the Turkish Government itself, and will in all probability work a silent but most important improvement in the administration of justice whether foreign or native'.²

Nor did Russell ever alter his view-point. No matter how hard Bulwer fought against the anomalous position of the legal establishment,³ and the undignified spectacle of foreign jurisdictions defending their own subjects against each other, his opinions were never welcomed. The immediate consequence was that the Porte still could not appropriate such foreigners to itself, because they cannot be under its laws and

¹. Russell - Bulwer, 7 Jan '60, FO.78/1495.

². Ibid.

³. The British consular Court under Sir Edmund Hornby had, since 1857, insisted on a strict application of the letter of capitulations. The combination of English litigiousness and laws of such scope of course made nonsense of Turkish sovereignty. So Bulwer attacked on two fronts. First, the legal establishment contradicted Turkish sovereignty. Secondly, it opposed the merging of the English system with a common jurisdiction for all nationals. Bulwer-Russell, 17 Jan. '60, nos. 27 and 28, FO.78/1503. His arguments against the capitulations applied with equal force to the protégé system whereby Ottomans acquired foreign nationality without having to reside in the foreign country. By a regulation of 9 August 1863, as a result of a Turkish circular, April 1862, the numbers an embassy or consulate could employ were limited. Further Ottomans could not be hired except by special arrangement with the Porte. See Sousa, p.102-3.

jurisdiction'.¹ Europeans would still be unable to own or exploit Turkish property, and the Turks continued to refuse to employ them in its own administration. His efforts to re-educate the Foreign Office thus achieved negligible results. Even the granting of the loan was not as Bulwer wished. The loan should have been the means of enforcing reforms by a European agency. Furthermore, the persistent advocacy of his ideas served to emphasise the differences between Russell and himself, perhaps to his great disadvantage from the career point of view.

On the other hand in 1860 he succeeded in thwarting the Russian initiative in favour of the Balkan Christians.² Though Bulwer and Lobanoff would be sincere in trying to use the Porte's embarrassment to oblige it to do something about provincial maladministration,³ the subject of reform acted as a screen behind which the representatives, notably the Russian and the British, sought solid political and diplomatic advantages.

As the diplomacy is sketched in elsewhere, it is only necessary here to point out that throughout these months Bulwer and Russell were disposed to act with the French. They were above all at one in thinking that Russian machinations had to be defeated.⁴ At first Thouvenel had inclined to Gortchakoff's view that an ambassadorial

¹. Bulwer-Russell, 26 July '59, FO.78/1637.

². See below Chapter IX, Part II, pp. 134.

³. For instance Bulwer urged Russell to seize the opportunity to come forward with the offer of a guaranteed loan. See above, p. .

⁴. Hence Temperley's suggestions that Bulwer acted without the French and without consulting his Cabinet sufficiently are without foundation, see Temperley, 'British Policy towards Parliamentary Rule and Constitutionalism in Turkey (1830-1914)', C.H.J. 1933 Vol. IV no. 2, 163.

committee or a commission on which foreign representatives would sit should investigate the condition of the Christians of Bulgaria, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and Montenegro.¹ However, Russell had been adamant that the representatives should take no part, even withdrawing from his previous commitment to France that the representatives might have a watching brief over Turkish commissions.² 'The Foreign representatives may meet separately after the Turkish commission has reported', he instructed Bulwer.³ Within a week of his hearing of Gortchakoff's move⁴, by his single efforts Bulwer persuaded the Porte 'to take the step I have long been pressing on it, that of her classing the Empire under divisions to be thoroughly inspected by competent persons'.⁵ These persons, he explained were, 'first to seek and correct abuses and punish offenders: secondly, to inquire especially into the cases brought forward by Russia and others: thirdly, to examine into the practice of reforms I advised last February twelvemonth, or devise others for safeguarding the Christian population'.⁶ A week later Lavalette was in general agreement.

Having at first hotly denied Russian accusations of the prevalence of violence, of corruption, and injustice,⁷ Bulwer eventually half-admitted they were correct. This troubled Russell, chiefly because of the opportunities it provided for Russian diplomacy. Leaving the details of the improvements to be made in his ambassador's hands, he concerned himself more with Gortchakoff's motives.⁸ He explained

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1. Bulwer-Russell, 4 July '60, FO.78/1637, referring to a despatch of Cowley to Russell, 13 June.
 2. See Charles-Roux, p.291.
 3. Russell-Bulwer, 25 May '60, FO.78/1496. In October Bulwer tried to act on the instruction.
 4. Bulwer-Russell, 13 May '60, *ibid.*
 5. Bulwer-Russell, 23 May, *ibid.*
 6. *ibid.*
 7. Bulwer-Russell, 13 May, *ibid.*
 8. Russell - Bulwer, 7 June, FO.78/1497.

that if the Turks failed to reform abuses, and 'if Russia should still be able to point to those defects in the administration which you described in February 1859, it will remain to be considered what should be done'.¹ Russell, pointing to the Treaty of Paris which stipulated that a contracting Power should ask for mediation before resorting to war on the Empire, held that 'no separate right of war on the Empire on the part of the Five Powers is to be deduced from Turkish abuses'.²

At the end of May the Grand Vizier left with a Commission of Turks, Muslim and Christian, for Varna to investigate the complaints made by Russia.³ For his part Bulwer was 'now disposed to think that the recent proposals may be looked upon as the opening to a series of measures which if anything like a favourable opportunity offers would be at once carried out'.⁴ Believing the Empire would disintegrate in three or four years unless measures were taken, he applied himself, during Kibrisli's absence, to learning as much as possible about the condition of Turkey. He circularised the British consuls, posing them a series of questions to do with the state of the various provinces, the improvements made, and the reforms which might be practically applied.⁵ The answers he received differed in detail but were consistent in their implications of Turkish inefficiency and corruption. They all pointed to the

1. Russell-Bulwer, 7 June '60, *ibid*.

2. *Ibid*.

3. See Engelhardt, p.162. Bulwer-Russell, 30 May, PRO.30/22 88. The Grand Vizir assisted owing to French pressure.

4. Bulwer-Russell, 30 May *ibid*. He felt 'much must depend on France'. In the event the all or nothing attitude of Russia allowed the Porte to do nothing.

5. 11 June, see Engelhardt, p.170-3.

uselessness of the local councils.¹ The consuls showed no liking for Bulwer's pet scheme, namely the appointment of Christian musteshars or vice-governors. There was a general concurrence that the farming of the revenues should be swiftly abolished and Christian evidence be accepted in the courts where, generally speaking, it was not. Roads needed to be built and banks set up. Judging from these reports the condition of the Empire seemed a nearly hopeless one.

After Kibrisli's return Russian machinations again obliged Bulwer to press upon the Porte the need to satisfy Russian complaints as far as possible.² Not only did Gortchakoff object to the Grand Vizir's coming back before visiting Bosnia-Herzegovina, he renewed his demand for a mixed European Commission of enquiry 'partly basing his demand on the example in Syria'.³ Russell merely reminded Bulwer of the instruction to have the representatives discuss together the reforms which might usefully be suggested to the Porte.⁴ Subsequently

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- ¹. e.g. see Finn (Consul at Jerusalem)-Russell, 19 July, FO.78/1521, Abbott(Monastir)-Russell, 9 July ibid, Blunt (Smyrna)-Russell, 28 July, FO.78/1533, Zohrab(Bosnia Serai)-Russell, 30 July FO.78/1530. See Engelhardt, p.172, who concluded that the various consuls wished the medjlisses to be more representative. This is to misread the evidence. Finn stated the Christians were too servile and progress had to depend on enlightened Turkish officials. Abbott was anxious for justice to be taken entirely out of the hands of the medjliss and given to the pasha. With much reduced powers it should then be made more representative. Blunt from Smyrna held the councils to be 'the most corrupt in the country' and this because local government was entirely dominated by Christians, especially by the Greek Primate, Zohrab wanted the medjlisses to be elected so that more Christians would be represented. But again he wished their functions to be severely circumscribed.
 - ². See below, Ch IV, part II, p.143. Eventually, at Bulwer's instance, the Porte agreed to send the Commander-in-Chief of the Roumelian army to visit Bosnia-Herzegovina which Kibrisli had not had time to see. Thus a major criticism of Gortchakoff was answered. See Engelhardt, 174.
 - ³. Bulwer-Russell, 16 Oct. '60, FO.78/1512.
 - ⁴. Russell-Bulwer, 18 Oct., FO.78/2436. His efforts to have Bosnia visited are described elsewhere. See below, Ch IV, part II, p.194.

Bulwer sent his colleagues an elaborate memorandum giving his views on reform, also enclosing the consular returns.¹ His main proposition entailed converting the Great Council² into the kind of executive body which he had always advocated. Half of the members would remain in Constantinople and the other half visit the provinces, to make sure the laws were observed and delinquent functionaries punished.³ He wrote:

'This institution may be liable to objections but it would have for its effect to raise the central authority, restore personal responsibility, enable the Government to dispense with pashas of the highest rank, in many instances replacing them by more enlightened persons of lower grade and of the rising generation: relieve the Grand Vizir, in a certain degree, of much of the business which now overwhelms him, and be at least the commencement of a new order of things'. 4

The reforms they should carry out were, some of them, contrary to the ones advised by his consuls.⁵ He still wanted to see Christian vice-governors appointed. He hoped the question of Christians being admitted into the army would be considered by the representatives, and multi-racial schools established. The consuls had rejected all three propositions as being incapable of realisation. However, the obnoxious suggestion required that dragomans attend meetings of the Turkish commission resident in Constantinople, at the investigations of complaints against any local functionary. From our examination of the way Bulwer's mind was apt to work on these

1. Bulwer-Their Excellencies the Representatives, 15 Nov., FO.78/1513.

2. The Great Council consisted of all the ministers of State, and sometimes the Sheik-ul-Islam. It was the centre of the Turkish bureaucracy.

3. cf. Engelhardt, p.171, again misconstrues the evidence. Bulwer did not wish to confuse the judicial and administrative bodies in the provinces. He had always advocated special civil, commercial, and criminal courts quite separate from the medjlisses. His idea was that the supervising body-the substitute for the strong man-should have extraordinary powers.

4. Bulwer-Their Excellencies, 15 Nov., FO. 78/1513.

5. Engelhardt, p.173.

questions, it is highly unlikely he seriously meant a proposal which was a derogation of Turkish sovereign rights. Yet the possibility has to be considered. Certainly Bulwer had put to Thouvenel, in 1859, a similar scheme.¹ So without agreeing entirely with Engelhardt that Bulwer's views were extreme merely to ensure their rejection,² the most likely explanation, and the obvious one, is that the ambassador simply wished his colleagues to discuss his idea. In the event Russia refused to co-operate as Bulwer knew it would.³ The Porte likewise violently rejected what it believed to be interference.⁴ Bulwer concluded:

'Under these circumstances there has been nothing for me to do but to urge the Porte to adopt such measures at once as will satisfy any reasonable expectations, and thereby prevent the necessity for that advice which it appears unwilling to receive'.⁵

There the matter rested. The Powers never again, during Bulwer's embassy, confronted the Porte so directly with its problems. Already the Turkish ministers had produced a scheme for reform which involved the abolition of the dimes where possible, and of the ilitzams, an improvement in the police, and the establishment of criminal courts.⁶ In February they received the Sultan's sanction.⁷ It constituted the sole result of the effort, begun in October 1859,⁸ to make the Porte realise the gravity of its predicament.

1. *Trois Années*, p.358. Thouvenel had replied: 'The permanent coalition of which you speak, between the best ministers of the Porte and the representatives of the missions at Constantinople, would not be possible and would not produce much effect, unless the Powers consented in some way to neutralise Turkey diplomatically, that is to say, to stop their rivalries'.

2. Engelhardt, p.173.

3. Bulwer-Russell, 18 Nov. FO.78/1531.

4. Russell-Bulwer, 17 Nov., *ibid*; see Engelhardt, p.174.

5. Bulwer-Russell, 5 Dec., FO.78/1637.

6. Bulwer-Russell, 12 Nov., FO.78/1513.

7. Engelhardt, p.174.

8. See above, p.79-80.

Thus, by 1865 certain changes had been made to do with the protégé system, and the trade tariff, and the Law of the Vilayets had been unannounced in 1864.¹ The changes were effected entirely at the Porte's instance. The Turkish ministers discussed other measures though again the Powers' advice was not sought.² The upshot was that in 1865 as in 1856 Turkey's administration lacked system and vigour, its finances were in a chaotic state and the revenues mortgaged. Owing to the growing reaction against reforms, Sultan Aziz was more wayward than ever. The day indeed approached when the Powers for political as well as financial reasons would have to exercise a closer control over the Ottoman government.³ Turkey could not reform itself.

Bulwer anticipated such an eventuality in his frequent suggestions to Russell that only a guaranteed loan, applied by Europeans, and an administration in the hands of Europeans, could save Turkey. May be, too, he seriously meant his proposal in November 1860 that provincial functionaries should be tried in the presence of the dragomans of the several embassies. Whatever his intention, he had not persuaded his government to view Turkey's plight in his way. Anything savouring of economic imperialism or political control was out of the question. Moreover, his intensity was not matched by a similar concern in London. Though Bulwer did not understand how deeply the malaise went he had observed sufficient to make him realise that drastic political solutions were needed because the

¹. See Pavet de Courteille et Ubcini - Etat Present de l'Empire Ottoman, p.90. An attempt to implement it was begun late in 1864 in a district composed of Silistria, Widin, and Nish. The new law reinforced Mussulman predominance.

². Temperley, 'British Policy towards Parliamentary Rule and Constitutionalism in Turkey (1830-1914)', p.160.

³. Engelhardt, p.256.

reforms, which had to be gradually applied, would not take effect in time to prevent disintegration. He did not clearly realise the logical conclusion of his ideas; but he was honest enough to disagree with the official line on reform, not only because it did not complement British Near Eastern policy, but also because it was intrinsically superficial.

CHAPTER IV

The Balkans.

The most trying problems which Bulwer had to deal with were those connected with the Balkans. Russian intrigues and deep social discontent kept the outlying areas of European Turkey ever before the attention of Bulwer and his colleagues. To prevent the local outbreaks and insurrections from being used by Russian emissaries and diplomatic agents for furthering pan-Slav designs, and France from increasing its influence by its support for the policy of nationalities in the Balkans, were constant preoccupations of Bulwer. Though his store of patience proved not inexhaustible, we shall see that in the minor crises which followed one after another, he maintained a steady course and with a certain good temper. First, however, we shall glance briefly at the historical background of this group of Balkan problems.

Before the outbreak of the Crimean War the dominating influence in the Balkans had been indisputably Russia. Austria had finally conceded this pre-eminence to Russia in 1791 when by the Treaty of Sistova, the Emperor Joseph gave up his gains made in the war with Turkey. Catherine, the Tsarina, kept what she had won and gained much in prestige. By the Austro-Russian agreement of 1781 Joseph's share of the spoils would have been Bosnia, Herzegovina, Montenegro and part of Serbia. When this opportunity had slipped by, and

later, when Metternich reshaped a policy which was to persist until 1859, the initiative passed completely to Russia. Under Russian protection the provinces of Moldavia-Wallachia, and Servia made swift progress towards independence of the Sultan. Servia,¹ which had been seriously misgoverned by the Turks, and had recently suffered much at the hands of the Janizaries, was the first to take advantage of the situation.² Between 1804 and 1815 two insurrections persuaded the Porte to yield to the Serbs. By a treaty of the latter year, though the Turks were to regarrison the Servian fortresses, Serbs were allowed to carry arms. The difficulties between Prince Milosh of Servia and the Porte were to revolve about the interpretation to be given to Article 8 of the Treaty of Bucarest which stated:

'It has been deemed just...to come to a solemn agreement respecting their (Servian) security. Their peace must not in any way be disturbed. The Sublime Porte will grant the Servians, on their petition, the same privileges which her subjects in the Islands of the Archipelago and in other parts enjoy; and will, moreover, confer upon them a mark of her generosity, by leaving the administration of their internal affairs to themselves - by imposing upon them moderate taxes, and receiving them only direct from them and by making the regulation requisite to this end by an understanding with the Servian nation themselves.'

By 1830, in fulfilment of the promise made in the Treaty of Adrianople (1829) to carry out the *Acte séparé relatif à la Servie*,

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1. The material for this introductory account concerning Servia is taken from H. Temperley - History of Serbia.
 2. In the wars of the fifteenth century the Serb aristocracy had been liquidated. Consequently the Serbs were never threatened in the way their neighbours were - i.e. by a gradual conversion to Islam via a nobility willing to change its faith to keep its lands. Hence there were no serious divisions amongst the peasant proprietors who constituted the mass of Serbs of Servia. They all hated the Turk and tax-gathers.

signed at Akermann in 1826, the Porte had conceded to Milosh his own interpretation of the Buearest Treaty. Thus, the whole internal administration of Servia was in Serb hands; ecclesiastical affairs were subject entirely to Servian direction; and no Turk could live in the country except in the fortresses. Most important of all the Sultan agreed that the succession should be hereditary in Milosh's family. The ensuing years witnessed attempts by the Porte to seize any opportunity occasioned by domestic strife in Servia to counteract its previous concessions, and it was so far successful as to be able to discard the principle of hereditary succession.

As for the lesser members of the Slav family in the Balkans, namely those inhabiting Albania,¹ Bosnia, Herzegovina, and Montenegro, theirs was a more violent, a more chequered, and a more unfortunate history - with the exception of Montenegro. In 1702 the people of the Tchernagora, faced with the threat of slow assimilation into the Muslim faith, had risen and massacred the Turks who were never able again to reinforce even a nominal sovereignty. For in 1711 Russia recognised Montenegrin independence; Austria concluded an alliance with the country in 1779; and in 1799 the Sultan issued a firman explicitly recognising the autonomous status of Montenegro. In the next half-century the remarkable lack of Turkish rule in this and the surrounding provinces encouraged something approaching endemic strife, in which, however the Prince² might try to preserve neutrality, the Montenegrins persistently succoured their neighbours.

¹. Securely Muslim, Albania caused little trouble to the Porte after the 16th century.

². In 1853 Montenegro declared itself an hereditary principality.

In 1831-2, 1853, 1857 and, to come to the period under special consideration, in 1861, the inhabitants of Bosnia and Herzegovina rose against their oppressors, until at last in 1858 Turkey was provoked into declaring war on their abettors, the Montenegrins.

It was the exclusive influence of Russia till 1854 that stimulated the nationalist movement in Moldavia-Wallachia. Essentially political, and quite unconnected with the kind of social discontent which encouraged rebellion against the Turk elsewhere, the nationalist movement depended entirely on foreign aid. The *Règlement organique*, the law by which Russia administered these two provinces, paid homage to the principle of their real unity. During the conferences in Paris in 1856 Walewski, and especially Clarendon, declared in favour of it though the latter would shortly change his policy owing to strong Turkish opposition. Nevertheless the nationalists had been successful in winning over the majority of Rumanians to the cause of independence of both Russia and Turkey. A vigilant watchfulness by French agents would see to it that the intrigues of Austria and of Stratford did not frustrate the general feeling.

In 1856, the international context was favourable to the efforts of Montenegro,¹ the Moldo-Wallachian provinces, and Servia, to obtain independence. Further the leaders of the separatist movements in these countries had their task made even easier by the new order of things instituted by the Treaty of Paris. This treaty required that before resorting to force in the Balkans a

¹ Prince Danilo had protested against the Porte's attempts at the Paris Congress to record Montenegro's vassal status. See Holland, p.257.

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contracting Power - including, of course, Turkey - had to seek the mediation of the other signing Powers. By article 22 the Principalities were guaranteed in their immunities. There could be no separate right of interference in their internal affairs. Also article 27 stipulated that, 'No armed intervention can take place without previous agreement between those (Contracting) Powers'. Similarly, neither Turkey nor any other Power could intervene without the consent of the other contracting Powers. Servian rights, embodied in several Imperial Hatts were placed under the collective guarantee of the Powers. Everything conspired to place the initiative in the hands of the Balkan rulers, and to render the Suzerain powerless. The diplomatic engagements which took place in the ensuing years, and in which Britain took part chiefly to save Turkish face, would seem like mere fussing. In fact, the results of the European protectorate if not its actual tortuous workings, were intelligent and deserve to be viewed more sympathetically than has been fashionable. This protectorate had a stabilising influence, checking the pace at which the provinces moved towards their goal, and giving the Powers time in which to adjust themselves to the changes.

Further, confronted by the tardiness of the protectorate in answering their demands, each province would tend to act in support of the other when the opportunity presented itself. From his accession in September 1860, Prince Michael of Servia would look to closer relations with Prince Couza of the United Principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia. The two leaders worked together in 1862.

Michael also obtained a vital advantage for Montenegro.¹

In the diplomatic struggle at Constantinople the significant development, for Britain, was the effacement of Austria, and during the years of Bulwer's embassy Vienna's equivocal policies towards the southern Slavs.² Britain was not interested enough in these areas to engage in a determined policy of retrenchment with a shaky Austria and an impotent Turkey.

Bulwer's response to the whole drift of events was fairly predictable. Striving to persuade the Porte to anticipate certain demands of its vassals, or to yield to them in time, to grant, for example, a port to Montenegro, to concede the Servian government jurisdiction over Turks residing outside the fortresses, and to strengthen Couza's position against the hostile Assembly which desired a foreign prince, Bulwer made a virtue out of necessity. His instinctive sympathy with the justice of some of the vassals' demands was less important than this sure, intuitive knowledge of political reality. Turkish survival depended, in part, on the friendship of these nearly independent countries. His anxiety on this score, in practice, tended sometimes to make him seem less to the point than Malmesbury and Russell. However the telegraphic system

¹. See below Part III, p. 219.

². Austria, traditionally interested in events affecting the fate of the southern Slavs, 'was bound by the condition of affairs to face the possibility, however repugnant, of the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire'. (C.H.J. 1925, Vol. I, No. 3, p. 324, 'Reichberg and Bismarck on the Eastern Question 1859-60, 1878, a. Instructions of Reichberg to Count Thun 4 Dec. 1859,' Elizabeth Malcolm-Smith). In dread of the establishment of independent states in the region, Vienna prepared even to allow Russia a free hand in the Straits provided Austria obtained Serbia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and Montenegro, should the Turkish Empire disintegrate.

restricted Bulwer's freedom of action, and the result was, generally speaking, a significant participation by Britain in the concert diplomacy affecting Balkan issues. Britain worked with France over the Double Election and the Legislative Union of the Principalities, though tending to be more pro-Turkish over lesser issues like the question of the Dedicated Convents. Compromise was the characteristic feature of British policy in 1862 during the Servian crisis, and Bulwer and Russell were pleased enough with the results. As regards Montenegrin affairs, Britain kept in the background. Malmesbury's negative response to Bulwer's suggestion that the Porte might give an outlet to the sea to Montenegro, was of little real importance since Turkey would not contemplate it.¹ Perhaps Russell's very competent handling of specific Balkan questions may have been a consequence of Britain's comparative lack of interest in the area.² Bulwer proved himself to be, in negotiations, a diplomatist of extraordinary endurance, though on occasions he lacked judgment in his general appreciation of a difficulty.

The following analyses will show how successful were chief and agent in extracting from the fluid state of political relations, the greatest advantage possible. More could hardly have been expected.

¹. In 1866, significantly when French hegemony at Constantinople was already something of the past, France like Britain opposed granting such a port though the Sultan had consented, see Temperley - History of Servia, p.256.

². As distinct from Russell's unfortunate policies towards Egypt. See below Ch. V, p.228-35.

PART I

'A'

The Double Election of Colonel Couza

The germ of the future successes of the nationalist movement in the Principalities lay in the failure of the Paris Congress to come to an agreement respecting Moldavia and Wallachia. During the conferences, January to February 1856, the Powers, fearing that the signature of a general treaty might be postponed, had referred the issue to future conferences to be held in Paris. In the meantime the Sultan, according to Article 24 of the Treaty of Paris, convoked a popularly elected Divan ad hoc in each province.¹ A European Commission, including a representative of the Porte, sitting at Buearest, investigated the condition of the Principalities with a view to proposing the bases of a new organization for the government of them. This compromise, which relied for its success on the concurrence of views of a popularly elected body and an alien commission powerless and reflecting the divisions of the Powers, quickly foundered on the rock of Stratford de Redcliffe's intransigence. The Settlement of the Principalities became again a subject for the consideration of the Cabinets when in July 1857 the European Commission refused to have dealings with the Moldavian Divan. It clearly did not represent the wishes of the people. The Emperor Napoleon, attempting to settle the business by personal diplomacy, had interviews with Clarendon at Osborne in August, and

1. 'These Divans shall be called upon to express the wishes of the people in regard to the definitive organization of the Principalities.'

with the Tsar and Gortchakoff in September which produced a fair measure of agreement though the French Emperor had compromised on the point of union under a foreign prince. As a result of these talks there were fresh elections to the Divans and these voted in October for the Four Points - autonomy, union, a foreign prince, and representative government. Between May and August 1858 the representatives at Paris debated the future organization of the two provinces in the light of these elections and the socio-political survey of the Bucarest Commissioners. So, when Bulwer took up his post in July 1858 the ambassadors in Paris were already concluding their labours resulting in the Convention of August 19. By this instrument the new United Principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia were to have two Princes, two Assemblies, two armies and one Central Commission and Supreme Court of Appeal at Focsani. There was to be a narrow electoral franchise. The Central Commission composed of members from Moldavia and Wallachia, half of them nominated by the Prince and half by each Assembly, prepared legislation affecting both provinces, and referred it to the Princes and Assemblies. Ministries were responsible to the Assemblies and could be impeached by them or the Princes. The Assemblies had a veto on all fiscal measures. Thus, in spite of the intention that each prince should be the chief executive power, the constitution was such as would produce a stalemate in the event of the Assemblies and the Princes disagreeing. The two armies were organised on a common plan, the Hospodars taking turns to appoint the Commander-in-Chief.

As the conferences had proceeded along their tortuous way Malmesbury, English Foreign Minister, had showed every sign of impatience with the constant negotiations. There was something ridiculous about sensible diplomatists spending so much effort trying to find an unobjectionable flag for the United Principalities. Further, the Porte's refusal to accept Malmesbury's proposal for the Hospodars to be elected for life annoyed the Foreign Minister.

'The idea is given up. Tell the Porte to remember it hereafter when at the death of every Hospodar the question of union will be inevitably raised again',

wrote Malmesbury to Bulwer.¹

Bulwer's views differed considerably from his chief's, though they were expressed in a very moderate, almost detached manner. The time Bulwer had spent as Commissioner in Buearest had clearly profited him for from the beginning his attitude was sympathetic, his ex cathedra criticisms and comments well-reasoned and consistent, and his information impressive. The occasion for his initial comments was his dissatisfaction with the European Commissioners' Report. He had differed with his Austrian colleague over Consular jurisdiction. Bulwer looked forward to its abolition. There were differences between him and his Turkish and Russian colleagues over the Greek Convents, and he alone suggested 'conferring on Jews in the Principalities the same rights they possessed in other portions of the Ottoman Empire'.² Of immediate relevance in view of pre-election developments in the next few months and of

¹ Malmesbury - Bulwer, 10 July '58, FQ/78/1349.

² Bulwer - Malmesbury, 16 April '58, FO/78/1375.

Couza's inability later to find a ministry in either province to tackle land reform, was Bulwer's anxiety to obtain a broader franchise, one which was more complicated, but certainly making use of the traditional organs of local government, and the social geography of the country. He wrote:

'...I was and am generally speaking in favour of all institutions that tend to confer rights and impose responsibility on the Citizen, deeming this the best means by which public character can be raised and morality permanently established in these Countries; whereas my Colleagues are rather of opinion that these effects must be produced by the Central authority and all depends on the choice of the Prince who is to be at the head of the Government'. 1

The practical details which Bulwer explained in his Project of Government² required each Legislature to be elected in two degrees, the whole system being based on municipal and district councils. In a country dominated by the petty nobility and financially dependent on the small merchants, Bulwer's system had far more to recommend it than the one actually adopted. One commentator said of the latter:

'...if it be true that the Conference at Paris has established that, to be an elector in the Towns it is requisite to be possessed of real or personal property in the Town of the value of 6,000 ducats, the consequence is that in most of the towns in Moldavia there will be no electors at all...' 3

Bulwer had also wished to lay down 'the Principle that in all matters where the Imperial interests of the Ottoman Empire are concerned, the interference of the Porte should be recognised as a matter of course, whereas in all subjects purely local it should be

1. Bulwer-Malmesbury, 16 April 1858, FO.78/1375.

2. Printed for use of FO., June 30, '58, *ibid.* The franchise would still have confined actual power within the hands of the propertied classes.

3. Ongley (consul in charge at Jassy)-Bulwer, no. 7, 29 Sept. '58, *ibid.*

strictly forbidden'.¹ The wisest proposal of all was that the Porte itself should appoint the first Hospodar in each Principality for a period of years.² By allowing the Principalities to inaugurate the new Constitution the population might 'feel that a new era is dawning upon them'.³ In a lengthy despatch Bulwer justified his policy for the area, referring to his previous attitudes. His explanation was a mild criticism of the Paris conferences then sitting. He explained that he had said earlier about the votes of the Divans ad hoc that they tended to independence which was contrary to the aims of the late war, and as he put it:

'...nor could the circumstance that the independence of the Principalities was not to be actually proclaimed, be taken by me as any argument in favour of its being virtually accorded'. 4

On the contrary, he thought that an outright declaration of its independence would have enabled the new state to come to some satisfactory agreement with the Porte about a defensive and offensive alliance:

'Whereas, any arrangement establishing independence in a more underhand and indefinite manner, whilst it would only lead ultimately to the same conclusion, that is, clear and positive independence, would do so through a series of disputes and quarrels, which would render any good understanding at the last, impossible'. 4

1. Article III of Project of Government.

2. He suggested too that the princes should not be hereditary since none was pre-eminent enough to command the necessary respect. He was not to have extensive powers for Bulwer feared that a prince who could, would do what he liked. Bulwer did not allow for the tension between the men of '48, now returned, and landed interests, which would have been aggravated by the limitation of the Hospodorial rank to the Grand Boyards.

3. Bulwer - Malmesbury, 13 July, FO.78/1378.

4. Bulwer - Malmesbury, 27 July, FO.78/1365.

Events would show how right Bulwer was in this appraisal of the possibilities. He went on to conclude that as independence was out of the question, a 'clear and positive' dependence should have been defined for the Principalities.

'But this being done, I wish to be distinctly understood to say that instead of thinking that the power of the Porte in the Principalities may be increased by its constant and unsolicited interference in the affairs of the Principalities I am convinced that the extent of its power will be almost in exact proportion with its abstinence from such interference'. 1

This extreme moderation of Bulwer's resulted from his not appreciating how intensely Austria worked for a conservative system, nor how much emphasis the French government placed on advertising Union because it had already given promises at Osborne which prevented its obtaining real Union. Further, Bulwer had yet to experience the actual diplomatic conditions at Constantinople and to witness the hectic speed at which affairs would move in the Principalities once the new order was commenced. He had not picked up the actual tempo of affairs when in Paris en route to his post he advised Malmesbury:

'...that it is more for the advantage of Turkey to make certain concessions, these not being of first rate importance, if they satisfy the French government, and its national susceptibility, than to resist them successfully, thus leaving France mortified and fancying herself injured'. 2

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1. Bulwer - Malmesbury, 27 July '58, *ibid*.
 2. Bulwer - Malmesbury, 14 June '58, FO.78/1362. Soon after settling down in Constantinople Bulwer advised the Grand Vizir, A'ali Pasha: 'that the policy of the Porte, in respect to the three Principalities, should be to leave them as much as possible to themselves, and only interfere, when the great interests of the Empire were especially concerned, or when such interference was required by the Principalities themselves, and was likely, by its judicious exercise, to increase the prestige of the Porte and add thereby, in almost the only manner in which it is practicable, to its real authority.' (Bulwer-Malmesbury, 14 July, FO.78/1364) Such fine gilt would soon rub off to reveal a rougher metal.

His manner soon became more urgent after two months at his work. By this time he had already been confronted by tension in Servia, and Montenegrin intransigence. Very shortly the violent outbreak of Muslim fanaticism at Djeddah thickened the atmosphere in the eastern metropolis. Colquhoun, Consul at Bucarest, plied Bulwer with complaints of the iniquities of the administration in Moldavia. Soon after the establishment of an interim government there, according to an agreement between the Powers, he expatiated on crimes of a different kind by the new order.¹ As a consequence of this mounting pressure against the Porte, a drift towards a more pro-Turkish attitude began to influence Bulwer's policy. It was only by a policy of supporting the Porte that he could ensure the carrying out of the Convention of 19th August in the spirit in which it was intended. It was only by such a policy that he could counter French influence, both at Constantinople and especially in the Principalities.² Already his worst fears about the electoral laws were being confirmed. Not only were there difficulties in interpreting the Convention as it applied to the different Principalities, there were forces at work trying to take

¹. Before the institution of the Caimacamie ad interim of Balliano, Philippesco and Mano, Colquhoun despairing, moaned: '...never during the 24 years I have resided here, has the ministry of the Interior been in the state it now is, never has the administration of the Districts been so corrupt, so demoralized. The prefectures with one or two exceptions, are in the hands of men of no character whatever, who commit delicts for which in other times the consequences would have been the salt-mines.' To Bulwer 15 Sept. '58 FO.78/1378.

². Thouvenel, though energetic in pressing his country's wishes, nevertheless disliked French policy in the Near East after 1856. Soon he had to admit: 'Sir Henry Bulwer, with the best facade, will certainly not come to an understanding with me to reconstruct the position of Russia at Constantinople'. Thouvenel-Amedée Outry, 18 Feb. '59 Trois Années, p.337.

advantage of the absence of authority to promote party interests - boyard in Wallachia, and nationalist in Moldavia. Contrary to law the Caimacamies dismissed Prefects in the localities and replaced them with safe men while in Moldavia itself, two of the Caimacams worked against the third, Etienne Catardji, the Minister of the Interior. Bulwer, increasingly irritated by such an exhibition of blatant indifference to the wishes of the Powers and the Porte, and his attitude towards France hardening, saw the answer to the various problems in the appointment of an authority whose decision would be supported by the Powers and therefore carried out in the Principalities.¹ Quite early he sounded Malmesbury on the advisability of helping the Porte to execute the Powers' wishes by according it support in its interpretations of the Convention's meaning. The representatives should give their advice to the Turkish government in this task. Bulwer wrote:

'There are many questions arising out of the late Treaty which when the new Constitution comes into operation will require explanation or we shall have all the difficulties over again that occurred on the last occasion. The Porte should, I think, be advised to demand explanations on these questions from Congress. The delay of an additional week should be allowed for this purpose.' 2

Malmesbury exhibited his customary anxiety to speed things along in this area, and negatived the proposal, though some three weeks later, when the Paris conferences had finished Bulwer returned to the scheme. He feared that when the Imperial Firman embodying the

1. See FO.78/1332, Nov-Dec. several Despatches; Bulwer-Malmesbury, 20 Dec. '58, FO.78/1352; 'The whole affair in Moldavia is said to be got up by the French Consul in a democratic spirit most hostile to the Porte'.

2. Bulwer-Malmesbury, 27 Sept., FO.78/1349.

conferences' proposals for a *caimacamie ad interim* reached Bucarest and Jassy the Powers would be even less willing to interpose their influence. He urged:

'As questions arise with regard to the interpretation of the Convention of Paris relative to the Principalities on which it is hard for any one Power to force the Porte to give way, and as Congress can no longer pass any opinion thereon, would it not be better once for all to declare that such questions are to be decided by a majority of the Representatives of the Powers parties to the Treaty at Constantinople, including the Porte'? 1

This was a drastic solution indeed which involved a mere majority of diplomatic agents deciding the meaning of a Treaty irrespective of the interests of the several governments. The Foreign Secretary naturally declined the suggestion.² Nevertheless seen against the background of events in the Principalities Bulwer's demand had merely involved the agents giving their advice and support to the Porte in making quick decisions not of principle but on the actual application of principle to a complicated situation. Conditions in one Principality were as different as could be from those in the other. Explanations would only be of local importance and to prevent their assuming a wider significance swift decisions were necessary.³ Bulwer added, clearly indicating what grieved him most:

'...it would be expedient for the sake of the dignity of this Government, that it should be at once able to give an explanation of its own decrees founded upon the Treaty, to which it was itself a Party. But the Porte will not venture to give its own interpretation without some general authority for so doing'...4

1. Bulwer-Malmesbury, 19 Oct., FO.78/1349.

2. Malmesbury-Bulwer, 11 Nov. '58, no. 340, FO.78/1352.

3. Later he explained: 'If nothing could be decided but by reference to the Courts, either the treaty would not be carried out for months or would be carried out by the authorities in the Principalities just in the manner they thought proper'. Bulwer-Malmesbury 17 Dec. 1858.

4. Bulwer-Malmesbury, 27 Oct., no. 306, FO.78/1369.

In fact, his concern for Turkish dignity made him adopt an unwarranted interpretation of the Treaty. He held that since the Porte issued the Firmans conveying the Powers' decisions it was the executor of the Treaty. Should there not be time to consult the Powers:

'as the Ottoman Government is responsible for the elections being fair, it seems to me authorised in preventing them from being unfairly influenced and conducted'. 1

It was a characteristic piece of sophistry.

He was also perturbed at the prospect of a nationalist victory in Moldavia which he anticipated would be a prelude to a similar result in the other province. 'The democratic party', he wrote, '...will not submit to be beaten in the other province by the system which a faction of an extremely opposite character is carrying on there'.² The military reoccupation of the provinces, rendering 'their future destiny gloomy and undertain', was, he thought, within the bounds of possibility as things were developing.³ In this Bulwer showed prescience. Only the tension between France and Austria in January - February of the following year would prevent Austrian military intervention.⁴

In the event Bulwer, in spite of his having received no encouragement from home, and even contrary to the opinion now expressed by his agent in Bucarest,⁵ was able to organise diplomatic action.

1. Bulwer-Malmesbury, 15 Dec., FO.78/1371.

2. Bulwer-Malmesbury, 24 Nov., no. 382, FO.78/1370.

3. Bulwer-Malmesbury, 2 Dec., FO. 78/1370.

4. R.W. Seton-Watson- History of the Rumanians, p.265.

5. Colquhoun-Bulwer, no.54, 27 Nov., FO.78/1378. Having objected to outside interference he went on: '...the Kaimacams yielding before the counsels of those persons who really are desirous of keeping matters quiet and orderly have long ceased from making further changes, except in cases when the evidence of misconduct fully justify their removing the obnoxious employé'.

At the invitation of the Porte, the representatives in Constantinople expressed their dissatisfaction with the behaviour of the two Moldavian Kaimacams. Though passing over most of the acts of the government in Moldavia they condemned the treatment of the Ministry of the Interior, the third Kaimacam, 'er the whole elections would be illegal'. They also reproved 'the insolent conduct of said majority in Moldavia towards the Porte and its Commissioner'.¹

Two weeks later the Porte at last decided that it could no longer tolerate the proceedings so humiliating to itself, and a proposal for a delay in the elections was made. While the Powers failed to respond to this overture, the Moldavian elections took place. Even Malmesbury, impressed no doubt by Bulwer's insistence, had come to believe that something had to be done quickly to stop the farce. At Bulwer's instance he proposed another Paris conference to interpret the Convention. The resulting Anglo-French initiative was, perhaps in pique, turned down by the Porte. But, in any case, the time when the actual course of events in the Principalities could have been stayed had probably gone when the task of inaugurating the new regime had been given over to the two Kaimacams ad interim. It was not easy for the Powers lightly to abandon the work already accomplished, and to begin again with no hope of discovering another method of instituting a new system. Be that as it may, the Porte in rejecting the French proposal which Malmesbury had encouraged, turned down the last opportunity of obtaining some assistance, however slight, in asserting some control over the affairs of its awkward vassals. It mattered little, too

¹•Bulwer-Malmesbury, 28 November, FO.78/1352.

that Bulwer who had interested the Foreign Office in a Congress 'to determine on the points at issue',¹ thought now that 'conferences might reopen to decide on principles, the execution of which might be left to the Porte and Representatives here'.² He was impressed by the Porte's 'great objection' to allowing Paris to be the arbiter in eastern affairs.³ One may also hazard a guess that just as Bulwer during these very months fought hard to make the consular system revolve round the Ambassador⁴ rather than the Foreign Office, and to keep the Dragoman system unimpaired⁵ to underline his own authority, so Bulwer returned to his original idea of leaving decisions in the hands of the representatives at Constantinople for similar reasons.

On the 17th January 1859 Moldavia elected Colonel Couza as its Hospedar. Wallachia chose him as its ruler on 5 February. As if this double election were not enough to introduce a serious tension between the Powers, the Serbs had deposed their Karageorgevic Prince in December and after his superfluous abdication on 3 January, they proceeded to elect the exiled Milosh in his place. Most ominous of all Napoleon III had declared at his New Year reception that he feared Franco-Austrian relations were not as good as they might be and thereby sent tremors round the Chancelleries of Europe. In the Balkans hopes burned brighter.

1. Bulwer-Malmesbury, 22 Dec., no. 450, FO.78/1371.

2. Bulwer-Malmesbury, Tele. 23 Dec., *ibid.*

3. Bulwer-Malmesbury 23 Dec., *ibid.*

4. See above, Ch. III, p. 80. also Bulwer-Malmesbury, 13 July '58, FO.78/1364, and Bulwer-Malmesbury, 27 Oct. '58, no. 307, FO.78/1369: 'Might it not be better as a rule that...the Embassy should first decide, if it thought it could do so, and transmit its decision to the Foreign Office and the grounds for it, or refer to your Lordship should it feel itself incompetent to form any positive opinion, pointing out the grounds of difficulty'.

5. See above Ch. III, p. 76. also Bulwer-Malmesbury, 10 Nov. '58, FO.78/1369.

The pro-Austrian Tory Cabinet pursued a very active policy during the next two months in the hope of limiting an Austro-French war if not of preventing it; consequently the problems of Turkey had to be subordinated to this central issue. It was the beginning of that process by which the increasing attention given to German and Italian problems would eventually allow Serbia and the United Principalities to achieve the substance of independence.

Malmesbury's attitude towards Couza was unequivocal from the first.¹ If he was not likely to be mischievous the Porte ought to accept him. After the second election Malmesbury was opposed to a Conference unless a measure of agreement as to facts and illegalities had been previously achieved.² He was apprehensive lest the problem should be settled not on its own merits but rather

¹ Malmesbury - Bulwer, 21 Jan., FO.78/1422: 'The Porte should act for itself as much as possible keeping within its rights by the Treaty. Consider whether the recognition of Couza would be mischievous or if he is a man to be made harmless'. Malmesbury-Bulwer, '59, *ibid.*: 'War with Austria is probable. We know an attempt will be made to raise the Turkish provinces against her. This will end in their independence. Let the Porte accept any Government that is less dangerous than a revolution such as I describe.'

² Malmesbury-Bulwer, Feb. 7th. '59, *ibid.* Referring to his former proposal for a conference in December which Austria and Turkey had rejected, Malmesbury went on to explain that: 'The Conference if it had been convened when proposed by Her Majesty's Government might have averted the more recent irregularities: but the opportunity having been neglected, it appeared to Her Majesty's Government that the question of appealing to the Conference could only thereafter be advantageously reverted to when the Principalities had more deeply and completely committed themselves by a systematic disregard of the Provisions of the Convention, and when on the other hand the Porte had shown that it had exhausted all means of conciliation, but had failed to impress upon the Principalities the obligation of confining themselves within the limits laid down by Treaty for their proceedings.' In other words, the double election was not as terrible as all that.

as part of the Franco-Austrian quarrel.¹ Throughout he was determined to act with a majority of the Powers in spite of Turkey and Austria.

Bulwer, who had wanted a conference after the first election of Couza because of the serious situation within the Principalities, quickly advised the Porte to convoke a conference without expressing its views fully on the subject 'until it knew those of the Powers on whom it could rely'.² This was to reinsure the Porte against any subsequent rebuff. But the Porte at once protested against the double-election, for, as Bulwer stated, its line was 'either to oppose resolutely or to acquiesce absolutely in what has taken place'.³ He wished it 'to see whether the first course was possible before altogether repudiating the second'.⁴ Feeling that Couza was merely the tool of a violent party Bulwer expected the most to be gained was Couza's giving up Wallachia, though he anticipated that Couza would not agree.⁵ Couza appeared impressed when Churchill, the English Consul at Jassy, communicated to him that he might be assured Moldavia if he gave up the other Principality.⁶ Prokesch, Bulwer, A'ali and Fuad consequently held a meeting on 15 February at the English ambassador's instance, to decide what a European Conference should do. Owing to Austria's involvement elsewhere all that could be agreed upon was that Bulwer should continue to press Couza and

¹. Malmesbury - Bulwer, 7 Feb., *ibid.*

². Bulwer-Malmesbury, 8 Feb., *ibid.*

³. *Ibid.*

⁴. *Ibid.*

⁵. Bulwer-Malmesbury, 10 Feb., FO.78/1423.

⁶. Riker - The Making of Rumania, p.217

refer a plan of collective intervention, whereby commissioners should go with a Turkish army of occupation, to the British and Austrian governments to be recommended at the proposed conference.¹ But Bulwer's importance, on a par with the other representatives', was negligible. This was essentially a western rather than an eastern question, and had to be subordinated to the larger consideration of European balance. It was a matter for Cabinets. Under French pressure Malmesbury quickly determined upon accepting Couza as sole Hospodar. No doubt chagrined by the Turkish rejection of his advice in the previous year in favour of hereditary hospodars and later of a conference to deal with election abuses, he quickly accommodated himself to the circumstances, especially as Cowley had promptly reported Walewski's frank espousal of the Roumanian cause. He wrote to Cowley, at this point on his Vienna peace mission:

'You could at the same time at Vienna sound Buol as to our admitting the double election of Couza, provided we fortified the suzerainé of the Porte and the divisions of the provinces by stringent declarations, stating our admissions to be favours, and contrary to the original convention'. 2

Preferring to await the opinion of a conference,³ before stating his views openly, Malmesbury assumed that Couza would be recognised in which event:

'The men who put up Couza as a sham would be caught in their trap'. 4

¹. Riker, p.218.

². Memoirs of an Ex-Minister, p.156, entry 13 Feb. 1859. This was in the event to be the substance of the Protocol of 13 April, the basis of the final agreement of 6 September '59.

³. Malmesbury-Bulwer, 14 Feb. FO.78/1423. Walewski suggested a conference which would allow the double election but not union or independence.

⁴. Malmesbury - Bulwer, 14 Feb. '59, FO.78/1422.

Malmesbury's tone became more imperative as the European crisis loomed larger. First, he was urging the Porte to grant Moldavia to Couza at once;¹ then, a week later, that Couza be recognised as sole Hospodar.² By the first week in March Malmesbury, assured by Musurus, Turkish ambassador in London, that the Porte would retire 'leaving things to take their chance' if Congress were to recognise Couza, also contemplated retiring from a conference if the Porte would not yield to the Powers.³ Malmesbury's was, indeed, an awkward predicament. He was confronted with a choice between the policy of the preservation of Turkish integrity at all costs, and one of apparent sympathy with the rising nationalism of a Christian people. He was embarrassed by the Porte's unyielding hostility to Couza.

'This country', he explained, 'will not stand a Hospodar being forced down the throats of the Roumans, but on the other hand we cannot force the Porte to submit to a breach of Treaty we have so lately made'. 4

Somewhat exasperated Bulwer pointed to the fact that Couza was not so important as the spirit which had dictated the recent developments. It meant independence.⁵ Of course he was right. A policy of yielding gradually, he felt, could but end in the ascendancy of France and Russia on the banks of the Danube. He recommended three courses:

'...standing firmly by the late Convention; inducing the Porte to propose modifications in it under the proviso that the execution of the Convention thus modified will be clearly provided for by a special

¹ Malmesbury-Bulwer, 14 Feb., op.cit.

² Malmesbury-Bulwer, 21 Feb., ibid.

³ Malmesbury-Bulwer, 6 March, ibid.

⁴ Malmesbury-Bulwer, ibid.

⁵ Bulwer-Malmesbury, 15 Feb., FO.78/1423.

arrangement as to intervention, or the total abrogation of the guarantee of the Convention in favour of much extended concessions as may give the Principalities at once all that they desire; and which if neither restrained nor satisfied they will assuredly seek to obtain'.¹

However, Bulwer was galvanised into action as soon as the war between France and Austria became imminent and he agreed with Malmesbury that it would be advisable to settle the question one way or another without delay.² Bulwer spared no pains in persuading the Porte to submit to the will of the Powers.

The Porte was at a great disadvantage. Fuad knew that whatever he might do he certainly could not withdraw from a Congress. Further, if too much time were to slip by it was hard to predict whether Couza could withstand the pressure to dispense with investiture altogether and declare the Principalities independent. Walewski, in February, had suggested that a guarantee might be devised to prevent other infractions of the Convention. Now, in March, Austria was speaking a similar language, and the British government did not like the idea of being publicly outvoted at a Conference - 'worse than any other complication to England'.³ Other things being equal all that was needed now was a decent and dignified time to elapse before an official assent to the recent treaty infraction would be forthcoming from the Porte.

During the months before the outbreak of the Italian war, Bulwer had flooded Malmesbury with suggestions for the solution of several

¹. Bulwer-Malmesbury, 22 Feb., *ibid*.

². Bulwer-Malmesbury, 16 April, FO.78/1430.

³. Malmesbury-Bulwer, 26 Feb., FO.78/1423.

difficulties. It was the internal situation in the Principalities which chiefly concerned him. Not that he had avoided the error of assuming that diplomacy could solve what were essentially social problems and questions of internal politics. Simply, he was prone to expanding on a pet theme, namely the weaknesses and failings of the constitution. The point that the Constitution needed revising in its entirety and the electoral qualifications made more logical, was sound and reached the heart of the matter. At the time it was a ridiculous suggestion.¹ Another proposition that Couza might be given a probationary period of 18 months as Caimacam to prove his ability, after which he might be made Prince, would have provided a basis for resolving the international complications, but in terms of local Rouman politics was silly. Bulwer insisted to the point of weariness that 'nothing permanent can be done except by standing firmly by the Treaty or by making great and radical changes in it'.²

Bulwer suggested in March 1859, that the election of a prince in either province should be by an Assembly for the purpose and not the Legislative Assembly - a measure to give the prince the kind of freedom which Couza lacked at that moment, that is freedom from the groups who had carried him to power. He should at first be named by an outside authority to implement the constitution for four or five years. The electoral laws should be revised for, as they were, they kept out the main body of the peasantry in rural

¹.Bulwer - Malmesbury, 8 March, FO.78/1423.

².Ibid. One suspects he must have wearied both Malmesbury and Russell by this 'I told you so' attitude.

districts and made the votes in some towns too exclusive.¹ Bulwer did not quarrel with the Principle of Union which might have been compatible with dependence, but with the overlooking of the Sultan's opinion and the infraction of Treaty rights. A respect for both was the only manner in which he could obtain prestige for himself, and further British policy. It was a matter of interests but he glossed this over in somewhat self-righteous language:

'...if treaties are to be lightly esteemed, if the parties who signed them are to allow their agents to act against them, when the ink with which their signatures were written is hardly dry, what trust can be placed in the only substitute we know of for contention and war?...The constitution, such as it is, has more chance of working well, under the conviction that it must be obeyed than it will have with the mere sanction of the double election of Prince Couza, under the idea that its regulations may be disregarded'. 2

And after asserting that in the latter case the Principalities and Europe would be kept in a constant state of irritation, he stressed the need to discover:

'the mode guaranteeing something like obedience to whatever plan, which...may be adopted'. 3

Throughout this crisis Bulwer chafed at his enforced inactivity. His government's line destroyed his policy before he could put it into practice and he would have done better to have confined himself to finding ways of ingratiating himself with Couza, perhaps by expressing sympathy with him in his attempts to cope with the awkward internal situation. Malmesbury had to act quickly and

¹. Bulwer-Malmesbury, 23 March '59, FO.78/1429.

². Couza had to fight a long battle with his political foes, ending with his plebiscite of May '64 before he was able to extend the franchise.

³. Bulwer-Malmesbury, 23 March, *ibid*.

Bulwer's awareness of this ought to have dominated his thinking, for in any case the question was being settled in Paris.

The Russian view that there should be no alteration whatever in the Treaty of Paris, and that a conference should meet before a Congress on Italian affairs was supported by Malmesbury who merely stipulated that the representatives of the Powers should be able to advise when the *casus intervenus* arose.¹ Consequently France and Russia insisted that it should be a unanimous decision. Walewski refused to act until he had reached a preliminary agreement with the British government which was eventually satisfied when a sufficiently strong formula on the integrity of the Convention presented itself. On 7 April Britain and France reached an understanding. Walewski was able to introduce the pre-arranged formula (13 April) amounting to a declaration that the double-election did not conform to the Convention of 19 August. The Porte was asked to invest Couza as an exception, it being understood that any further infraction of the Convention, so declared by the representatives of the Powers, would be dealt with by the Porte according to a fixed procedure. Coercive measures were the last resort. Cut short by the outbreak of the Italian war, the conference could not await the results of its efforts.

As Austrian troops entered Piedmont Malmesbury urged immediate acceptance and praised Couza's moderation.² Expecting the worst

¹. Riker, p.225.

². Malmesbury - Bulwer, 31 May '59, FO.78/1432.

in Europe, Bulwer thought that Turkey would have to join a league of armed neutrality with England, the Low Countries, Prussia and Sweden. He used very strong language to the Porte to get it to yield to the simple form of the Protocol of 13 April. However it demanded conditions about intervention which would have required another general agreement. Riker suggests that by his separate action Bulwer was trying to impress the Porte with the fact of his abrupt volte face, and to get back his personal prestige.¹ The suggestion that Bulwer for personal reasons was the cause of Lallemand's inability to bring the Representatives to combine to press the plan on the Porte, is inaccurate. Austria could never have joined in such a combination. Nor could Bulwer have taken a step which might have emphasised a disagreement with Austria in the Near East. How Bulwer's hint to the Porte that the whole question of the treatment of the Christians might be taken up by Russia if it did not yield on this question may be construed as intrigue whereby Bulwer hoped to 'banish the bogey of Russian ascendancy',² it is difficult to imagine. The most that can be said is that Bulwer, once the war had commenced, was fearful lest Turkey, in her isolation, might turn to Russia. It was an hypothesis which Bulwer expected his chief to examine at his leisure.³ What Bulwer actually said to the Porte was that should it withhold its sanction from Couza, the latter would do without it, and that the

¹. Riker, p.228.

². Riker, p.227-8.

³. Bulwer-Malmesbury, 3 May, FO.78/1431: 'The idea nevertheless may be chimerical and it is not from this remote corner that I can judge of its feasibility'.

Porte's action would make 'an unfavourable impression on the Cabinet of St. James'.¹ A declaration of independence would be concurred in by the Powers, including Britain, and it would be followed by one from Milosh of Servia. Complications with Russia might ensue resulting in a Russian occupation of the Principalities. As there was nothing in the Turkish Treasury, and the Porte was trying to raise the next year's revenue by a sacrifice of 50%² in interest, Bulwer was, may be, not as erratic as at first sight appears. The rest of Europe could have done nothing to halt Russia. Malmesbury however was able to reassure Bulwer that the intentions of Russia and France regarding Turkey were satisfactory.

Again Riker's statement that Bulwer was lenient to the Porte's manoeuvre to add conditions to its acceptance of the Protocol of 13 April is not enough. The Porte's acceptance would have included a clause allowing either one of the Principalities to vote for another Prince through its Assembly, and leaving Turkey free to accede. Omission was advised, in the event, by Bulwer, owing to his colleagues' hostility.³ Bulwer went so far as to write to Fuad telling him that in submitting to the fresh Protocol the Porte would be better off than before, for it was binding on the Powers who if sincere would have to help the Porte with measures against a future infraction of the Treaty.⁴

During July the Turkish counter-project involving the addition of the Protocol of 13 April to the Convention as an 'acte additionnel'

¹. Bulwer-Pisani (head dragoman), 29 April, 1430.

². Bulwer-Malmesbury 28 May, FO.78/1430. The Grand Duke Constantine's itinerary in the Greek Islands also warranted suspicion.

³. Bulwer-Malmesbury, 28 May, FO.78/1431.

⁴. Bulwer-Fuad Pasha, 18 May, FO.78/1431.

was similarly given up.¹ The conference, meeting at Paris on 6 September, confirmed Couza as Hospodar of both Principalities. Even the declaration of 13 April that the recent acts were contrary to Treaty was not repeated. The Porte was given the right to point to any future illegality though the Powers had to agree upon the 'casus intervenus' and the measures to be taken. This was instead of allowing the Porte any initiative in taking action in which the Powers afterwards would be invited to concur.

Russell, taking over the Foreign Office from Malmesbury in June, resigned himself to the situation created by the Treaty of Paris and acknowledged the strategic limitations which were more important than the psychological ones which had embarrassed his predecessor. After a few months in office he revealed what his future line would be. It was a policy of wait-and-see. He wrote:

'The Porte has agreed not to send troops into the Principalities without the consent of the Great Powers of Europe. But it is difficult to imagine a case short of an open declaration of independence, which would induce the Powers of Europe to agree with unanimity to a Turkish intervention.

While there are such obstacles in the way of the assertion of authority by the Sultan, Great Britain and France, having no access by land to the Principalities and no right to send fleets into the Black Sea cannot give any efficient succour to the Porte.

Such is the condition in which the Principalities are left by the Treaty of Paris.

In this position Her Majesty's Government are very unwilling to pretend to an authority which they cannot exercise...The time is not yet come, however, when the Porte is likely to arrive at any final and complete arrangement'. 2

¹ Malmesbury-Bulwer, 14 July, FO.78/1487. Turkey was isolated as soon as Malmesbury informed Bulwer 'that H.M.'s Govt. are not prepared to support against the objections of other Powers the conditions which the Porte proposes to attach to its recognition of Prince Couza'. See Riker, p.247.

² Russell - Bulwer, 13 Dec. '59, FO.78/1427

Russell implied that the assent of the Porte to the Principalities' actual independence would not be objectionable to England. However, other preoccupations, as with the Porte's dignity, would determine British foreign policy towards this area.

Bulwer's conclusions were couched in a similar vein. He referred to the chronic unrest in the Principalities but went on to say that the best thing to do was to maintain:

'...whatever the Congress of Paris and the recent Conferences have affirmed with only such changes as a practical working out of the principles agreed to may gradually and absolutely require; and I believe moreover that the interests of the Porte are more engaged in supporting the Hospodar it is about to confirm, than in provoking the chances of other contingencies'. ¹

So after the settlement of the first problem arising from the Convention of 19 August the Foreign Office had written off the future Rumania as forming part of the Ottoman Empire vital enough to be included in the traditional policy of Britain. Moreover, the defence of British interests, diplomatic ones in this instance, required the co-operation of France rather than Austria. In effect Malmesbury's policy had been based on the assumption of French ascendancy in the East. Russell, in the despatch quoted above, paid homage to the fact, and he would not fail to trim his policy accordingly, in spite of Bulwer's occasional aberrations. These last would be stimulated as much by temper as by calculation.

¹ Bulwer - Russell, 14 Sept. '59, no. 155, FO.78/1435.

'B'

Towards Legislative and Administrative Union

After Couza had attained power in February 1859, Bulwer's policy, very broadly speaking, was to give the Hospodar the support he needed to secure his internal position.¹ The defeat of the Radicals would thus enable Couza to fulfil his obligations to the Powers. To a degree Bulwer accepted Couza at his face value and in sympathising overmuch with the Prince's difficulties was not always clear in his own mind whether Couza would want to fulfil his obligations anyway. However, since domestic affairs in the Principalities made Couza dependent on the good-will of the Powers for his tenure of office, here was a situation which might have allowed the application of a well-conceived policy, carried out with determination - that is if the Powers had been agreeable.

Bulwer's policy, though by no means a line of least resistance, was generally speaking a reasonable compromise between interests and circumstances. But he failed to consider sufficiently the limits of British influence, as in the previous crisis. Such a consideration might have moderated the strong tone with which, with no corresponding success, he voiced his opinions.

The international situation during the period when the legislative union of the Principalities was the most prominent of Balkan issues (till December 1860), was not nearly as uncomplicated as it had been during 1859. The Porte was generally the

¹. Bulwer's sympathy was constantly blunted by Couza's handling of specific issues, namely the application of the Capitulations in his country, the secularisation of the Dedicated Convents and the entry of arms into the Principalities.

the enemy of Couza, continuing to hold the view expressed by Fuad Pasha in 1856,¹ that the developments in the Principalities, if permitted, 'would loosen the bonds which attach them to the Empire, and consequently destroy, for the Empire and the Principalities, that moral but real force which their actual position gives them today'.² Owing to the predominance of France at Constantinople and Napoleon III's warnings,³ Turkey could do little of her own. Further in the particular instance of the demand for legislative union, the Porte was from the first influenced by Bulwer's sympathetic arguments in favour of giving Couza what he asked. Russia became increasingly unsympathetic towards the Couza regime. In the first place Russian diplomatic support to France and the pro-union policy had only been a 'quid pro quo' for French help in the event of the Tsar's government being able to reverse the clauses of the Paris Treaty pertaining to Russian neutrality in the Black Sea. Gortchakoff hoped that something might benefit Russia from union. Perhaps his candidate the Duke of Leuchtenberg might yet obtain the hospodariat and at one stroke supplant French hegemony. Couza's francophil tendencies never ceased to cause resentment in the Russian Chancellor.⁴ The latter tried to recover lost ground by recruiting partisans among the old boyards.⁵ The confiscation of arms in December by the Principalities government, coupled with the frequent comings and goings of emigré Poles and Hungarians could not but make Russian

¹ Circular to the Diplomatic agents of the Sultan, 21 July. See

P. Henry - L'Abdication du Prince Cuza, p.13.

² Circular to the Diplomatic agents of the Sultan, 21 July.

³ P. Henry, p.14.

⁴ P.17, *ibid.*

⁵ P.17, *ibid.*

support for a pro-Couza French policy less assured.¹ Thouvenel, the French Foreign Minister, found it a trying business keeping Russia in line. Hence it was doubly imperative that Britain should not be antagonised. The conservative Thouvenel was naturally irritated by Couza for his handling of the rights of foreigners and then for his confiscation of the arms landed at Galatz.² These gratuitous acts of provocation certainly did not make any easier Thouvenel's task of working with Britain in support of Couza's proposals for administrative union.³ Despite the situation in the Principalities the Liberal Ministry in England, glad enough to see Couza ruler rather than risk another major change, could only play second fiddle to France at Constantinople. No matter how tentative the alliance between France and Russia, it was inconceivable that Britain should co-operate with Russia in the

¹. For the larger causes of tension between France and Russia see above Chapter II.

². See below, p.174, for an account of negotiations concerning Capitulations in the Principalities.

³. French sympathy for Rumania gradually declined after this (though Riker, determined to see things in black and white, makes the most of what was left of that sympathy). In January 1863, the new French Foreign Minister, Drouyn de Lluys, even more conservative than Thouvenel, would react very strongly to Couza's collusion with Michael of Servia over the importation of arms. By this time the Principalities were as much of an irritant to France as to other Powers. No help was forthcoming from Paris when Couza eventually fell. Similarly Russian antagonism seriously concerned the European Powers after 1863 when Couza's attitude to the Dedicated Convents, the rights of foreigners, and a new agrarian law, became unyielding. See P. Henry p.41 and p.109, Jean Alecsandri to Baligot, 8 April '63: 'Decidedly Lord John Russell has succeeded in passing us off in the eyes of other governments for liege men of Russia'. Ibid, p.111, Alecsandri - Baligot, 19 Jan. '64: In a conversation with Alecsandri, Budberg, the Russian ambassador in Paris, stated: 'The Emperor (Napoleon III) is less calm than his Minister (de Lluys) and the other day he explicitly declared to me that the infraction committed by Prince Couza in the Convention would not be tolerated'. Ibid, 113-4, 20 February '64: 'So everything conspires to show Austria as really upset by our armaments and makes me attribute to the irritation of this Power the ill-humour of M. Drouyn de Lluys against us...'

event of her detachment from France - as for example after the Polish rebellion. So the alternatives were supporting France with a bad grace or retiring altogether from the Balkan arena.¹ The second choice was out of the question.

During the late summer of 1859 several hints of other problems put the diplomatists on their guard. The Bulgarians were turning against the Greek regimen; in Servia Milosch felt his way towards a policy directed against resident Turks; and in official circles much was made of the rumoured comings and goings of emigré Poles, Hungarians, and revolutionary Italians in the Principalities. The Spring of 1860 would break with dramatic force over Syria with the slaughter of the Maronites by the Druse Arabs. The sending of French troops to the area did not make Anglo-French relations any easier while the Syrian occupation would embitter them until June 1861. Gortchakoff's demand for an enquiry by a European Commission into the condition of the Balkan Christians (May '60), accompanied, it seemed to Bulwer,² by suspicious troop movements on the Bessarabian frontier, presaged, it was thought, a further period of intense Russian activity. It was within these pressures that the European Powers, notably Britain and France, shaped a very moderate and conciliatory policy towards the Principalities.

Russell and Bulwer kept a close and intelligent watch upon Rouman internal politics during the months following the latest

¹ Austrian diplomatic activity was restricted by Austria's involvement in other more important affairs.

² Bulwer - Russell, 8 Feb. '60, and 30 May '60, PRO. 30/22 88.

concession to Rouman nationalism in the September Protocol. The first scare came soon after. In December '59 the Central Commission at Focsani proposed a thorough reorganisation of the Convention, including organic union and a foreign prince. Seeing that such an event was likely, Bulwer had alerted Russell somewhat dramatically:

'...the Central Committee in point of fact proposes both the union and independence of the Principalities and disregards altogether the terms of the Convention. ...my idea is that to put an end to constant difficulties on this subject there are only two courses: that of strictly enforcing the Convention, or that of abandoning all control over the Principalities'. 1

Russell's phlegmatic reply, that 'H.M.'s Government are very unwilling to pretend to an authority which they cannot exercise',² was sufficient to make Bulwer turn more determinedly to the possible ways of conciliation. Fortunately, too, Couza had to prop his not too secure position by obtaining legislative and administrative union from the Porte, rather than as a concession to internal factiousness. The Central Commission was dissolved, likewise were the Assemblies. During the next few months Bulwer, always sceptical of the practicability of the regime, learned to sympathise with Couza in the midst of his unyielding political difficulties. The Prince's opportunities for choosing the right ministers were few and the constant changes in them did not improve matters. The only slight improvements he had been able to make were in the personnel of the administration. A lack of prestige, preventing his allying with the radicals who would have worked for electoral

¹ 27 Nov. '59, FO.78/1426.

² Russell - Bulwer, 13 Dec. *ibid*, see above p.145.

reform,¹ and hostility to the Boyards who fought to prevent real agrarian reform, persuaded Couza to seek the help of the Powers to deal with the crisis which fumed on his horizon. The recent gains of the nationalist movement were in danger of being lost should he fail to steer clear of the Scylla of the Radicals and the Charybdis of the Boyards. A moderately worded Note to Negri explained the embarrassment of having a capital at Focsani where ordinary comforts did not exist, consequently where it was difficult to find men of talent who would go, and where a Court of Cassation² would eventually be established.

Thouvenel quickly sounded Russell as to the propriety of moving the Central Commission to Bucarest, or of allowing it to meet alternately at the Wallachian and Moldavian capitals. Russell immediately favoured a change.³ He wrote to Bulwer:

'As far as Her Majesty's Government are concerned, they consider that the removal of the Commission from Fokshany would be desirable rather than otherwise; but I have to desire you to report to me your opinion upon this question'.⁴

Bulwer was disturbed at the prospects in the troublesome provinces. ^{He was} Well-informed by two vigorous and percipient consuls, Green at Bucarest and Churchill at Jassy, ^{and} there was little that slipped his notice. He took his cue from Russell's request, writing

¹. According to Protocol no. 9, 10 July '58.

². Riker, p. 291.

³. Riker - The Making of Rumania, gives an erroneous account of the workings of British diplomacy, seeming to despise diplomacy anyway and only forgiving the French because they advertised their support of nationalism. Russell reacted instantaneously and sympathetically. That he could have done little else is not to the point. One wonders why Riker makes the odd sarcastic interpolation, for example, 'strange to say, even Russell expressed the opinion', (p. 296) when a straightforward reading of the material makes Russell's favourable policy to the Principalities obvious to banality.

⁴. 23 April '60, no. 169., FO. 78/1496.

back:

'The two extreme parties conservative and radical, have united against the Government - the first in order to overturn Couza...the last in order to get the Prince to place his administration in their hands.

It seems almost probable that the present Hospodar will have to undergo a Revolution or make one. The Constitution moreover is an unmanageable one: made without the slightest reference to the wants or condition of the country and will have to be modified.

'...a popular chamber cannot govern a country; and as there is nothing between that chamber and the Prince with governing powers - and the Prince has hardly any power-government exists nowhere. ...What I advise is, that Couza should if possible come here and explain his difficulties'. 1

In his official despatch he suggested that Couza should prove his case at Constantinople while the Porte should recommend the changes to the Powers. The Central Commission would best meet alternately at Bucarest and Jassy.²

Though Negri had refused to do more than sound the ambassadors, hoping that Couza's eventual trip to pay his homage to the Sultan would do the trick, the response had been favourable. Austria of course remained hostile.

In the Principalities, the parties by stifling Couza's attempts to implement the requirements of several Protocols unwittingly prepared the ground for another initiative. In June Couza penned an elaborate Memorandum to Negri referring to these difficulties in the way of good government. The main points were the union of the two governments and the assemblies, and a revision of the electoral laws. La Vallette, and Prokesch did not encourage Negri while only A'ali beside, saw the Memorandum. As time appeared to

¹•Bulwer-Russell, 9 May '60, G & D 30/22 88

²•Bulwer-Russell, no.255, 16 May '60, FO.78/1506

be running out, Couza, in connection with his coming visit to the Sultan, gave it out that he would retire 'unless on going to Constantinople he received certain concessions at the hands of the Porte'.¹ Russell quickly instructed Bulwer 'to take such steps as you may consider best in order to induce His Highness not to resign'.² Meanwhile, the same month, Couza united the two ministries of War with a central direction at Bucarest which was to be his chief residence. Plied by Russell with instructions to urge Couza to prevent any infraction of the Treaty 'without the consent of the Powers',³ Bulwer obtained a clear promise from the Prince "that he would oppose all attempts to change the treaty 'motu proprio' by the Principalities whilst I undertook to represent his difficulties to you:- and to endeavour to strengthen his hands against the attempts which might be made for overturning the Constitution altogether..."⁴ Upon A'ali Bulwer pressed the necessity of a conciliatory policy while at the same time he advised Couza to work with the Porte 'in a friendly and proper manner'.⁵

When at last Prince Couza paid his respects to the Sultan, he was warmly welcomed and feted.⁶ Upon Bulwer he made 'a most favourable impression, and I have no hesitation in saying that he is a man above the common, and with a mind which seems likely to improve by responsibility and experience'.⁷ In spite of

¹ Russell - Bulwer, 25 Aug., FO.78/1499.

² Ibid.

³ Bulwer - Russell, 10 Dec., FO.78/1514.

⁴ Bulwer - Russell, 12 Dec., PRO.30/22 88.

⁵ Bulwer - Russell, 5 Dec., FO.78/1514.

⁶ Couza arrived 6 October.

⁷ Bulwer - Russell, 16 Oct., no. 680, FO.78/1512.

numerous provocations this opinion did not change till 1864 when a dictatorship seemed to be an immediate possibility. Answering Russell's despatch of 21 September 'and the general question of what policy to pursue with respect to the several wishes of Prince Couza tending more or less to unite the government of the two Principalities', the ambassador produced a long statement minutely entering into all the reasons why it was necessary to concede Couza's demands. The state of the Empire had to be considered, the feelings, running high, in the Principalities, and the likely alternatives to his policy. As for the supposed Russian proclivities of the Rouman provinces, Bulwer scotched this myth in no uncertain fashion. 'They dispute with Russia the possession of a portion of Bessarabia', he wrote. How did the Porte's interests figure in all this?

'All real resistance to the project of Union', declared Bulwer, 'when Prince Couza assumed the rule of the two Principalities was vanquished: the national feeling in favour of it, instead of diminishing, has gained ground. The Porte has less power than it had for opposing it: nobody, if the point came to a practical issue, would oppose it. Many of the reasons for our contending against it have disappeared. ...all that the Ottoman Empire can expect...is a friendly neighbour. Its policy is to grasp at this substantial advantage, and to run no longer after a shadowy one'. 1

To contend for Treaty rights, Bulwer thought, would be to court disaster in the Principalities, 'and then the question of a Foreign Prince' naturally comes forward'. The Sultan should officially ask Couza what he wanted and content him as much as possible.

Cowley's suggestion of making possible concessions coterminous with

1. Bulwer - Russell, 30 Oct. '60, no. 702, FO.78/1512

rule by a native Prince, Bulwer toned down. 'I would bear that suggestion in mind without bringing it too prominently forward'. But, on the other hand, the Porte could recommend 'that whilst the Prince lives and reigns, certain concessions adapted to the situation in which he finds himself should be made in his favour'. Such a step could be retraced only with difficulty, but 'would be naturally retraced if two Princes were again named to them'. In this way Bulwer tried to avoid creating unnecessary difficulties. It was best to leave future solutions to future problems. In brief the Porte should act quickly and make its concessions appear to result from the Prince's recent visit, thus enhancing his prestige and preserving his loyalty.¹

Yet by the time the first arms crisis had interfered with the course of this affair, Couza had still to obtain some official gesture from the Porte, though A'ali had promised to make haste.²

The geographical situation of the Principalities, surrounded by Russia, Austria, restive Servia, and Turkey, gave to the introduction of French arms into Galatz an importance which the size of the transaction hardly warranted. Cavour in the war with Austria had been anxious to use the Hospodar for Italy's advantage. The upshot was that General Klapka reached Jassy and possibly signed two conventions with Couza. The object was to enable Hungarian patriots to establish arms depots in the Principalities. Couza was to be given rifles from France. Whatever the truth of this, in

¹. Bulwer - Russell, 30 Oct. '60 no. 702, FO.78/1512.

². Bulwer - Russell, 10 Dec., FO.78/1514 .

the event Couza had been advised to keep quiet and not to create complications. After Villa Franca, Cavour, however, was not restricted by his French ally and determined to use the Principalities. Intrigues multiplied and Austrian fears increased. Hungarian emigrés passed constantly through the Turkish province to join the Hungarian Legion in Italy. Finally, in December, it came to light that two Sardinian vessels, the 'Unione' and the 'Mathilde', had unloaded arms at Galatz. The three which had been detained at Sulina at Austria's request, returned to Constantinople escorted by a Turkish warship. Baron Prokesch, the Austrian Internuncio, had quickly taken up the question and with some violence, which was his undoing for it provoked the prince into adopting a stubborn attitude. Originally assuming he might be able to confiscate the arms, Couza had perforce to change his mind owing to the irritation of Thouvenel and Russia caused by the enrolment of Moldo-Wallachian officers in Victor Emmanuel's army. Bulwer, sick with pleurisy during the last week of December,¹ was strangely enough galvanised into action, having till then effaced himself, allowing Prokesch to take the lead.² Austria, in spite of her own consul's objection against such an impolitic move, had insisted that the arms already landed should be sequestered under consular surveillance, thereby questioning Couza's good faith. Bulwer then associated himself with the other representatives in backing the Porte's request that the arms should be simply sent to Constantinople. But it was evident that French views had changed.³ Couza was suspicious, correctly

¹. Bulwer - Russell, 2 Jan '61, 30/22 89.

². Riker, p.278 n.2.

³. Bulwer - Russell, 28 Dec. G&D 30/22 88 and Riker p.280-1.

assuming that the Porte's aim was to keep the arms once arrived.

By the end of December when the French inclined to the opinion that the arms should be simply sent out of the country, Bulwer had taken over the direction of negotiations. Cautioned by Russell to be careful to co-operate with the representatives in any move to deal with the Arms,¹ Bulwer rejoined by sponsoring the French compromise.² He had full discretionary powers after this to settle the problem.³ Both he and Russell especially were chiefly disturbed at the prospect of European complications arising from this and the presence of suspicious characters in the area.⁴ Apart from these preoccupations Bulwer was only concerned in getting the difficulty of the arms out of the way. At no point did he emphasise Treaty right, in contrast to his perverse insistence on this in the negotiations upon the Dedicated Convents.⁵ Russell certainly thought along these lines:

'Are the cannon and arms re-embarked at Galatz?
Whether they are sent to Constantinople or Genoa
this step is quite necessary',

he wrote to Bulwer⁶.

During the first week of January the Representatives agreed to ask Couza to send the arms out of the country, Bulwer declining to discuss 'the further question as to what should be done with them when they have left Galatz, until they have done so'.⁷ The prince had already made it clear that he would assent to such a request.

¹. Russell - Bulwer, 28 Dec. '60, FO.78/1514.

². Bulwer - Russell, 30 Dec., FO.78/1514, 28 Dec., PRO.30/22.88.

³. FO-Bulwer, 1 Jan. '61., FO.78/1559.

⁴. Russell - Bulwer, 1 Jan '61, no. 3, FO.78/1559.

⁵. See below, p.135.

⁶. Russell - Bulwer, 7 Jan '61, FO.78/1559.

⁷. Bulwer - Russell, 9 Jan., G&D 30/22 89.

If Bulwer hoped to have the arms confiscated on their reaching Constantinople, his scheme was nipped in the bud by Russell's instructions. He explained:

'We ought to be satisfied with the punctual execution of the order given by Prince Couza. If it has been agreed that arms are to go back to Italy, the Porte should adhere to that agreement. If not, let them be sequestrated and not confiscated by any means. Be friendly to Prince Couza in all matters you think safe for the Sultan'. 1

Quite possibly Bulwer had some 'arrière pensée' on the subject. Prokesch, however, by insisting on the confiscation of the arms by Turkey had made no other course possible than that of returning the arms to Genoa.² The Danube froze giving the representatives more time to think. Though he saw the arms business in the context of the more dangerous internal crisis in the Principalities, with the greatest tact, Bulwer continued to keep before Couza his original promise to send the arms away.³

'It is difficult', he complained, 'to come to any settlement as to the Principalities and the demands of Prince Couza until the arms question is disposed of'. 4

Russell felt the same.⁵ He instructed Bulwer:

'Any favour shown by the Porte to Prince Couza ought to be dependent on the bona fides of his conduct in regard to the arms...If...he acts with loyalty and good faith, you will do well to advise the Sultan to make him any concessions compatible with his position and the Treaty of Paris'. 6

1. Russell - Bulwer, 9 Jan '61, FO.78/1559.

2. Bulwer-Russell, 8 Jan '61 FO.78/1559: Bulwer-Russell, 23 Jan '61, PRO. 30/22 89.

3. Bulwer-Churchill, no.3 25 Jan '61, FO.78/1566.

4. Bulwer-Russell, 23 Jan, op.cit.

5. In January 1861 Couza had sent another memoire to Negri on the subject of changing the electoral laws, and unifying the two legislatures and administrations. Bulwer had passed it on to FO.

6. Russell-Bulwer, 21 Feb., no. 105, FO.78/1559.

Significantly, he added that the concessions would of course devolve on his successors since there would be no way of preventing this.

At last Couza asked whether an English ship might transport the arms to Genoa. Prokesch assented to the proposal.¹ With Russell approving,² Bulwer took the necessary steps, previously informing all the other ambassadors, 'and especially M. de Lavalette',³ and requesting them to assist 'in any way in the operation'.⁴ Only Lavalette raised objections, which Bulwer tried to accommodate especially by looking for the Sardinian agent who could convey the arms away and promise to take them out of the Turkish Empire.⁵ But no agent came forward who could prove his right of possession.

In the third week of March, unknown to Lavalette and the others - saving Prokesch and A'ali - the arms were shipped away on the 'Banshee' and the 'Psyche', two British ships.⁶ To all intents and purposes there was no longer any problem, though the Italian agent, Durando, supported in all probability by the French ambassador, continued to storm at Bulwer for the next month.⁷ A'ali Pasha agreed

¹ Riker, p.284 holds that the idea was Prokesch's and that Bulwer took all credit for it.

² Russell - Bulwer, 20 Feb., FO.78/1559.

³ Riker, p.284, takes Lavalette's view that he was not informed.

⁴ Bulwer-Russell, 27 Feb. '61, no.152, FO.78/1567.

⁵ Lavalette took for granted that Couza would not consent, which persuaded Bulwer that if Couza's and the Porte's assent had not been obtained first the French ambassador would have seen to it that Couza did not co-operate. It was just a matter of personal pique.

Bulwer-Russell, 2 April, no.239, FO.78/1568.

⁶ Bulwer-Russell, 21 March, FO.78/1560; Bulwer-Russell 13 March, PRO.30/22 89.

⁷ Bulwer-Russell, 2 April '61 FO.78/1560, 3 April, no.348, FO.78/1569; Bulwer-Russell, 20 March '61 PRO 30/22 89, 27 March '61, ibid and 17 April ibid.

to Bulwer's proposal that the arms should be kept in deposit at Constantinople until a party came forward proving his right to them. He would have to guarantee to take them out of the Empire.¹ Only in November 1862 did the arms finally leave Turkish waters.²

At no time had either Bulwer or Russell lost sight of the great object, which was to succour Couza in his struggles against the factious politicians who for one reason or another would have brought him low. On the whole their opinion of Couza's value as the only obstacle to a foreign Prince remained unchanged: hence their moderation in the arms affair. Couza's refusal to be pushed into extreme policies partly resulted from his knowledge that he had a sympathetic hearing in Constantinople.

But the workings of diplomacy were slow. All parties, including the Austrian, were of the opinion by now that Couza's predicament made further delay highly dangerous. Bulwer set to work to hurry the Porte in the task of replying to Couza's Memoire of the previous June.³ Long before the Moldavian Assembly's vote for union with the Wallachian Assembly Bulwer anxiously plied A'ali

¹. A'ali - Bulwer, 28 April, FO.78/1570.

². Riker, p.286 n.2, not having examined all the material makes a mystery of this episode. He found in FO.78/1658 a clue. In FO.78/1659 he would have found the answer; Erskine-Russell no.68, 12 Nov: 'With reference to Y.L.'s despatch no.615 of 17 October, stating your expectation that the Porte would not deliver up the arms brought from Galatz...until some assurance was given that they would not be handed over to the Italian volunteers, I have the honour to enclose herewith copies of a correspondence between the Italian Minister and A'ali Pasha in which the former has pledged his word that the arms shall be conveyed direct to Genoa and shall be used only for the Royal Army. The arms are consequently to be delivered to the Marquis de Caraccioli in the course of today or tomorrow'.

³. Riker, p.307 and 311, comments that Russell was not too interested at this stage. The description is neither true nor pertinent. There was an English ambassador at Constantinople acting on instructions.

and Fuad with hints and suggestions on the necessity of swift and conciliatory action.¹ The Turkish statesmen listened attentively to his proposal for a letter to be sent to Couza acquainting him with the Porte's sympathy and asking him what he required. Cannily Bulwer had explained that the Porte should point to the arms crisis as the delaying factor. Such a letter was drawn up and the matter brought before two Councils at the Porte during March.² But owing to Austrian and Russian advice the Porte still hesitated,³ and after a month had passed, Bulwer, in spite of A'ali's agreement and M. de Lavalette's support, despaired of the Porte's ever acting in time.⁴ For Green in Bucarest he produced a string of arguments in support of Couza, always ending with the same refrain:

'I see no chance if he is overturned of naming two native princes, one for Moldavia, and one for Wallachia, and no chance for naming any other native Prince for Moldo-Wallachia. We might thus have to pass through a state of intermediate confusion, which would lead to a foreign occupation- in order to arrive at the question of a foreign Prince, the selection of whom would be a great European difficulty'. 5

Russell, unimpressed by the Prince's political abilities, but concerned with the urgency of his political problems, already foresaw a foreign intervention. To Bulwer, keeping before him the need to watch events 'carefully', he gave the warning:

'The Boyards (in Wallachia) may very probably call for a foreign force, but according to the Treaty of Paris an agreement of the Representatives of the Powers would be necessary to make such a measure legal'. 6

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1. Bulwer - Russell, 7 Feb. '61, no. 97, FO.78/1566.
 2. Riker, p.312.
 3. Bulwer-Russell, 6 March '61, no.171, FO.78/1567, 20 March, PRO.30/22 89.
 4. Bulwer feared any complications which might give an advantage to the Slavs. Bulwer-Russell, 6 March op.cit: 'The great point I look to is Bulgaria and Servia'.
 5. Bulwer - Green, 5 March '61, FO.78/1567.
 6. Russell - Bulwer, Secret, 9 March '61, FO.78/1560.

On learning of Thouvenel's positive support of union Russell sensibly gave Bulwer considerable discretion in these Rouman affairs, merely stipulating 'that Couza should be able to maintain his authority, and that he should strenuously support the Sultan who is interested in the welfare of the Principalities and ready to assist the Prince so long as he adheres to the Treaties by which his position is defined'.¹

It only needed the vote of the Moldavian Assembly to bring the dissentient Austrian and Russian cabinets into reluctant agreement with France and Britain.² The spectre of permanent union without the Porte's permission presented itself. Russell cautioned Couza.³ Thouvenel assured him that the Porte had responded to his overture of the previous June.⁴ A'ali at last produced the draft of a note to be sent to Couza. This acceded to Union of the governments and assemblies during the Prince's lifetime.

'I am certainly constantly doomed here to vexations and disappointments', sighed Bulwer, 'and frequently see my advice unattended to just at the moment when it would most profit...' 5

1. Russell - Bulwer 14 March '61. see Riker p.313, refers to the Porte's learning of the British government's support for Bulwer in April. They yielded to his pressure as a consequence. In fact Bulwer and Russell as is apparent above had followed one undeviating line and the Porte had no cause to think otherwise.
2. Bulwer - Russell, 17 April, PRO.30/22 89. On 8 April the Assembly had passed a resolution requesting the Wallachian Assembly to join them at Focsani to settle the rural question brought up in the Central Commission by the boyards in the Summer of 1860.
3. Russell - Bulwer, 27 April, FO.78/1560.
4. Riker, p.310.
5. Bulwer - Russell, 17 April, PRO.30/22 89.
6. Bulwer - Russell, 30 April, no.312, FO.78/1570. Dated 1 May the Note asked Couza to draw up a scheme for electoral reform for the Porte and the Powers to consider. It proposed the union of the assemblies and governments for the Prince's life. The Central Commission was to be abolished.

In two weeks' time the Wallachian Assembly would meet so the snake was merely scotched, not killed, until the Porte despatched the Note. But the moment was lost.

'So long in preparing notwithstanding all my repeated counsels and efforts, backed by those of the French ambassador, that the events which we wished to prevent have already had a commencement',

wrote Bulwer.¹

The Wallachian chamber had voted in the same sense as its fellow. Much of the explanation of Couza's bad tactics in the coming December just at the time he would finally receive his sovereign's long awaited Firman lay in the bitterness and humiliation he must have felt during this period. Bulwer hit off the magnitude of the Porte's blunder in a few telling sentences:

'The great fault has been by this delay to seem to yield to a necessity than to originate a concession, which, at an earlier period, would have been regarded as a boon.

'Nor is this all. The Prince had he been able to say that by his negotiations he had obtained this concession would have had his hands considerably strengthened and been bound by gratitude to the Porte.

'His position indeed has become most critical: the party of the Boyards, and the extreme Democratic party having combined for his overthrow'.²

For the time being Bulwer worked to induce Couza to accept a moderate Conservative alliance.³ Eventually, after many

¹. Bulwer-Russell, 30 April, no. 312, FO. 78/1570. Dated 1 May the Note asked Couza to draw up a scheme for electoral reform for the Porte and the Powers to consider. It proposed the union of the assemblies and governments for the Prince's life. The Central Commission was to be abolished.

². Bulwer-Russell, 30 April, FO. 78/1570.

³. Ibid. I do not accept Riker's thesis that everything that happened to cause the Powers embarrassment was to the Prince's advantage, and that every internal trouble could easily be got over by a little cleverness. Greater wisdom on Couza's part in the arms crisis and a little sense of urgency in the Porte might have brought Couza the union he was seeking some seven or eight years earlier, and in the event irritating, months earlier than he actually obtained it. A strengthened Couza might have proved a different Couza.

vicissitudes in Couza's political fortunes this came about.

It took some of the sting out of the boyard opposition which had concentrated on the Porte's reference to changing the electoral laws. Of course such a change implied a threat to the boyard's economic interests.

For the next months Russell showed a single-mindedness in what he did, all the more remarkable because it was in pursuit of an object which the Porte really disliked. And although Russell had favoured the union of the Principalities, in power he tried to respect the Porte's wishes. Moreover, the first divergence between the views of Bulwer and Russell appeared, the latter being more keen than Bulwer to sink differences in detail in order to settle the big issue.¹ Austria fought a rearguard action against concession. Gortchakoff, directing Russian policy, seemed to be impelled by a perverse desire to irritate France, now backing French and British diplomacy, now working for definitive union, now seeking changes in the electoral laws first, presumably to ensure that the boyard-Orthodox Church interest would control a unified state in the interests of Russia and the Orthodox Church.² Perhaps the object was to remind France that Russian friendship was not expendable.³ Be that as it may, Russell early on sought his ambassador's opinion on the new developments.⁴ His terms of reference offered Bulwer considerable

¹. During July Bulwer convalesced. He had had an heart-attack in June. Pleurisy was the complaint, though one doctor took a less serious view, diagnosing pneumonia. Erskine-Russell, 19 June '61, PRO.30/22 89.

². Couza's handling of the Convents was a constant irritant to Russia.

³. Bulwer-Russell, 12 June '61, PRO 30/22 89.

⁴. Russell - Bulwer, 18 July, FO.78/1562.

scope for manoeuvre in any future negotiations. Underlying all his suggestions was the assumption that Bulwer would use this latitude to bring the Powers together. Russell stipulated simply that the introduction of a foreign prince should not be permitted.¹ Nor did he approve 'a democratic law of Election which would shake all rights of property, and in all probability force Prince Couza to give way to a foreign prince'.² With Russia in mind he went on:

'But what Her Majesty's Government desire above all is to maintain the Suzerainty of the Porte over the Principalities and to prevent their falling into the hands of any other Power'.³

On the method by which the concessions were to be made, 'whether an exchange of Notes, or a Conference at Constantinople, or a Conference at Paris', Russell merely referred Bulwer to the existing conditions in the Principalities and at Constantinople.⁴ Bulwer was ordered to speak 'unreservedly' to A'ali Pasha on the subject. The manner in which Russell would keep right on top of the question showed perhaps impatience in the Foreign Secretary, and perhaps distrust of Bulwer. Certainly the ambassador's attempts to make it easier for the Porte to deal with future infractions of the Treaty, thereby introducing unnecessary delay into the negotiations, necessitated such treatment.

Bulwer replied to Russell's request for advice by advocating the simple communication of Notes by the several Powers to the Porte's communication of 1 May, this 'giving the Porte greater power, since in a Conference of Representatives it will probably not be supported by

1. Ibid.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

4. Russell - Bulwer, 18 July, FO.78/1562.

a majority'.¹ What he actually meant was contained in another remark:

'It might be the policy of the Porte to agree to Union as proposed if additional safeguards are given her against further changes and that her efforts should be directed to obtain these'.²

In a conference Bulwer knew such a proposal would certainly have been out-voted. The 'if' in the remark indicated a mean bartering spirit reflecting, more important, a lack of a sense of urgency which had previously characterised his earlier efforts. Russell rejoined that 'a good electoral law might be sanctioned by the Conference' and that 'the Porte must be supported in all reasonable requests'.³ A sympathetic insight into Russell's policy would have enabled Bulwer to have taken advantage of the indefinite nature of these statements. Unfortunately his irritation with Couza's bad handling of the political situation, and with the supposed French intrigues in Bucarest favouring it, got quite out of hand, culminating in the angry outburst in October.

Russell and Thouvenel had reached an understanding based on immediate acquiescence in the principle of administrative and legislative union during Couza's life-time. Russell, however, insisted that the reform of the electoral laws was a question which only a conference in Constantinople could reach a decision on. To Chateaurenard, French chargé d'affaires in London, he expressed the desire that A'ali should introduce the changes proposed by Couza 'and state the views of the Porte upon these' changes.⁴

¹•Bulwer - Russell, 7 August, FO.78/1562.

²•Ibid.

³•Russell - Bulwer, 8 Aug., FO.78/1562.

⁴•Russell - Bulwer, 3 Aug., no.519, FO.78/1562..

To counter any waywardness on the part of Russia it was agreed that Lallemant and Bulwer should attend a Conference provided nothing beyond the Porte's circular should be discussed.¹ Shortly after, Gortchakoff gave up his insistence on electoral reform preceding a decision on union.² Unfortunately, A'ali emphasised the necessity of introducing fresh guarantees against further infractions of the Treaty,³ which caused France, Russia, and Prussia to join against any addition to the Convention in this matter of interference.

Bulwer took advantage of the divergence to press for an elaborate arrangement, which would have necessitated the co-operation of Couza and the Assemblies, in the drawing up of a new electoral law. He also pressed the Porte's view regarding coercive measures. This went against his government's instruction that union should be decided first. Concerning fresh guarantees Russell, sceptical, wrote:

'Her Majesty's Government can say no more than that if the occasion should arise, they will scrupulously regulate their conduct by the Treaty of Paris, and by the subsequent convention and protocols.'⁴

He did not like Bulwer's tergiversation when it was apparent that all were agreed on the essential thing. Worried by Green's reports from Bucarest that union would be announced anyway, with or without a Firman,⁵ and very angry with Bulwer's indiscretion in instructing Green to inform Couza, 'that neither his Highness nor the Principalities will be permitted to infringe the existing

1. Russell - Bulwer, 22 Aug., *ibid.*

2. Riker, p.329.

3. Bulwer - Russell, 25 Sept. '61, PRO.30/22.89 and Riker p.330.

4. Russell - Bulwer, 21 Sept., no.570, FO.78/1563.

5. Green-Hammond, 9 Sept., FO.78/1583; Green-Russell, 17 Sept. *ibid.* By the end of November Couza was in precarious control of the situation again. Green-Russell, 26 Nov., no.95, *ibid.*

Constitution in the question of the union, and that such proceedings would be repressed, if necessary, even by force',¹ Russell promptly rebuffed Bulwer.² So it was perhaps convenient for the expedition of a speedy settlement that Prokesch refused to meet in Conference his Italian colleague. Separate notes to the Porte would have to do.³ As for the reform of the electoral law that could easily be left to the Assemblies⁴, as Bulwer had already been told, while with reference to the use of force he again repeated himself:

'Better leave the question as it stands in the Treaty of Paris and subsequent protocols'. 5

Bulwer, somewhat lamely, apologised for not as clearly understanding 'as I ought to have done' his instructions, going on to explain:

'I should not have dreamed of coming to any decision upon an important point nor even expressing any opinion which was to constrain my future conduct without reference to you'. 6

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1. Green-Bulwer, no.68 8 Oct., FO.78/1583.
 2. Russell-Bulwer, Tele 30 Sept., FO 97/419.
 3. Russell-Bulwer, 6 Nov., FO.97/419; Bulwer-Russell, 13 Nov. PRO.30/22 89.
 4. Russell-Bulwer, 7 Oct. FO.78/1563.
 5. Russell-Bulwer, 1 Oct. FO.78/1563.
 6. Bulwer-Russell, 16 Oct. G&D 30/22 89. The following is a remarkable letter as much for its fulsomeness, as for its ambiguity; Bulwer-Russell, 23 Oct. PRO.30/22 89: 'I do not like to conclude without one observation. I think my dear Lord Russell that by one or two of your last communications you think I am too prone to take upon myself to decide matters without reference. I am not too conscious of this, but so many questions of all kinds come before me here, on which I am obliged to decide at once or you could never have a moment of repose—that it is very possible that in some way I may have fallen into the error I allude to, and I am very much obliged, if such be the case, that you call the fact to my notice. ... I respect by long habit and conviction your ability and judgment far too highly ever to set my own opinions against those you entertain. ... the invariable practice of the French is to spare no pains and to scruple at no perversion of truth to injure a diplomatist when they do not think their own representative has at certain places a superior position to his. I say this, but I know at the same time that the observation to you is useless'.

Apparently Bulwer had forgotten his recent indiscretion.

The Porte made its final bid in the third week of October,¹ but it failed chiefly because Russell would have nothing to do with new guarantees.² In the next fortnight the Firman had been prepared. Bulwer's only objection to it was that 'it would doubtless have been more acceptable in the Principalities and to some of my colleagues, if it did not bring forward so prominently the fact that the arrangement made is merely temporary, and that things will revert as a matter of course to their present condition in the event of a vacancy.'³ He was right on both counts. The objections of Lavalette he was able to smooth over quickly, but Lobanoff did not like any reference to the temporary nature of the union nor to Protocol 6, September '59, covering the use of force.⁴ Very ingeniously Bulwer induced the representatives to send two communications to the Porte, one simply accepting the Firman and the other 'containing any remarks each has thought proper to make concerning it'.⁵ The French ambassador was in agreement with Bulwer and only the Russian ambassador made reservations in his second note, withdrawing his government's assent to any measure on the occasion of a vacancy unless there were a previous understanding between the Great Powers and the Porte.⁶ The Porte's Note accompanying the Firman, referring to its

¹. Bulwer - Russell, 23 October PRO.30/22.89.

². Russell - Bulwer, 22 Oct. no. 630.FO.78/1563, & Tele 25 Oct. *ibid*.

³. The Firman was ready to be despatched 3 Dec. It contained no mention of the use of troops, declared the union of the two ministries and assemblies, and stated that in the event of a vacancy in the Hospodariat the Constitution as settled at Paris would be in force again. This last point was to cause some difficulty.

⁴. Bulwer-Russell, 21 Nov. FO.97/419.

⁵. Bulwer-Russell, 5 Dec. *ibid*.

⁶. Bulwer-Russell, 5 Dec. *ibid*.

attitude should there be such a vacancy, did not mention the necessity of a preliminary agreement with the Powers. All the Powers, save Austria, issued reservations about this.

The responsibility of government now rested entirely upon the shoulders of Couza. He had what he had asked for. By this time, however, the problems caused by his not being a distinguished scion of some great European dynasty, had not lost their urgency, but, on the contrary, were more pressing. These past two months of November and December showed him utterly incapable of anticipating small difficulties and in fact he created them. Out of mere pique with the implacable boyards he refused to mention the Firman, already published for the world to see in the Paris 'Moniteur' 6 December, in his speech opening the Wallachian Assembly. Only later did he rectify this omission. But clearly no one liked the Firman with its implied declaration against permanent union. Some satisfactory attempt to resolve his country's basic social and economic problems might have helped Couza to strengthen his position during the next few years. However, already the forces arrayed against him, extreme liberal and reactionary boyard, had determined not to facilitate his task. Only by keeping up a running quarrel with the guaranteeing Powers, and at last by the repudiation of the Constitution, would Couza be able to prolong his rule. As Green noted, already the introduction of a foreign prince was being mooted and Couza encouraged the agitation.¹

¹ Green - Russell, no. 106, 27 Dec. '61, FO.78/1583: Green - Hammond, 28 Dec. *ibid*.

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Rights of the Powers

The diplomacy in these last few months owed much to Russell's grasp of what was needed and to his persistence in carrying out his policy. Of course it was upon the French initiative in Rouman matters that Russell relied. On the other hand, Thouvenel quite as much relied on English support. That it was readily given resulted in a great measure from the Syrian complication. Palmerston, especially, could not rely on French good intentions in Syria, occupied by French troops. It did not help that the Suez canal project continued, in the background, to maintain irritation between the two governments. Yet these considerations apart, Russell had an interest in strengthening Couza in order to avoid a foreign prince and a possible quarrel between Russia and Turkey.

Bulwer's reflexes were slow, not surprisingly in view of his lack of sympathy with Russell's too generous policy. His delaying tactics were badly conceived for he knew that his only allies were Austria and Turkey. With the first he disagreed over the very principle of union. The sensitivity he showed for Turkish dignity was consistent but unfortunate. Nevertheless by the November and then through December he applied his energies very effectively to overcoming the Austrian objection to Sardinia's presence in the conferences, and in nullifying Russian insistence on keeping Turkey from interfering in the Principalities in any future eventuality. Bulwer actually committed an indiscretion and slyly skirted instructions at one period. The fault lay essentially in his lack of faith in such mere tampering with a radically unsound

constitution and sprang, in part, from the paternal spirit in which he viewed provincial problems.¹ He could not but be irritated when a prince refused to do what he was told for his own good. On the whole, even so, Bulwer had done creditably. Further, British diplomacy in the conditions was astute. Russell had no business - nor time - to look to future eventualities. He had seen the quickest remedy to the immediate difficulty and had applied it.

From 1863 till 1864 the Liberal Ministry faced another, quite different problem: how to deal with a de facto independent country actually violating international obligations. It presented itself in three phases, a discussion - which began as early as 1859 - over the validity of the Capitulations in the Principalities; in a spasmodic quarrel over the rights of the Greek Convents in the area during the years 1859 - 64 but being particularly acute in the last years 1863 - 64; and the last phase, the second arms crisis, 1862 - 3.² Now that the provinces had obtained union these other difficulties came into the foreground. The dreary exchanges upon the Capitulations and the Greek Convents do not concern us except in so far as they illustrate Bulwer's contribution to the formation of British policy. His efforts, backed by Russell, were directed to supporting Treaty right. He could have done no other without jeopardising the traditional friendship between Britain and Turkey. Nevertheless it is strange that Bulwer with Russell's approval assumed the role of chief defender of the rights of the Greek Church.

¹. Bulwer-Green, 29 March, FO.78/1649: 'I have yet to learn the possibility of establishing a permanent and well-ordered Govt. on the double basis of an elected Chief and one popular representative body'.

². This arms crisis concerned Prince Michael of Servia more than Couza and consequently is only mentioned here. For more detail, see below p210.

This should have been the part played by the Russian agent, though oddly enough he tended to be quiet throughout the whole affair. One suspects that Bulwer might have tried less hard. As it is, the policy he and Russell pursued would merit the charge which Disraeli made in another context. It was meddle and muddle. Russell fully appreciated the powerlessness of Britain by itself to affect issues in the Principalities. His concern for keeping well with Turkey and for keeping the Greeks friendly to the Sultan should not have made him forget this.

The Capitulations¹ quite early troubled the relations between the diplomatic corps and the authorities in Bucarest and Jassy.²

There was no money in the treasury when Couza took over the Government, and the country suffered from an economic depression. There were no credit facilities, no national bank, but a great deal of faction and hostility in the Assemblies. Couza became increasingly unpopular and embarrassed financially. To deal with both problems he decided to bring foreigners and protégés within the fiscal system, in spite of the Capitulations which guaranteed their immunity. This was a subject upon which all the Powers might agree, including France and Russia. That they might, but would not act as if they did, of course tended to encourage the kind of policy which Russell would pursue. Britain would have to protest. The security of Turkey was bound up with the maintenance of certain treaties. Consequently it was dangerous to allow these treaties to be broken by some

¹For the significance of these laws, see above Chapter III, 75.

²During the months preceding the settlement of September '59 Vienna refused to recognise Couza de facto, so Austrian subjects were placed in May '59 under local jurisdiction. Austria came very quickly to terms. See Riker p.231.

unilateral decision. It would have serious repercussions throughout the Empire. Moreover there were British subjects in the Principalities to take care of. The economic advantages, of course, were plain and precious.

Bulwer was in a quandary. He was not antagonistic, rather sympathetic, to the claims of the government of the Principalities; but he would not budge on the question of letting Couza dictate to the Powers. Here, an insurmountable obstacle was the unwillingness of the Powers to resort to the ultimate sanction in face of outright French objections to such an extreme course. There was the added difficulty in Bulwer's refusal to negotiate with Couza upon a subject which was really a matter between the Porte and the Powers. He insisted that the autonomy of the provinces as determined in the Convention did not include the treaty rights of the Powers. In that same Convention the Capitulations had been confirmed.

Bulwer's line was to work closely with the other representatives in declaring to the government at Bucarest what the rights of the Powers were. His voice was in favour of yielding everything except consular rights in civil and criminal cases. A legalistic attitude was inevitable given British policy for the area. Its obvious shortcomings were a result not of a particular mannerism of Bulwer, but of the odd situation consequent upon the divisions of the Powers, and the inadequacy of the Treaty of Paris.

The local government's infractions of the treaty were three: the objection of the Principalities to the presence of Consuls in native courts: their assumption of rights to tax foreign artisans and retail traders: and the refusal to allow passes and passports

from Consuls to serve as licences for travel through the country.

Adamant on the first point, Bulwer was moderate enough otherwise:

'With respect to the second, it appears to me that the most that foreigners can expect who reside in or carry on retail trade in a country is that they should be as favoured as native subjects. Anything beyond this would be an injustice to the native.

...In regard to the third question, I conceive that Consuls may give papers or passports to British subjects, but that the Authorities have a right to insist on their signature of visa being affixed thereto.' 1

The answer of the government to the Powers' first move, an identic note from the Consuls, was uncompromising.² It had no share in the making of the treaties granting extraterritoriality and the only jurisdiction it could recognise was that designated in the Convention. The implication was that it was sovereign in domestic affairs. Bulwer gave Churchill support, though the other Powers were from the first inclined to leave matters alone. Russia had political motives for not wishing to press her rights.³ Naturally the initiative was with Walewski who at one and the same time did not wish to offend the Principalities nor ignore French interests. He drew up a memorandum, largely a rehash of citations from the Report of the International Commission of 1858. Certain privileges were unsound. For the moment Consular jurisdiction should remain until the setting up of a Court of Cassation, as decreed by the Convention, when such jurisdiction might be revised. The consuls were quietened and the complaints from them became

1. Bulwer-Russell, no. 82, 3 August '59, FO.78/1434.

2. Identic Note dated 29 June.

3. Russia had been chiefly responsible for the failure of the International Commission to study the problem in 1858.

less urgent.¹

It was the granting of legislative union for the Principalities that caused the representatives to play another variation on the above theme. Copies of the Firman granting union were sent to the Consuls in December 1861 with explanations as to its meaning, and identic instructions agreed upon by the ambassadors at Constantinople.² They were to the effect that notwithstanding the fresh changes, the treaty rights of the Powers were still valid. Ignored by the consuls, the identic instruction was repeated, enjoining upon the Principalities the necessity of not infringing the rights of Powers.³

Russell was opposed to yielding to the pretensions of the corrupt Courts in the Principalities, already extending their jurisdiction to cases between foreigners. However, his attitude was not narrow, though his views showed a great deal of muddled thinking. When Arsaky, Secretary for Foreign Affairs in Couza's government, had sent a reply to the consul's injunction, which reply he published,⁴ Russell wrote the following instruction to Bulwer:

'In the first place it will be right to put M. Arsaky's letter aside with a strong assertion that Moldo-Wallachia cannot be considered as an independent State. Next Sir E. Hornby should be consulted by your Excellency

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- ¹ However, the cause for complaint remained. Green-Russell, July '60, FO.78/1560: '...the Consuls are perpetually compelled, in order to cover their own responsibility, to address complaints to the Authorities, frequently on trivial matters, but which are not the less breaches of treaty rights. On the other hand the Authorities, Civil and Judicial, systematically repudiate Consular interference and authority, and thus arise conflicts of jurisdiction (in which)... the foreign agent finds himself involved in an irritating correspondence from which he can discover no escape but in silence'.
- ² With greater wisdom than the ambassadors, not wishing to rake over old sores, the consuls did not act on them at first. Bulwer-Russell, 31 Jan. FO.78/1648.
- ³ Bulwer-Russell, 3 Feb. '62 FO.78/1642.
- ⁴ Much to Bulwer's embarrassment. There were only two ways of dealing with the manoeuvre; ignoring it or negotiating on it. Bulwer would not do the latter.

as to what can be remitted of the Capitulations in Turkey proper: for H.M.'s Govt. can never submit British subjects to venal or incompetent courts in Moldo-Wallachia while they refuse to submit them to similar tribunals in Turkey...
At the same time difference of practice long existing must be taken into consideration'. 1

Both Bulwer and Russell were reduced to making ineffective comments which could not advance any policy. Bulwer repeatedly reminded Russell that here was a question of power not warranty. Having underlined the fact that the Capitulations were violated everyday, Bulwer had already explained:

'The question, as your Lordship says, is whether the Governments of the Guaranteeing Powers will collectively punish such violations. At all events they are now after the recent declaration more pledged to do so than previously'. 2

Nor were the Powers more committed than they had been. Bulwer merely indulged in wishful thinking. Also he was not consistent. At this point Churchill in Jassy had advocated making a virtue of necessity by allowing the Moldo-Wallachian authorities the right 'either useless or difficult to maintain, or fallen into disuse', to jurisdiction in criminal cases involving native subjects.³ Bulwer rejected the idea in no uncertain terms:

'We might...strenuously assert and maintain firmly our pretention to interfere'. 4

The strange comment may only be accounted for if one assumes that Bulwer, trying to be logical, feared that alterations for one area meant complications in another. He declared:

1. Russell - Bulwer, 29 May '62, FO.78/1644.

2. Referring to the identic instruction to the consuls in February. Bulwer-Russell, no. 68 19 Feb. '62, FO.78/1648.

3. Bulwer-Russell, 30 April FO.78/1650.

4. Ibid.

'The habit of Foreign Consuls sitting in judgment on mixed cases in common with Turkish judges fell into disuetude in the Ottoman Dominions generally; but we have reasserted our claim on this subject in Turkey; and the Porte has not gainsaid it, and as long as justice is so badly administered in the Principalities and the Ottoman Empire, we must have some control of this kind, tho' I agree in the inconveniences attending such control and admit of its being modified according to places and circumstances'. 1

Yet in October after a general conversation with the Austrian Minister, Count Rechberg, in Vienna, Bulwer very persuasively explained that although Article 42 of the Capitulations permitted a Consul to be co-judge in mixed criminal cases, 'I am quite convinced that the Principalities will never accept this'.² He concluded:

'...Such a right is given us - but it was long disused at Constantinople. The French and other governments have not exercised it, being satisfied with the assistance of a Dragoman at the trial, nor has anything beyond this been, to the best of my belief, ever claimed by us in the Principalities'. 3

Except by himself, Bulwer might have added. He proliferated schemes in the hope either of blurring the issues for the government in Bucarest, - in which case he failed hopelessly - or of actually settling a matter of principle by modifying the detailed application. More likely he intended the latter. As he put it himself:

'The principle of interference cannot then be abandoned, but admits of modification'. 4

If Bulwer thought in this way he had overlooked the obstinacy of the Principalities in their stand on principle. Until a solution to this problem was found all Bulwer's schemes were so much paper and

1. Ibid.

2. Bulwer-Russell, 15 Oct. FO.78/1658.

3. Ibid.

4. Bulwer-Russell, 30 April '62, FO.78/1650.

verbiage. As for the flexible attitude which he invariably adopted on such questions, again it availed little while there was a refusal to acknowledge the 'de facto' situation wherein Couza's government was sovereign.¹ However, it is interesting to note that Bulwer as part of a general agreement would have had the Porte consult with Servia and the United Principalities before concluding commercial treaties affecting the Empire. Upon the Capitulations proper Bulwer, characteristically, refused to negotiate with the Rouman authorities. The choice for him lay in 'insisting on a right, or quietly foregoing one - unless we saw the possibility of making great and general alterations'.² Yet, he continued:

'this would require taking into consideration what could be granted if asked for by the Porte, since, again I agree with Sir E. Hornby+ we should not entirely separate one question from the others'.³

Bulwer was losing his patience. In December '61 - January '62 the representatives had agreed on identic instructions reaffirming the rights of the Powers under the Treaties with the Porte. At the instance of the several governments they had requested in May their consuls to report what might practically be permitted and what not in the Capitulations. When the report duly arrived it was accompanied by an exposition on the subject by Arsaky in which the autonomy of the Principalities was assumed in all things. Now matters were allowed to drop because Moustier, French ambassador, had received instructions 'not to pursue the subject further'.⁴ All Bulwer could do was to recommend an agreement of all the Powers to

¹. Russell's policy was impractical for this reason as Bulwer hinted. However, Bulwer had no choice but to make suggestions while Russell stuck to his policy.

². Bulwer-Russell, 30 April '62 FO.78/1650.

³. Ibid.

⁴. Bulwer-Russell, 13 Sept. '62 FO.78/1657.

+...Judge of Supreme Consular Court.

examine the whole Capitulatory system as it applied throughout the Empire. 'But', he wrote, 'it is better not to enter upon any plan of this kind without the intention to come to some decision and to carry that decision through'.¹ More to the point, the consuls should be given wide discretionary Powers to cope with the anomalous situation in the Rouman provinces. In a not too veiled criticism of the policy of the cabinets, Bulwer explained that nothing could be done. He preferred to wash his hands of the subject, though he had 'little doubt that Sir Edmund Hornby who is absent but whom I will consult on his return, will not be disposed to consider that any portion of the Capitulations can be remitted in Turkey proper'.² Bulwer did not agree with Hornby but, he pleaded, 'opinion must be more ripe on the subject and the European policy towards Turkey must be more clearly defined before any modifications I might advise can be satisfactorily considered'.³ In effect the matter rested there.⁴ Throughout the negotiations on the Capitulations, France played an ambiguous part. It was so in 1860 when Thouvenel initially promised support in favour of Green at Bucarest.⁵ Nothing transpired. The pattern repeated itself in 1862-3. In such a situation Russell might have done well to have made a virtue of necessity, certainly after the *démarche* of January '61. He need not have advertised a concession for that would have induced the Porte to ask for general changes in the system and for this Russell was not prepared. As

¹ Bulwer-Russell, *ibid*.

² Bulwer-Russell, 11 June '62, FO.78/1652.

³ *Ibid*.

⁴ Moustier effectively halted another move in Nov. '63 based on the agreement of Jan. '61. See Erskine-Russell, no.24 12 Nov. '63.

⁵ FO. - Green, 13 Nov. '60, FO.78/1517.

for Bulwer he had no sympathy with the part he was cast for. It seemed illogical to him that he should be expected to try to accomplish something in spite of the disagreement amongst the Powers, especially in view of his own chief's acknowledgment of the fact that Britain could not act alone. Constantly thwarted and frustrated in his desire to have the whole Capitulatory regime swept away and replaced by different arrangements in conformity with the situation in the Empire, Bulwer seemed not to have found it easy to watch calmly and wait with the stoic assurance that almost certainly the opportunity would not arrive. Something of his successor's⁺ cynical resignation would have assisted him in his thankless task.

Nor was Bulwer better equipped, diplomatically or temperamentally, to deal with the Dedicated Convents question. Nothing could be achieved unless England, France, and Russia were in agreement.¹ In the event, French policy was less ambiguous than in the negotiations over the capitulations. In fact, far from being ambiguous, it was positively favourable. From the commencement of the diplomatic fencing in 1859 to the drawn out conferences held in 1864 France stood forward as the defender of the views and actions of the government of the Principalities.²

While Bulwer's instructions would explicitly require him to protest against the arbitrary actions of Couza and to work with the

¹. Austria and Turkey would have come into line.

². This is not to say that French governments were not irritated by Couza's handling of other issues, such as the arms crisis 1862-3, and his inability to cope with the internal difficulties after the death of Catardji June '62 till the assumption of dictatorial powers by him in May 1864. The notion that Couza was a tool of the Russian govt. gradually began to find acceptance. P. Henry-L'Abdication du Prince Couza, p.23.

+ Lord Lyons

Powers for the solution laid down in the Paris Treaty, Bulwer was in any case predisposed to teach Couza a lesson. Owing to Bulwer's frequent bouts of irritation with Moustier during the critical phase of negotiations in 1863, Bulwer actually came forward as the leading protagonist of the Greek Church. It was bad tactics and certainly not required of him by his instructions.¹ As in the case of the Capitulations Bulwer's reactions were a complex of sympathy with the Romyan government attempting to deal with evident injustices, irritation at the methods used to achieve its goals, and frustration because of an inability to effect very much anyway.²

In Wallachia, some quarter of the country's acreage was in the possession of the Greek Convents, in Moldavia about one-third.³ Much of this landed wealth had been dedicated by the founders to certain Holy Places situated in various parts of the Empire. The condition was that the profits from this land should be used primarily for local philanthropic purposes. Any surplus after this would then be sent to support these Holy Places. Some of the conventual

¹ Apart from these difficulties over Capitulations and conventual rights, Bulwer tried hard to help Couza in his internal struggle against the boyards who wanted neither him nor agrarian reform, and the liberals who preferred a foreign prince to agrarian reform.

² See Bulwer-Russell, 26 July 1859 FO.78/1432: 'There can be no doubt that the Greek clergy, whose titles to the property they hold are in many cases, to say the least, dubious, has at the same time been endeavouring to shirk the obligations, which such property imposes'. Even so Churchill was instructed to refer Couza to the 13th Protocol of the Conference at Paris. See Riker, p.353: 'The interested parties shall be invited to come to an understanding among themselves by means of a compromise; in case they do not succeed in coming to an understanding in a year's time, it will be settled by means of arbitration. In case the arbiters do not succeed in coming to an understanding, they will choose an over-arbiter. If in turn, they find it impossible to agree on the choice of this over-arbiter, the Sublime Porte will confer with the Protecting Powers for the purpose of designating one'.

property was under native administration, and during the 1830s had actually been brought under State Control. The bulk of this wealth was at the disposal of the State.¹ For the rest it was seldom directed into social and religious channels; much of it left the country; and all of it was under foreign administration. Thus the Convents owned some eighth of the lands of the Principalities most of the profits from which went to line the pockets of a small privileged class of farmers of revenue, or to support alien institutions. There was hardly any contribution to public needs.²

In 1858 Russia thwarted the attempt of the Commissioners at Bucarest to lay down the principle that the State should take over the administration, paying a fixed annual sum to the Holy Places. Hence they agreed that should the Monasteries and the Principalities be unable to come to a friendly agreement, the matter would be referred to arbitration. By January 1862, owing to Couza's unwillingness to have the business taken out of his hands, the situation remained unaltered except in one thing, namely the anxiety of successive Assemblies and Couza to decide the question themselves - a direct result of the union.

In January 1862 Bulwer consulted his colleagues. They agreed with him on the wisdom of allowing Couza another six months in which to reach a friendly settlement with the Monasteries.³ His sympathies were with the government in Bucarest.

1. Riker, p.354.

2. Ibid p.356.

3. Bulwer-Russell, 8 Jan. FO.78/1648. Originally three months was suggested, but see Bulwer - Russell, 16 April '63, FO.78/1734.

'That the Principalities should, to a man, rise up against such a state of things is not astonishing', he wrote.¹ However, for Bulwer, this was not to the point. 'As it was laid down at the Treaty of Paris that a certain mode of dealing with this subject should be adopted, that mode ought to be followed'.² As in January 1863 the representatives had again allowed a delay - to last till the end of April - the arbitration would not come into operation till then. And Bulwer had no illusions about its probable success. The issue, as he knew, was too fundamental, as he admitted:

'The Principalities object more to the interference of the Convents in the internal affairs of the Principalities than even to the loss which the Principalities undergo in having so considerable a portion of the wealth of the country applied in a manner foreign to its interests'.³

He grumbled that the Russian commissioner had thwarted his scheme in 1858 to have the Convents paid an annual sum in lieu of the property: and that the Greek Convents 'badly advised' found such a proposal inadmissible now. So only arbitration offered a way out.⁴

By this time the belief that Couza looked forward to his own dictatorship had become current.⁵ No doubt Russell and Bulwer felt he sought possession of the monastic revenues to finance his grandiose scheme.⁶

1. Bulwer-Russell, no. 145 29 March '63, FO.78/1649.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

5. In November '62 all the revenues of the dedicated convents were sequestered. From August to December Russell pressed Bulwer to get his colleagues to support the Porte's demand for the execution of the arrangements in Protocol 13. Russell - Bulwer 16 Dec. '62, FO.78/1642

6. They certainly thought so in February '64, Russell - Bulwer, 3 Feb. FO.78/1797.

In April Bulwer brought the matter before his colleagues again, the period for a friendly arrangement having terminated. Though Austria, Russia and Prussia agreed to Bulwer's proposal for the commencement of an arbitration, Moustier objected that Couza would simply use the revenues to fulfil the engagements which the Convents had for a long time ignored. The residue would return to the Greek Convents and if they were dissatisfied they might refer the question regarding compensation to arbitration.¹ Bulwer, angered at Moustier's attempt to make the other representatives the executors of French policy, replied that the suggestion might do well but was not protocol.² The matter must be referred to the Cabinets.³ A few days later Bulwer proposed that if the Principalities and the Convents did not appoint arbiters in three months - and assuming they did not come to an amicable arrangement - then the Porte and the Powers should.⁴ Moustier's natural rejoinder was that the matter was now before the Cabinets. Bulwer out of pique with Moustier had made a blunder in allowing the matter to pass out of the hands of the representatives, though in the long run the result would have been the same. Moustier advocated leaving a settlement to the parties in dispute, though the Monasteries first

¹. Bulwer-Russell, 16 April, no. 190, FO.78/1734.

². Bulwer was not always a stickler for Protocol. When by October it was plain enough that France supported Couza, Bulwer proposed a complicated plan whereby the Principalities, first of all having agreed that the properties were bona fide the property of the Holy Places, should buy them all up. Bulwer-Russell, 5 Oct. '63 FO.78/1739. Evidently Bulwer insisted on Protocol as the only means of carrying out his country's policy and protecting British interests. The policy of course suffered from an inherent failure. Once the major battle was lost, the usefulness of preliminary skirmishing had gone.

³. Bulwer-Russell, 16 April, loc. cit.

⁴. Riker, p.364.

would have to renounce all right to the property they claimed.¹

What happened subsequently had little consequence. To all intents and purposes the recent French action had put Couza behind a wall of immunity. Russell continued to storm against the arbitrary acts of Couza even against the measure changing the liturgical language from Greek to Roumanian.² 'The Representatives', he wrote, 'should inform Couza that such proceedings are illegal, tyrannical, and subversive'.³ He also suspected France of designs for giving the Latin Church a predominance over the Greek at Jerusalem.⁴

It was strange that Bulwer had to tell his chief:

'Nothing short of compulsory measures on the part of the Powers and the Porte, or the menace of such measures could avail...'. 5

Eventually, in December, Couza with the assent of the Assembly expropriated the Convents. By this time, even Austria had agreed with France to limit the scope of arbitration to the simple question of indemnity,⁶ while the Porte's attitude from June onwards had been remarkably luke-warm.⁷ Ultimately the English government had to accept the principle of compensation as a proper object of the

1. Bulwer - Russell, 4 June, FO.78/1736.

2. Russell - Bulwer, 18 June, FO.78/1730.

3. Ibid, and see Russell - Bulwer, no. 366, Aug. 10 '63, ibid.

4. Russell - Bulwer, 10 July '63, FO.78/1730.

5. Bulwer - Russell, 24 Aug. '63, FO.78/1738.

6. Riker, p.370.

7. Riker, p.367, holds that there was collusion between Moustier and A'ali to get the problem settled according to Couza's wishes. It seems very likely judging from the odd comments in the PRO. and FO. material, see Bulwer - Russell, 24 Sept. '63, FO.78/1738; Bulwer - Russell, 4 June '63, no. 264, FO.78/1736.

attentions of a conference on the dedicated Convents.¹

As in these issues so in the more crucial one of Couza's policy for a dictatorship,² the Powers were hopelessly divided.³ So it mattered little that throughout the twelve months from January 1863 there was moderation and sense about Bulwer's anxiety to help Couza to establish another Constitution giving him more powers. Even when Couza was about to execute the plebiscite, in May 1864, Bulwer looked to capitalising on this event by having the Porte invite Couza to Constantinople. Only the objections of Prokesch and Novikow, the Russian ambassador, had halted this manoeuvre which Bulwer had persuaded even Moustier to support.⁴ When Prokesch overcame his initial ill-will towards Bulwer over this issue, even he had to agree:

'You could not have pushed the Porte to a rupture (i.e. with Couza) while your Government wanted to cultivate France. We could not inspire in the Porte more heroism while it had the presentment that it would not be supported in the consequences'.⁵

¹. Bulwer-Prince Metternich, Austrian Ambassador in Paris, 19 Jan '64, T/77. Bulwer-Russell, 1 Sept. '64 FO.78/1799: 'Couza has given way and offers the million and a half required by the Porte for compensating the Convents. I see no other way of avoiding difficulties...'

Though insisting that the Porte and Clergy should be agreeable (Russell-Bulwer, 3 Sept. '64 FO.78/1799) Russell had climbed down sufficiently to be able to advise his ambassador: 'it must always be recollected that it is a matter in which Her Majesty's Government have no immediate concern; ...provided a peaceable compromise can be made, and the Great Powers can be brought to agree, the British Government will be fully satisfied'. (17 Sept. '64 FO.78/1799) As early as February (Russell - Bulwer, 3 Feb. '64, no.2 FO.78/1797) Russell had warned Bulwer not to exclude the principle of secularisation 'which is not in itself repugnant either to the principles of equity or to the well-weighed merits of the Convents themselves'. This was a remarkable volte face on Russell's part.

². Bulwer and Russell referred in this way to Couza's schemes for increasing his powers. In fact the new Constitution of June 1864 did not create a dictatorship, though Couza was greatly strengthened by it.

³. R.W. Seton-Watson - History of the Rumanians, p.309.

⁴. Bulwer-Novikow, 19 June 1864, T/77.

⁵. Prokesch - Bulwer. 18 June. *ibid.*

But Bulwer acknowledged his mistake in all his dealings with Rouman issues. He had accepted Couza at his face value. The policy adopted towards Couza on his double election and towards his demand for union had been expedient and right; and though Bulwer's views had diverged somewhat from the official policy, Bulwer had contributed much to it by his sympathy for Couza. Malmesbury and Russell saw to it that Bulwer's desire to strengthen the Porte did not impede the course of negotiations. It had been politic to work with France, especially in the conditions. Further it was a British interest to take measures to prevent a foreign prince being introduced into the country. Bulwer's policy in the arms crisis in the Winter of 1860-1 was a logical outcome of the general policy. It was ^a skilful performance. However from 1862 it became increasingly apparent that Couza was not the man he was thought to be. Russell trod very carefully, instructing Bulwer, Green, and Churchill to find a middle way between the contrary pretensions of Couza and the coalition against him. Bulwer had generally favoured giving the prince his head.

'I have up to this time', he wrote to Green, 'been always disposed to support him to the full extent that a sense of justice would admit of'. 1

Disillusioned, angry, and apprehensive lest an intervention of some Power might introduce fresh complications, he at last turned against Couza.

'Considering', he stated, '...that there is little probability of arriving at peace or regular Government in those provinces, or peace and satisfaction on their frontiers, as long as the present ruler pursues a line of conduct which I see no

¹ Bulwer - Green, 28 March '64, Private, T/68.

indication of his being willing to alter - I now incline somewhat towards the opinion that his downfall may be the necessary accompaniment of a new and better state of things in which the rights of Foreign Powers and the Porte should be more strictly observed on the one side, and a greater latitude as to framing their own institutions be given to them on the other'. 1

He had felt that British policy had been wrong in not emphasising sufficiently the Porte's rights. In fact it could not, intelligently, have been very different. Bulwer's sympathies had been wrong and one suspects that it was his growing awareness of this that made him reduce the issues of the Capitulations and particularly the Convents² to personal battles between himself and Moustier. The latter had backed a cause, independent of Couza. Bulwer never forgave Couza for something he was not entirely responsible for. With some bitterness he announced his change of front to the Prince:

'If you continue to irritate us (si l'on continue ces continuelles taquineries) always playing at empire and independence, bear in mind my words: Europe will tolerate much and more, as one suffers a fly a long time which buzzes in your ears when you want to sleep, but in time one takes the trouble to get up and kill the fly'. 3

1. Bulwer - Green, *ibid.*

2. In 1867 the offer of Compensation to the Convents lapsed. So the United Principalities had had their own way entirely. See Seton-Watson, p.308.

3. Bulwer - Prince Couza, 19 July '64, T/64.

PART IIMontenegro

The endemic strife on the ill-defined borders of Bosnia, Herzegovina, and Montenegro was always likely to provide a bone of contention between a Power hostile to the Empire, and the Porte. Quite independent of Turkish rule, except in name, the Montenegrins were never slow to accept a challenge. A Turkish incursion into the neighbouring countries to suppress some especially serious rising occasioned by Turkish inability to provide a minimum of order and elementary justice, would be the signal for the highlanders to leave their farms to aid the peasants against their Mohammedanised lords and the Turkish troops. So it was in 1858, and just as Austria, with its own Serb population to think about, had decisively intervened in 1853 to protect Montenegro from the consequence of its actions, so in 1858 the Concert, prompted by France and Russia, stepped in to prevent the Turkish troops from pursuing its war with the vassal state.

Malmesbury, apprehending that France and Russia might co-operate in supporting Prince Danilo's claims of independence, was anxious that the question of sovereignty be shelved and the warfare stopped. Bulwer went to Constantinople ^{and} joined to implement this policy with all haste, irrespective of Turkish susceptibilities. Speed was particularly imperative in view of Russian moves to bring up the general question of the treatment of the Balkan Christians.¹ In order

¹ Alison (Chargé d'affaires) - Malmesbury, 13 April '58, FO.78/1347.

too, to prevent France from acting entirely with Russia, it was necessary for Malmesbury to see to it that the Porte pursued a conciliatory policy. The Porte agreed to hand the Representatives a memorandum on what had not been done to fulfil the Hatti-Humayoun and why not,¹ but positively refused to suspend hostilities against the Montenegrins at Grahovo.² It insisted that it was merely restoring order in its own districts. In spite of Turkish appeals, Malmesbury pressed forward with his proposal for a Commission to settle the Montenegrin boundary - for the time shelving the question of sovereignty.³ By the second week in May, Walewski, French Foreign Minister, agreed to urge the Montenegrins to evacuate Grahovo, on condition the Porte consented to the Commission. Even a Franco-Russian threat to acknowledge the vassal's independence failed to change the Porte's mind.⁴ However, the Montenegrin victory at Grahovo produced the desired result.⁵

Difficulties raised by Danilo, sensitive on the score of his sovereignty delayed a settlement until November when at Bulwer's insistence⁶ the Porte, equally sensitive in this respect, became more amenable.⁷

The boundary suggested was based on the status quo of 1856, a line determined by an arrangement between Austria and Turkey in 1853.

1. Alison - FO. 19 April, FO.78/1347.

2. Alison - FO. 8 May '58, *ibid*.

3. Alison - FO. 9 May, *ibid*.

4. Alison - FO. 15 May, *ibid*.

5. Alison - FO. 16 May, *ibid*.

6. Bulwer - Malmesbury, 2 Nov. *ibid*.

7. Malmesbury, at this point, also urged Bulwer to co-operate with Austria in a protest against the exactions of the Beys in Bosnia, (Malmesbury-Bulwer, 8 Nov. '58, *ibid*) though the ambassador had been anxious to inculcate the Christians. Bulwer-Malmesbury, 8 Aug. '58, FO.78/1350.

Commissioners on the spot were to examine it, settle the details and arrange for compensation to be paid to either the Turks or Montenegrins who would be embarrassed by the definitive settlement of the Boundary. Two years later they reported on the results of their labours, which were negligible.¹

As the Commission of Engineers wearily attempted to execute its mission, the Franco-Russian design to leave undisturbed all Montenegrins, in short to make a boundary for Prince Danilo's convenience,² provided fresh opportunities for strife between Turkey, provoked by Montenegrin incursions, and Montenegro. It was found convenient to let the boundary settlement be put on one side. In any case, as far as Britain was concerned, the Sultan's authority over Montenegro was nominally unimpaired, and to that extent the original aim of the Conservative government had been achieved. Bulwer did not like to leave things as they were, correctly anticipating that what the Commissioners had been unable to do peaceably would be effected by the sword.³

Shortly, seizing upon the opportunity provided by the embarrassment of the Porte by the Syrian massacres, Gortchakoff, in May 1860, brought forward the question of the condition of the European provinces. Again British policy was conditioned less by circumstances in these areas than by a desire to act with France in countering the Russian pressure at Constantinople. France, for its part, would have to meet Britain half-way owing to Italian developments and the

¹. See Holland, p.237, n.6. Protocol of 17 April '60.

². Bulwer-Russell, 17 March '60, FO.78/1505.

³. Bulwer-Russell, 3 April '60, FO.78/1505. Russell had agreed to the termination of the Montenegrin Boundary Commission. Russell - Bulwer, 9 May, FO.78/1496.

meeting of the three rulers of Austria, Prussia, and Russia, in Warsaw in September.¹

Russell kept before Bulwer the need to get the Porte to do something to show it was concerned that its Empire should not be a prey to the misrule of which Gortchakoff had accused it. On the other hand, Russell's instructions to Bulwer emphasised the importance of preventing any European participation in the commission of enquiry to the provinces, which Bulwer was working for to exonerate the Turks.

'The British Government', wrote Russell, 'by no means wish to have Representatives of Foreign Powers forming part of a Commission. The Foreign Representatives may meet separately after the Turkish Commission has reported'.²

Very quickly Bulwer and Lavalette, French Minister, came together to press for a purely Ottoman Commission to examine local complaints and for the Grand Vizir to visit the provinces to deal out justice.³ By June, this policy had been implemented and the immediate danger had passed.⁴ Further, in response to the news from Warsaw, Russell advised Bulwer to persuade the Porte to send the Grand Vizir, returned from Roumelia, back, this time to Bosnia and Herzegovina.⁵ Bulwer took Kibrisli Pasha's view. He held:

'...it was useless for him to go at this time. He objected also to Omer Pasha who, he said, was disliked by the Mussulmans.'⁶

¹ See Charles-Roux, p.281. At this last meeting Gortchakoff would come forward with the proposal that a Conference at Constantinople should deal with the grievances of Bosnia which the Grand Vizier, in his recent tour, had not visited.

² Bulwer-Russell, 25 May '60, FO.78/1496.

³ Bulwer-Russell, 29 May, FO.78/1497.

⁴ This minor crisis provided Bulwer with an opportunity to press forward his ideas on reform. See above, Chapter III, 108.

⁵ Bulwer-Russell, 1 Nov. '60, FO.78/1513.

⁶ Bulwer-Russell, *ibid.*

Not satisfied with this reply, Russell telegraphed:

'If the Grand Vizier cannot be spared to go to Bosnia, an efficient Turkish Commissioner or Governor should be sent.

The enquiry into reports of the consuls by the Representatives of the Great Powers should commence as soon as possible with special reference to the Hatti-Humayoun'. 1

Indicating that he felt it was time to call a halt to this policy of warding off Russian pressure, Bulwer, after acknowledging his instruction, stated:

'I do not see what further he could do elsewhere, that would give content to those who now censure his (the Grand Vizier's) proceedings'. 2

Later, in April 1861, Osman Pasha went as Governor to Bosnia, following an official notification³ to the Representatives, that the Albanian coast was under blockade, while in the Autumn, the Montenegrin coast was similarly subjected to a Turkish blockade, in spite of Franco-Russian pressure.⁴ With troops now available from Syria the Porte clearly was determined on putting an end to the constant border feud. The difference between 1858, when the Concert effectively intervened, and 1861 lay in this determination. In addition it had the moral advantage of having tried to satisfy European demands by sending the Grand Vizier and an Ottoman Commission into the provinces. Perhaps, too, Russell's refusal to favour any sort of interference with an essentially Turkish concern stiffened the

¹ Russell - Bulwer, 2 Nov. '60 FO.78/1513. For the predictable sequel to the second suggestion, see above Chapter III, p. .

² Bulwer-Russell, 6 Nov., no.723, FO.78/1513.

³ Bulwer-Russell, 21 April '61, FO.78/1570. Official notification was 28 March in Bulwer-Russell, 1 April '61, FO.78/1568.

⁴ Russell-Bulwer, 11 Oct. '61, FO.97/419 and Bulwer-Russell, 16 Oct. '61, PRO 30/22 89.

Porte's will to resist Franco-Russian pressure.¹ Of some significance, when considering the pacification of the Balkans, was Russell's conciliatory policy towards the Bulgarian Orthodox bishops and priests. Whatever the motives² behind this policy, such it had been from early in 1860,³ and by March 1861 the Patriarch had had to yield to nascent Bulgarian nationalism.⁴ This possibly helped to quieten the agitation which had made the Balkans a potent source of embarrassment for the Porte.

Russell's astute policy of making the Porte take half a step for every stride Russia urged, had been demonstrably successful. As Gortchakoff made no other move, there was no further British diplomatic activity on issues to do with Montenegro, Bosnia, and Herzegovina. However, this did not prevent Bulwer putting forward his ideas. While the Porte despatched ships to Antivari because of the discontent in Herzegovina and a threatened landing by Garibaldi; and also sent three battalions to Scutari,⁵ Bulwer, a mere witness to the diplomatic duel between Lobanoff and Prokesch,⁶ explained:

¹ Russell-Bulwer, 11 Oct. '61, FO.97/419. Russell's firmness here, contrasts with Malmesbury's anxiety to have things settled as soon as possible, no matter what the Porte felt.

² Almost certainly the consideration uppermost in Russell's mind was the need to appease the Evangelical Society (Bulwer-Russell, 27 March '61, FO.78/1568). Such a policy was naturally favourable to Russian interests. Palmerston - Russell, 20 July '60, PRO/30/22.21. 'With the Russians in Bulgaria and the French masters of Syria, the Eastern Question, as it is called, would be pretty nearly settled, though not much to our liking'.

³ Russell - Bulwer, 8 March '60, FO.78/1496.

⁴ Bulwer - Russell, 27 March, FO.78/1568.

⁵ Bulwer - Russell, 22 Jan. 1862, and 1 Feb., no.41 FO.78/1721.

⁶ December '61. The Austrian incursion into the Sutorina to destroy some Montenegrin forts tended to obscure other issues and to underline the important one, viz: that Montenegro was the preserve of either Austria or Russia.

'I see nothing for the Powers to do at this time in the question of Montenegro'. 1

Even were Montenegrin independence recognised by some of the Powers, Bulwer could see no change taking place in the real situation. Montenegrins would still invade neighbouring territories, and Turkey would still be prohibited from entering Montenegro by the state of European opinion on this subject, and Russia would still be the protector of that country.² Yet, Bulwer went on:

'Were the Turks to grant the Montenegrins a considerable extent of cultivable territory, which territory being so exposed to the attacks of a Turkish force that any insult or assault could be punished by a Turkish army - were the Prince to do homage for that territory, and were also some suitable provisions made for the communication of Montenegro with the sea coast, it is possible that the Montenegrins, becoming more wealthy and civilised...another order of things might spring up - and to this project, a project not for making Montenegro independent of Turkey, but for rendering Montenegro, for its own advantage, more dependent on Turkey - not for exciting other Principalities to look after independence as a consequence of rapine and indolence, but to look after solid benefits, as the consequence of nominal submission, I should myself be well disposed.' 3

A better example of Bulwer's ability to mask realpolitik behind a facade of generosity and quasi-liberal thinking, it would be difficult to find.⁴ Nothing came of the suggestion of a port for

1. Bulwer - Russell, 19 Feb. 1862, no. 71, FO.78/1721.

2. Bulwer - Russell, *ibid.*

3. Bulwer - Russell, *ibid.*

4. PRO. 30/22 89. Bulwer - Russell, 7 August '61. Bulwer suggested that Spitzza might be used by Montenegro, 'but I despair under great extremities of getting the Porte to agree. Haughtiness and the groping at a great shadow in preference to a smaller substance are still its main defects'.

Montenegro, as Bulwer might have expected.¹ In any case Bulwer had been instructed not to interfere with Turkey on Montenegrin affairs.² Moreover, he favoured the Porte's attempt to bring the vassal state to submission, though he continued to hope it would see an advantage in being generous.³

Complementing this policy of non-interference, especially when from August to October the Turkish forces were pressing forward, eventually to crush the Mountaineers near Scutari, Russell kept the ring for the Porte.⁴ While approving the Porte's course,⁵ yet instructing Bulwer not even to advise the Porte on the terms of peace, he protested at St. Petersburg against the interference of Russia.⁶

The Turks imposed their terms on the defeated mountaineers in August. By this treaty Turkey was to build through the country a road protected by military blockhouses. The idea at once invited sceptical comment. When the plan, in the February of the following year was given up under French, Russian and Austrian pressure, Bulwer

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1. ^{F.O.} Bulwer, 15 Dec. '58, no.434, FO.78/1352. Malmesbury wrote: 'as regards the suggestion that a port on the Adriatic should be assigned to Montenegro, Her Majesty's Govt. earnestly trusts that the Porte will not make any such concession...it might be possible to place any port nominally possessed by Montenegro, but of which the Ruler of that Country might allow a foreign Power to have unquestioned occupation, in such a state of defence as to be rendered nearly, if not entirely, unassailable; and it would thus become a source of danger and anxiety to some at least of the Powers of Europe whose territorial possessions or commercial communications might at any moment be interfered with'.
2. Russell - Bulwer, 11 Oct. '61, FO.97/419.
3. Bulwer - Russell, 30 July '62, PRO.30/22 89.
4. Holland, p.328, n.l. 31 Aug. '62 Turkey enforced terms which included the right to build a military road through Montenegro.
5. Russell - Bulwer, 8 Sept. '62, FO.78/1726: Russell - Erskine, no. 1 22 Oct. '62, FO.78/1727.
6. Russell - Bulwer, 14 Sept. '62, FO.78/1726.

commented:

'The Porte can...make two decent fortresses, one on each end of the road which will probably be more useful and less likely to cause quarrels than small intermediate stations running through the Montenegrin territory. For my own part I always felt this the safest plan in a military and political point of view'. 1

Even this was an optimistic view for the Porte had no money for roads of greater consequence than the one proposed for distant Montenegro, and without roads, as the foreign office was aware, the situation between Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina on the one side, and Turkey on the other would remain unaltered.² For the moment calm slowly returned to the area,³ and pressure from Austria, trying to re-establish 'the good relations with Montenegro which were formerly of immense importance to them',⁴ from France and Russia, ensured that nothing came of the offensive treaty.⁵ Erskine, British chargé d'affaires, merely advised the Grand Vizir, A'ali Pasha, to implement the reforms promised for Herzegovina in 1861,⁵ and expressed to Russell the hope that the projected road through Montenegro would be forgotten, for it would only serve, he thought, to increase the possibilities of collision between the two sides.⁶ A little later Erskine reported that he understood the only blockhouse built as a result of the treaty was not even in Montenegrin territory, 'and I should not be surprised hereafter to find that there

1. Bulwer-Russell, 19 Feb. '63, T/70.

2. Holmes (Bosnia Serai) - Russell, 23 Sept. '62, no. 61, FO.78/1727.

3. Churchill (Scutari) - Russell, 23 Sept. '62, no. 26, *ibid*.

4. Bloomfield (Ambassador to Austria) - Russell, 4 Dec. '62, no. 416, *ibid*.

5. Erskine-Russell, 1 Jan. no. 1, FO.78/1732.

6. Erskine-Russell, 7 Oct. '62 *op.cit*. A remarkable suggestion to put to the Foreign Office, that the best means of keeping, or rather obtaining, good relations between suzerain and vassal was to put as great a distance as possible between them.

is no intention of persisting in a project which has met with such general opposition'.¹ Such was the case.

Elsewhere, Montenegrin autonomy had been more effectively secured by the part of the Servian agreement which stipulated for the demolition of the fortress of Udshitze, commanding the Serb-Montenegrin border. Turkish ability to strike swiftly in that part of its Empire was thus seriously reduced.

The defensive policy of the British Government had achieved its object in containing the struggle in the western Balkans, and providing the Sultan's government with an opportunity to pacify the area, however temporarily, in spite of French and Russian policies. Austria's prominent intervention, in December 1862, on behalf of Montenegro nullified the immediate gains of the Turks. Yet, it is doubtful whether the Porte had desired anything more than to reassert her authority in some striking and dramatic fashion. So its inability to capitalise on the treaty of August was not unexpected. For the time being, partly as a consequence of Russell's moral support and success in destroying the acknowledged, though not real bases, of Russian policy, by making the Porte act as if it intended to remedy grievances in Bosnia-Herzegovina, this region ceased to trouble the Porte unduly, or the Powers for the remainder of Bulwer's embassy. Radical solutions not being possible at the time, this was perhaps a measure of the success, however undramatic, of British policy. Russell, in the process had consolidated his victory over Gortchakoff of May 1860, when the latter had brought forward a second time the condition of the Slavs of the Ottoman Empire.²

¹ Erskine - Russell, 1 Jan '63, no. 1, FO.78/1732 .

² See Charles-Roux, p.292.

PART III

SERVIA

To the settlement of the Servian issues raised in 1862, Bulwer contributed much more. But recently recovered from a serious illness in July '62, by a remarkable display of energy and endurance he was able to win the chief laurels in this diplomatic contest.

According to the Internuncio, Prokesch:

'The great and principal merit in the conduct of the negotiation belongs to Sir Henry Bulwer, whose just survey, faculty of work, wealth of conciliatory ideas, politeness of manner, and calm dignity in discussions joined with the weight of his public character, refuted from the beginning the position of the ambassador of France and the Minister of Russia...' 1

The second phase of the Servian question had begun with the victory of Russia in 1829.² Hence, with the aid of Russian good offices, Prince Milosh Obrenovitch of Servia determined to regulate internal affairs as he chose; in effect, to turn the country into a national and sovereign state. But in a land of peasant proprietors, equal in status, and in their hostility to government, little could be effected to strengthen the central power, without resorting to despotic methods. Allowing nothing to deter him from attaining his object, Milosh, having extorted the privilege of vesting the succession, by hereditary right, in his own family, went on to undermine the traditional constitutional machinery, which had also been legalized by various Hatts. The latest Hatti-Sherif of 1830 explicitly stated:

¹. Quoted in Riker, p.380.

². See above, Chapter II, p.45. The first phase had ended in 1815 when Milosh had forced the Turks to acknowledge the autonomous position of his country.

'Prince Milosh (shall) continue in the name of the Sublime Porte to administer the internal affairs of the country, and to settle them in concert with the council and assembly of the chiefs and elders of the nation'. 1

It also demanded that:

'as long as the chiefs and elders, members of the council of which mention has been made before, do not render themselves guilty of any grave offence towards the Sublime Porte and towards the laws and constitution of the country they shall not be dismissed, nor shall they be deprived of their offices without cause, or without having committed some fault'. 2

In fact, Milosh centralised all executive power in his own person, suppressed the Skouptchina and Senate, and reduced the role of the National Court of Chancery to that of a simple judicial body. A Servian Code based on the Code Napoleon did not assuage the arbitrariness of Milosh's rule so that by 1835, though supported by France and Britain,³ it was not approved of by Russia which sided with the malcontents. Seizing this golden opportunity, the Porte, with Russian consent, issued in December 1838 a Firman re-establishing a constitutional regime. No Senator could be dismissed unless his crime had been proved to the Porte: judges held office for life; and monopolies were abolished. The Senate alone could sanction taxation. Most important of all, with the permission of the protecting Power, the elective principle had, de facto, been substituted for the hereditary one.⁴

Milosh had to leave the country; the contest was postponed.

The great change in the situation when he returned to power in

1. In Longworth (Consul at Belgrade) - Bulwer, 22 April '60, no. 6, FO. 781515

2. Ibid.

3. They attempted to make ground in the provinces that they had lost at Constantinople by the Treaty of Unkiar Skelessi.

4. Temperley - History of Servia, seems to think that the Porte was acting *ultra vires*. It was not.

1859 lay in the substitution of the collective guarantee for the single Russian guarantee of Servian immunities. The Porte was solely responsible to the Powers for the interpretation or execution of any Hatt, Ustav, or Treaty. Another alteration, giving cause for immediate quarrel with the Porte, was in the latter's non-observance of its own Hatts in so far as they pertained to the evacuation of Mussulman subjects from Servia.

By the Hatts of 1829 and 1830 no Turk could reside in the principality except within the Turkish fortresses. No exception was made in favour of Belgrade, though by a Firman of 1833 the Porte claimed, as of right, that Mussulmans could continue to reside in the city of Belgrade, the argument being that from a strategic view the whole city was within the fortress.¹ In 1858 the Turkish settlement in the city of Belgrade did not figure in Servian complaints, though indeed it might have done. For through Servian neglect, the old gates dividing the old city from the suburbs had been left standing, and the Turks had sentries there, taking the gates to be an extension of the garrison.² To aggravate the situation, the Governor of the Belgrade citadel, for his part, had always, whether by policy or from mere carelessness - possibly both - permitted Christians to reside within this space between the Gates and the actual fortress.³ In 1859, not only were Mussulmans settled all over the country, the Porte claimed jurisdiction over

¹•Dalyell (attaché) - Bulwer, July 24 '58,T/12. The problem was complicated by the Firman of 1838 which provided for the destruction of the Gates of the old city - later referred to as the Faubourg. In 1862 Turkey's legal right to live in the space between the fortress and the gates would be questioned.

²•Fonblanque (Consul at Belgrade)-Bulwer, 16 March '59,no.9 & 14 March, FO.78/1439

³•Bulwer-Russell, 11 Sept. '62,FO.78/1657.

them, also over the non-Servian Christians residing there.¹ Clearly the provisions of the Firman of 1833 should not have been extended in this way. They had provided for a different state of things 'viz: the period following the conclusion of the struggle between the Porte and the Principality, at which period the Turkish proprietors were probably for the most part residing in the suburbs and neighbourhood of the garrisoned fortresses'.² In April 1860, Milosh sent a Deputation to Constantinople to voice his grievances which a system of mixed jurisdiction, conflicting militias, and police caused.³ The Deputation demanded the recognition of the hereditary succession in the Obrenovitch line, and the withdrawal of the Mussulman population from Serbia according to the Firmans.

From the first, Bulwer looked to conciliating national opinion in Serbia by timely concessions, and he had advised the Porte in this sense before the Deputation arrived. His language on the subject had been moderate, even delicate.

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- ¹ Serbia was unfortunate in this respect. Moldo-Wallachia was not similarly bound to allow Mussulmans to live within its frontiers. There was a lighter side to this. Fonblanque in Belgrade remarked that he knew 'a Bosnian Spahi who calls himself Abdoul-Abdoulievitch! Fonblanque - Bulwer, 1 Feb. '59, no. 4, FO.78/1439.
 - ² Dalyell - Bulwer, 24 July '58, T/12.
 - ³ Longworth - Bulwer, 22 April '60, no. 6 FO.78/1515. The Servian authorities made the Turks shut up shop on Sundays, though the Turkish authorities did not - and could not - make the Serbs close on Fridays. The Turks refused to improve the appearance of the Belgrade market place because it would have involved the removal of some tombstones. Dalyell-Bulwer, 24 July '58, T/12. As for the Mussulman population scattered up and down the country, though the Turks refused to allow them to be placed under Servian laws, they were unable themselves to exercise jurisdiction over them. Equally aggravating was the existence of two sets of police, Serb and Turkish, both fully armed and both patrolling the old city, and mutually hostile. Fonblanque - Malmesbury, 14 March '59, FO.78/1439

'The adoption of Michael (Milosh's son) by anticipation', he wrote, 'would be rather a bitter pill, and is difficult on any fixed principle. Upon the whole, what I should recommend to the Porte is to draw up by anticipation instructions to the Pasha at Belgrade to use instantly on old Milosh's demise; and which would be to the effect that if his nomination would be popular, to assure him that even at the request of the Senate, or any national authority, or even on any plausible pretext, it should at once be sanctioned'. 1

Somewhat to Bulwer's dismay the suggestion only became acceptable to Milosh at Russia's instance². The Porte did write to Osman Pasha at Belgrade, instructing him to communicate to Prince Michael the Porte's assurance that he would be recognised on Milosh's death.³ Bulwer took the opportunity to warn Milosh 'to take care what he was about, since by attacking the state of things guaranteed by Treaty, he would be assailing not only the Porte but the Great Powers'.⁴

The Serb deputation made two categorical demands, that the constitution be abolished and the principle of hereditary succession be reaffirmed, and that the Turks outside the fortresses should leave the country.⁵ Naturally suspicious of Milosh's designs, Bulwer thought the objections to the constitution should be specified so that the Porte could discuss changes with the Representatives of the Powers. Otherwise he favoured the recent demands, though he went on to explain:

'It will...be difficult to preserve the fortresses not on the Danube when the Turkish population around them is withdrawn, and perhaps the wisest thing eventually will be to destroy them'. 6

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1. Bulwer-Russell, 25 Jan '60, PRO.30/22.88.
 2. Bulwer-Russell, 17 Feb. '60, *ibid*.
 3. Bulwer-Russell, 14 March '60, *ibid*.
 4. Bulwer-Russell, 14 Mar. '60, *ibid*. Prokesch & Lallemand joined him in this.
 5. Bulwer-Russell, 11 April '60, *ibid*.
 6. Bulwer-Russell, *ibid*. When the Servian crisis blew up the next year, this was one of Bulwer's first assumptions.

He had always in mind the suspicion that Russia might easily capitalise on Servian discontent.¹ Further, considerable unrest in the provinces, especially Bulgaria, also in the capital itself, the troops being ill-paid, and the agitation in the Moldo-Wallachian Principalities made it imperative that the leading section of the south Slavs, the Serbs, should be kept quiet.² However, Russell's astute manoeuvring between Russia and France, ably backed by Bulwer's drive in keeping before the Turks the need to implement reforms,³ contained the situation.

Prince Milosh died in September. His last act had been to declare to the Skouptchina, convoked in August for the purpose,⁴ that the Suzerain's decision over the recent Servian demands could not be respected. Despite these strong words, when Michael succeeded his father the task of establishing the government on a sound basis of law and order, and of giving it security from external aggression remained. Government had to be regularised, likewise the fighting force. The necessary concomitant to his civil reforms and the introduction of conscription, in fact, even, the prerequisite for the success of both, was the need to have the Mussulman problem settled. Competing jurisdictions and authorities

¹. Bulwer - Russell, 17 and 22 Feb. and 16 June '60, *ibid*.

². Russia had put its army in Bessarabia and the Caucasus on a war footing and now agitated the question of the condition of the Slav provinces. (Bulwer-Russell, 8 Feb. '60, *ibid*). Russian projects, Bulwer explained, 'are to substitute for former plans of external aggression, plans of internal dissolution, which only at a propitious time would be supported by a military force. A force sufficient for the purpose of backing a general insurrection, or a state of internal convulsion will probably be kept in readiness..' (Bulwer - Russell, 16 June '60, *ibid*).

³. See above, p. 73, and Chapter III, p. 103.

⁴. See Temperley, p. 240.

impaired Michael's sovereignty. These would be the factors underlying the demand, whose immediate significance might have appeared to be merely personal, for the admission of the hereditary principle.

Again, however, the Porte, in its Berat, skirted around the question simply stating Michael to have the essential qualities for administering Serbia.¹ Russell quickly asked Bulwer for his opinions on the situation, and on Michael's proposal that the Turks living in Serbia 'should continue to reside, but under Servian law and police, than that they should be expelled'.² The ambassador rejoined:

'This was the view always taken both by myself and Monsieur Thouvenel on this question, and I have more than once mentioned it to the Servian Representative here'.³

This of course received official approval.⁴

When Garashanin headed another mission to Constantinople to negotiate withdrawal of the Turks outside the fortresses, and to demarcate the spheres of jurisdiction, the Porte was grappling with the gravest financial crisis of these years,⁵ was preoccupied with disturbances in Albania and Bosnia-Herzegovina of which, it felt, Garibaldi would take advantage, and, with Britain prodding from behind, was striving to get the French out of Syria. In the midst of these troubles it could hardly have tackled another problem so full of administrative complexities, especially when there seemed to

¹. Enclosed in Bulwer-Russell, 31 Oct. '60, no. 709, and dated 20 Oct. FO.78/1512.

². Russell - Bulwer, 2 March '61, no. 130, FO.78/1560.

³. Bulwer-Russell, 25 March '61, FO.78/1568.

⁴. Russell-Bulwer, 9 April '61, op.cit.

⁵. Negotiations were on foot for the notorious Mirès loan which would have obtained £8 million for the Porte at a cost of £16 million.

no urgent reason why it should. Nevertheless, Bulwer seemed to be convinced the Porte should do something to meet Garashinin's request. He wrote:

'The proposal is not only plausible but just, nor do I see any reason why the affair should not be settled amicably'. 1

On the other hand, Turkish indecision made him suspect that the problem would have to be brought before the Powers.² Already a note of anxiety had sharpened Bulwer's occasional reflections on a worsening state of affairs. After Milosh in the previous August had flung down the challenge, Bulwer whose communications hitherto had tended to be a little frivolous - to the effect that Milosh was dying as usual, and that a nation of swineherds, unless as a part of a general and foreign sponsored insurrection, could not be dangerous, commented:

'I shall advise the Grand Vizir...to open the door for further negotiations, but the result of what finally takes place will probably depend on circumstances which will have little to do directly with the correspondence between the Porte and Prince Milosh'. 3

Not much insight was required to see that even an Obrenovitch could not completely control the nationalist movement which was constantly stimulated by the petty local grievances.⁴ The event proved the ambassador right. In June 1862, after months of bickering, the tension mounting up in the old city, or Faubourg, could no longer be contained by the authorities, and there resulted an open clash

1. Bulwer-Russell, 5 May '61, no.346, FO.78/1570.

2. Bulwer-Russell, *ibid*.

3. Bulwer-Russell, 28 Aug. '60, no.552, FO.78/1510.

4. Unpopular rulers like 'the Miloshes' would even go so far as to turn attention towards external grievances, so-called, through 'fear of otherwise losing their hold over Servia what (sic) opinion is now beginning to run against them...as a means of sustaining their own power', reflected Bulwer. Bulwer-Russell, 22 Feb. '60, PRO. 30/22.88.

(15 - 17 June) between the residents, ending with the bombardment of the town by the fortress artillery. It was a panic action, yet one for which the Serbs had clearly hoped. Michael's levying of 50,000 men in 1861, contrary to treaty stipulations, had not been an idle gesture. During the incident the Serbs had quickly captured the walls of the Faubourg which they occupied, and barricades went up. The Turkish fortress was in a state of siege and for the next four weeks, that is until the Conferences to settle the issue began their sittings, another outbreak between the Serbs and the Turkish forces could not be discounted.

While the Consuls helped the Commandant of the fortress and the Serbian Prime Minister, Garashanin, to come to a temporary truce, and the Porte dispatched a new Governor and a Commissioner, Ahmed Vefyk to enquiry into the affair,¹ the business had begun of bringing it within the bounds of negotiation.

Austria took the initiative in asking for a Conference of the Powers at Constantinople. Russell, who took a serious view of the incident and of its significance,² assented to the Austrian

¹. Bulwer - Russell, 16 and 23 June, FO.78/1644.

². Russell - Bulwer, 3 July '62, FO.78/1645. Russell wrote this despatch later: 'The engagement by which it is stipulated that the Principality shall continue to hold of the Sublime Porte has been openly attacked and naturally denied. The declaration of the Prince (Milosh) and of the Skouptchina by which it was declared that the Prince alone was entitled to carry on relations with foreign powers; and by which the Constitution of the Principality was set aside without the sanction of the Sultan; the provisions by which an hereditary authority was conferred on the Prince (Milosh) in contempt of the Firmans and Hatti-Sheriffs of the Sublime Porte and lastly the decree by which 50,000 men were to be levied and armed in support of this usurped authority grievously affected the territorial integrity of the Ottoman Empire, and therefore, were according to the Treaty of Paris to be considered as matters of general interest'. See Temperley on this incident. His view that the Turks had abused the various Firmans, thus creating the difficulties at Belgrade, is not justified by the evidence. Nor had the Treaty of Paris, as Temperley holds, altered the situation vis-a-vis the Turkish fortresses. Ibid. 245.

proposal,¹ and instructed Bulwer to communicate with his Austrian colleague should the question of intervention arise. Russell had dropped his previous idea that a mission composed of the Representatives at Vienna should go to Belgrade 'with power to order Austrian regiments to occupy Belgrade for a short time to establish a truce between the contending parties'.² Maturer reflection had made Russell sceptical of the use of any intervention. He 'would be best satisfied if the question were not raised at all'.³ The Porte itself had objected to this, while clearly Russia and France could hardly have favoured it.⁴

Bulwer, as mentioned above, had strong opinions on the kind of relationship which should exist between Sultan and vassal. He had argued:

'The only sensible view to take of these Provinces is that of considering them as a neutral frontier, the population of which has not to be ruled by the Porte, but to be conciliated by it. Their nominal vassalage to the Ottoman Empire is the best and safest guarantee of their real independence against neighbours more ambitious, and more powerful. And this it is probable they will themselves understand and appreciate, if the connection which such vassalage imposes does not too violently shock their feelings, and too materially injure their interests'. 5

1. Russell - Bulwer, 22 June '62, FO.78/1644.

2. Russell - Bulwer, 19 June, *ibid*.

3. Russell - Bulwer, 26 June, '62, *ibid*.

4. Temperley, p.244. France and Russia had consistently supported Michael's innovations in respect of the army and the constitution. Now, in July, they came to an agreement to reduce the menace of the Turkish occupation of Serbia, and to settle the question of jurisdiction in Serbia's favour. Riker states that Russell came to suspect such an arrangement in September. In fact, he knew of it early in August. Russell - Bulwer, 11 Aug., FO.78/1645.

5. Acting Consul Lytton (Belgrade) - Bulwer, 19 March '60, FO.78/1505, quoted Bulwer's instructions and went on to suggest that his two months stay in the country had persuaded him that nothing else could be looked for. Bulwer and the Foreign Office greatly respected Lytton's judgment.

He had written in this sense to Longworth at Belgrade, instructing him as to his bearing towards Michael, and the advice he should give him on the subject of the hereditary title. The despatch showed Bulwer at his paternal best:

'It appears...that he is rather...childishly anxious about the hereditary title... The policy of the Porte and of the Prince is to endeavour to live on good terms together. Get His Highness to conform as much as possible to forms. I would on the other hand get the Porte to meet his wishes, as far as possible, as to things. You will have seen the reception given to Prince Couza, a new policy on the part of the Porte with respect to the outlying Principalities. Let the Prince come into this. I have personally a great respect and regard for him, and consider him a perfect gentleman'. 1

His views had suffered no change by the recent events. On the other hand his tactical judgment, always suspect, was unsound. He asked Russell whether he might take his leave of absence - long over-due - and turn it to advantage by having it in Belgrade to facilitate a private arrangement between the Serbs and the Porte.² A secret desire for a little glory seems to have prompted him, for already he had been instructed to attend a Conference of the Five Powers.³ With remarkable nonchalance he explained in his private letter:

'I think, if Fuad will do now what Narvaez did in 1842, that in a few days I could settle matters at Belgrade as I did formerly at Tangiers. Let him, in short, and he seems so inclined, give me carte blanche to finish things as best I can: in taking my leave, I should naturally pass by Belgrade, and in three days I could see what is possible, and turn it into an arrangement. All this might be done perfectly quietly, and nothing more is necessary than to give Vefyck absolute orders to sign what I assent to'. 4

1. Bulwer-Lytton, 21 Oct. '60, FO.78/1512.

2. Bulwer-Russell, 27 June, FO.78/1644.

3. Russell-Bulwer, 25 June, no.340, ibid.

4. Bulwer-Russell, 25 June, PRO.30/22.90.

Encouraged by the Grand Vizier, Fuad, and by A'ali, who presumably sought to get out of a scrape, Bulwer actually proposed that the Conference should be presented with a 'fait accompli' which 'could not be otherwise than accepted'.¹ The astonishing idea showed a rare inability, in a diplomatist of 30 years experience, to grasp the political realities beneath the diplomatic situation. Russell gave it short shrift, stating:

'Her Majesty's Government do not wish you to go to Belgrade. The Representatives should meet at Constantinople and have before them the proposals of Vefyķ and of the Prince of Servia.

It is necessary that deliberations should be in common, and that all the Powers who signed the Treaty of Paris in 1856 should be represented in Conference'.²

The specific instructions enjoined him to discover, why the Serbs had attacked the Gates which the Turks held by treaty, whether or not a renewal of the conflict might shortly take place, what the Treaties involved and how they had been violated, and if the Treaties needed to be changed.³ Russell was anxious to get the Conference assembled as soon as possible, and could only be irate as a month slipped by without the Representatives meeting because the Russian had no instructions, and the Austrian objected to the presence of an Italian representative.⁴

The first meeting of the conference took place on 23 July. Bulwer had a clear notion of what he wanted and also what his bargaining pieces would be. He felt it would be inviting trouble to have the Turks and Serbs again together in the Faubourg which

¹. Bulwer - Russell, 27 June, op.cit.

². FO - Bulwer, 28 June, ibid.

³. Russell - Bulwer, 25 June, no.340, FO.78/1644.

⁴. Russell - Bulwer, 15 July; Bulwer-Russell, 21 July, FO.78/1662

fronted the fortress. The essential thing was to make the fortress secure, 'giving up the rest'.¹ By this he meant that the Turks should give up the Faubourg, and the two smaller fortresses in the interior, namely Sokol on the Bosnian frontier, and Udshitze in the Sanjak of Novibazar. These fortresses depended exclusively on outside supplies,² and were consequently indefensible. But Bulwer added 'this cession should be kept back till the last and not made too easily'.³ He expected no difficulties from the Porte. At the first conference he took control, the initiative remaining with him till the end - chiefly because he bid low. The conference agreed on sending a joint telegram to the Consuls in Belgrade instructing them to impress upon the Servian government the need to keep the peace⁴. The real business began at the next conference. It indicated the way the future negotiations would develop. The battle between Moustier and Bulwer began in earnest.

Stressing the critical state of Belgrade, Bulwer urged the conference to press the Servian government to withdraw the advanced sentries and take down the barricades. The Porte also should take measures to improve the atmosphere. On Lobanoff's and Moustier's insisting on the barricades remaining, Bulwer asked for his proposal to be recorded. At this Moustier climbed down, and expressed his willingness to assent to Bulwer's disarmament proposition providing it were linked with an outline of his views of the political settlement he had in mind. The Porte had obviously been primed beforehand for

¹. Bulwer-Russell, 9 July '62, PRO.30/22 90.

². Bulwer-Russell, 11 Sept. no. 600, FO.78/1657.

³. Bulwer-Russell, 9 July, op.cit.

⁴. Bulwer-Russell, 24 July '62, FO.78/1662.

Bulwer suggested 'that the citadel should have a sufficient rayon⁺, decided by military authorities, and all those whose houses were demolished should be indemnified'.¹ Moustier and Lobanoff said they would ask for instructions.

Bulwer's confident expectation that the Frenchman would shift his ground sprang from his sure insight into French policy on this issue. He recognised its limitations. Crowing over his tactical victory, he wrote to his chief:

'My notion is that Moustier was told to obtain all he could by influence, obscure threats, and indirect promises, but not to pledge his Government to insist on anything directly or to place it avowedly in opposition to us or to what we might reasonably expect'.²

Bulwer's plan now was for the Porte to be difficult, and thus to secure him and Prokesch in their position as mediators.³ For a change, agreeing with the policy he was attempting to carry out, and perhaps relishing his good health, Bulwer quite evidently enjoyed the struggle, cheerfully commenting on the personal situation:

'The greatest harmony exists between myself and Prokesch; and M. de Moustier is, at least in form, - the Marquis - every inch of him, and so rounds the corners of his phrases that he appears polite when he begs the Turks to give up all they possess',⁴

and on the diplomatic possibilities:

'I think if two or three useless fortresses are demolished, the whole affair may be settled on Thursday when we meet again'.⁵

The prognostication proved false. On 31 July the Russian and French representatives demanded that the fortress of Belgrade be

1. Bulwer-Russell, 28 July, *ibid.*
 2. Bulwer-Russell, 30 July, PRO.30/22.90.
 3. Bulwer-Russell, *ibid.*
 4. Bulwer-Russell, *ibid.*
 5. Bulwer-Russell, 28 July, FO.78/1662.

+ 'Rayon' or 'Esplanade' was the word used to describe a 'no-man's-land'.

given up to the Serbs. Bulwer simply asked the conference to discuss, paragraph by paragraph, a project he had prepared, 'and after much discussion we agreed on all but the two most important points, the extent that should be given to the Rayon around the citadel of Belgrade, and the number of fortresses the Turks should keep'.¹ Other points which produced differences, were the limitation of the Servian army which, as the only check on its size, i.e. the Constitution, had been tampered with, Bulwer held ought to be settled by the Powers and the Porte; and the indemnification of the Mussulman population whose property had been pillaged in the recent fracas. While Moustier and Lobanoff disliked these last two suggestions, the former at least was prepared to consider the Turkish offer to give up the two fortresses in the interior, and there seemed to be a possibility of compromise on the question of the defence of the citadel. As the conference closed Bulwer threatened that if a settlement were not soon arrived at, he would raise difficulties about Servian armaments and the barricades, while the Porte would take measures to defend itself.² Bulwer had countered the stiff French terms by offering the two Turkish fortresses. He had to make it clear that this was his last major concession. In the next few days, Moustier changed his ground, became obstinate, and tried to bully the Porte into giving up all the fortresses.³ Bulwer held his ground, assuring his chief:

¹.Bulwer-Russell, 1 August, FO.78/1662.

².Bulwer-Russell, 1 August, FO.78/1662.

³.Bulwer-Russell, 4 August, ibid.

'France would prefer an arrangement entirely in favour of the Servians, but does not want to have the responsibility thrown upon her of having provoked a collision thro' her unreasonableness'. 1

Finally, at the conference of 13 August Moustier overplayed his hand. The Porte had already given distinct assurances as to the two fortresses, and the withdrawal of the Mussulman population - rather than leave it under Servian jurisdiction.² Neither touching on the strength of the Servian forces, nor an indemnity for the Turks, Moustier's project stipulated for the destruction of the Belgrade citadel and the five fortresses. After this Bulwer gained the Prussian minister to his side while even the Italian representative was sympathetic.³ It seems that each side waited for the other to give in, but Bulwer, confident in the ability of the Turkish army to crush the Serbs, preferred to keep the minor concessions until the French should radically alter their views. And for a time Bulwer suspected Moustier had tempered his opinion.

'As to the French Ambassador', he wrote, 'his conduct seems to have caught the fever of the climate, and to have its alternate hot and cold fits, so that one conversation always makes one surprised at the other. He is now, however, I hear, in a cold stage, and I cannot help thinking that the firm but moderate tone we have taken up, has contributed to this result'. 4

Till this point Russell had left his ambassador considerable latitude, approving of his not having brought forward the question of culpability,⁵ which he himself had emphasised in the original instructions,⁶ and of the manner in which Bulwer had handled the

1. Bulwer-Russell, 6 August, PRO.30/22 90.

2. Bulwer-Russell, 11 Aug., op.cit.

3. Bulwer-Russell, 20 Aug., PRO.30/22 90.

4. Bulwer-Russell, ibid.

5. Bulwer-Russell, 12 Aug., no.526, FO.78/1656.

6. Russell-Bulwer, 27 Aug., no.515, FO.78/1645.

conference¹. He instructed him now not to make any more concessions, and to tell the French ambassador of this.

'This is the last word', he wrote, 'of Her Majesty's Government on the affairs of Servia'.²

On Bulwer's requesting Moustier's specific and detailed objections to his project of 31 July, the latter, instead, produced another project, in substance much like Bulwer's scheme but very offensive in tone.³ He demanded that not a single Servian building be touched, however necessary a rayon for the fortress, that the two interior fortresses be demolished at once and the others be examined 'to see if any more can be destroyed',⁴ that under no circumstances should the town be bombarded, and, while a military commission should examine the citadel, it should be 'to see if advanced points disagreeable to the Servians cannot be altered'.⁵ The subject of the Servian forces, upon which the strength of Turkish garrisons would be assessed, was entirely ignored. No mention was made of an indemnity for the Mussulman population. In short the whole intention of the project was to concede everything to Servia, and to treat it as an equal Power rather than as a vassal. 'Another difficulty', as Bulwer explained, 'is in the amour propre of the French negotiator who wishes the paper signed to be drawn up by him'.⁶ He also complained of Moustier's draftmanship, 'there being no suite in the articles and each treating of a variety of things'.⁷ Having persuaded the French ambassador to withdraw his

1. Russell - Bulwer, 23 Aug., no. 508, FO.78/1645.

2. Russell - Bulwer, 22 Aug., *ibid.*

3. Bulwer - Russell, 11 Sept., no. 600., FO.78/1657.

4. Bulwer - Russell, 27 Aug., FO.78/1662.

5. Bulwer - Russell, *ibid.*

6. Bulwer - Russell, *ibid.*

7. Bulwer - Russell, Sept. PRO.30/22 91.

declaration that the document be accepted in toto, Bulwer, presumably in deference to his pride, and thinking it 'better not to have much discussion' took the project away with him.¹ With the aid of A'ali, and especially Prokesch, Bulwer produced a counter-project at the conference held 2 September,² which in accordance with the latest suggestions of Russell, who had insisted to Thouvenel on the justice of an extended rayon to compensate for the loss of the faubourg,³ included two compromise proposals. One touched on the problem of a Rayon, and the other agreed that the Porte should give a moral guarantee not to bombard the town except under the strongest provocation.

Moustier had kept back his instruction to agree to a rayon, providing the Servian Cathedral, seminary, and one or two other buildings were left alone.⁴ He now yielded, accepting Bulwer's counter-project which he proceeded to alter in one or two details.⁵ One of these, a new idea, that a Military Commission to decide on the requirements of the rayon should include a Servian Representative, Bulwer promptly rejected.⁶ They agreed in the final conference (4 September) to leave the Porte and the Servian government to reach

¹. Bulwer-Russell, *ibid*.

². Bulwer-Russell, 11 Sept., no. 600, FO.78/1657.

³. Russell-Bulwer, 11 Aug., FO.78/1656; Bulwer-Russell, no. 525, 12 Aug. *ibid*, and Russell-Bulwer, 28 Aug., FO.78/1645: 'M. Thouvenel's despatch to St. Petersburg read to me by the French chargé d'affaires speaks of only two points, first that no Servian houses should be destroyed to enlarge the rayon, second that a moral guarantee should be given against bombardment, except in case of necessity. As to the first, I think consent of Servian proprietors should be obtained and indemnity promised. The second I think is reasonable. Endeavour to reduce the French demands to these two points'.

⁴. Bulwer-Russell, 12 Aug., FO.78/1656.

⁵. Bulwer-Russell, 11 Sept. no. 600, FO.78/1657, and Bulwer-Russell, Sept. PRO.30/22 91.

⁶. Bulwer-Russell, 4 Sept., FO.78/1662.

a friendly entente as to the size of the vassal's militia. And, as Moustier rejected the idea of leaving the Military commissioners to decide which Servian properties, apart from the buildings already excepted, should be destroyed to facilitate the construction of an effective Rayon, Bulwer, at the last, acted on Russell's suggestion that the Porte should come to an arrangement with the Servian government for purchasing the necessary Servian houses. It was an important concession, because the Porte, again, had to make it.

'I carried it at the very last by consenting to the arrangement as to the rayon which Your Lordship's telegram of the 28 August mentions, but which I myself had never consented to if all the other points had not been agreed', explained Bulwer. 1

On the other hand the barricades and other fortifications had to come down before the Porte issued its Firman. The ambassador concluded:

'I have only to add that I think Your Lordship will find, on comparing my original proposals with our ultimate agreement that after all the stormy debates that have occurred, we remain pretty nearly on the same ground which we took up at the commencement of our discussions'. 2

Apart from the failure to indemnify the Mussulmans - and it was not certain whether they ought to have been - and the Porte's having to reach an agreement with the Servian government over its militia and the purchase of Serb properties, Bulwer's statement was correct. The failure to reach a more satisfactory arrangement on the militia was serious, but Bulwer seems, by his conduct, to have

1. Bulwer-Russell, 4 Sept., FO.78/1662.

2. Bulwer-Russell, 11 Sept., FO.78/1657.

been glad enough to have persuaded Moustier that it was even a proper subject for discussion.¹

According to the new arrangement the Turks would demolish its fortresses at Udshitze and Sokol - to the great benefit of Montenegro and Herzegovina. The fortresses on the rivers, Drina, Save, and Danube, namely Shabatz, Semendria, and Fethislam, and little Zvornik on the Drina, and the island of Adakaleh on the Danube, remained, forming part of the defence of Belgrade itself.² Though the Faubourg was to be given to the Serbs no military work could be constructed on it, and the rayon or esplanade which was to be enlarged chiefly in the former Mussulman quarter, and was to provide the space of ground separating the garrison from the Serbs, would also have no fortifications. The guarantee against another bombardment included a stipulation that the Commandant of the Fortress should inform the consul and the inhabitants of the Town if a similar bombardment were contemplated in some future eventuality.³

Russell praised Bulwer's efforts:

'You have shown skill, promptitude, judgment, and all the conciliation compatible with your instructions, and the rights of the Porte'. 4

All these qualities he had given proof of. Moreover, his powers of restraint, his remarkable endurance and good temper, put him in the rank of first-class negotiators. His initial aberration does

¹Article XI of the new treaty expressed the Porte's belief 'that the Servian government will not keep a number of men superior to what is necessary for the maintenance of the tranquility and internal order of the country'. Treaty enclosed in Bulwer-Russell, 11 Sept., no. 600, FO.78/1657.

²Bulwer-Russell, 11 Sept., no.600, FO.78/1657.

³Enclosed in Bulwer-Russell, ibid, Porte-Governor of Belgrade.

⁴Russell-Bulwer, 6 Oct. '62, FO.78/1646.

not detract from the performance. Though he had made most of the concessions early, in the diplomatic context this was a wise policy, for Thouvenel, no supporter of the Russian entente, could hardly have insisted on the exorbitant and insulting demands Moustier originally put forward. More important, Bulwer, supported by Prokesch and the Porte, refused to be browbeaten, and while the French ambassador could not contemplate Turkey and Servia putting the issue to the test of war, there was little he could do but climb down. The tardiness with which French policy became conciliatory possibly reflected a need to impress the Russian ally.

There was a curious aftermath in the second arms crisis. Bulwer, in Cairo on a leave of absence, received from A'ali a letter stating arms and munitions, thought to be destined for Servia and Bulgaria, had crossed the Russian frontier into Moldo-Wallachia.¹ Couza had rejected a request by the Porte for their sequestration. He held that the request was an infringement of his country's autonomy. Further, Couza said that Prince Michael had claimed the arms, thus preventing him from seizing them.

Russell's instructions to Erskine required the chargé d'affaires to do nothing except in support of a Turkish initiative, and when the question of a Commission,² to stop the illegal acts of Couza, was bruited, he was told:

'Her Majesty's Government are not prepared to act without French as well as Austrian co-operation. Be very explicit on this point...' 3

¹. A'ali Pasha - Bulwer, 8 Dec., PRO.30/22.90.

². According to the Convention of August '59 the Porte could investigate an infringement of this said Convention and bring it to the notice of the Powers.

³. Russell - Erskine, 27 Dec., FO.78/1662.

Russian indifference to the outcome of this arms question prompted Rechberg to suggest, in accordance with Turkish proposals, that the Representatives of the four Powers should accompany a Turkish delegate to Bucarest to implement the Convention.¹ Naturally nothing came of this,² and when Bulwer arrived the situation remained unaltered.

Meanwhile, on 28 December, the wagons of arms under Wallachian escort, crossed near Widdin into Servia. Moreover, France was now reluctant to question the conduct of either Prince after Michael had given a positive assurance of loyalty, explaining that the purchase of arms was made immediately following the Belgrade incident. All that remained, for evidently nothing could be done to persuade the Prince to disgorge the arms, or to chastise Couza for his collusion, was for the Powers to salve the Porte's wounded pride. Bulwer, returned from Egypt in the second week of the New Year, took upon himself this task. He put his views before Russell:

'With regard to the Principalities and Servia, I think the Porte quite justified in demanding explanations as to arms, and Couza quite wrong in his conduct and manner. I believe, however, the arms were purchased by Servia previous to the late arrangement, and not after: which solely affects the character of the transaction. To get arms back now, impossible; to send a Commissioner to provoke disputes that cannot be settled, impolitic; to leave things as they are, generally unsafe, and to the Porte humiliating'.³

He considered any step which would humiliate Couza in the eyes of his rivals, as dangerous. On the other hand, a commission

¹ Russell - Erskine, 18 Dec., FO.78/1647.

² Russell refused to act without France. Russell - Erskine, 27 Dec. FO.78/1647.

³ Bulwer-Russell, 18 Jan. '63, FO.78/1743.

might strengthen Couza's position by bringing the parties and Couza to a better understanding. So he was for a Commission less to deal with the arms problem than 'for explanation and conciliation'.¹

In the conference, convened to discuss the matter (20 January), Bulwer suffered a defeat owing to French and Russian objections. All that could be obtained was an agreement that the Representatives should advise Couza and Michael to send 'proper explanations' to the Porte.² Trying to place this somewhat ignominious proceeding in a decent light Bulwer wrote:

'If things are placed on a suitable footing and the Porte's dignity maintained, I think this, under the circumstances, is all that can be done'.³

According to the Conference's decision, Bulwer, like his colleagues, wrote to Couza requiring him to give the number of arms and to state whether or not they were brought in secretly.⁴ The letter to Michael of 28 January asked for an assurance that the arms were to be used by the Servian militia.⁵ While Moustier hesitated to write this second letter, awaiting further instructions for the Russian, Novikoff, Bulwer received instructions to be 'very prudent in regard to the Principalities and Servia'.⁶ Russell went on:

'Prince Gortchakoff has changed his language, and has become more friendly to Great Britain. The insurrection which has broken out in Poland will make the Russian

¹ Bulwer-Russell, 18 Jan. '63, FO.78/1743.

² Bulwer-Russell, 22 Jan, ibid.

³ Bulwer-Russell, ibid.

⁴ Bulwer-Russell, 30 Jan., no.46, FO.78/1732. Enclosed Bulwer-Couza, 21 January.

⁵ Bulwer-Michael enclosed in ibid. Michael had already informed Bulwer that he had only received 20,000 of the 40,000 muskets. The latter felt this was not an excessive number.

⁶ Russell-Bulwer, 26 Jan. '63, FO.78/1743.

Government unwilling to foment rebellion elsewhere. Neither will France support Prince Couza or Prince Michael in revolutionary schemes. The Porte has only to be fair and prudent'. 1

In short, the improbability of disturbances in Bulgaria and Servia meant that general measures of conciliation were not required. So on 27 January Bulwer simply asked Moustier to act upon his promise to write to Couza suggesting he send a delegate to Constantinople. Moustier offered to do it instantly.² He promised also that his letter to Prince Michael would not be indefinitely delayed on account of Russia. As for the Commission which Bulwer had so earnestly desired, Bulwer gave it a discreet burial - presumably because of Russell's latest injunction. 'If we could be sure that its object would be honestly and heartily carried out', he wrote, '(he) would not be sorry to see our end attained without it, and to keep within my control, which would be the case, if what passed, passed at Constantinople, all the proceedings'.³ If the Princes gave satisfactory replies to the notes, the Porte's answer, Bulwer considered, might terminate the affair.⁴

In the third week of February, Negri, Couza's Kapou Kiaya, arrived with verbal explanations and assurances as to his general sentiments towards the Porte.⁵ The same week letters from Michael and Couza settled the affair. Refusing to send a special delegate, simply acting through his resident agent at Constantinople, Michael

1. Russell - Bulwer, 26 Jan. '63, FO.78/1743.

2. Bulwer - Russell, 28 Jan. no. 41, FO.78/1732.

3. Bulwer - Russell, *ibid*.

4. See Riker, p.400. Gortchakoff agreed to act with the other Powers.

5. Bulwer - Russell, 19 Feb., no. 84, *op.cit*.

stated that his assurance of loyalty should be good enough and that his agent would supply the necessary explanations of his recent conduct. Commenting on these letters, Bulwer wrote:

'It appears to me that if their tenor is not in all respects satisfactory, it is sufficient to close this affair without wounding the dignity of the Porte, and that as nothing more can be done effectively in the matter, as to getting the arms, it may be better to bring the discussion to a close'. 1

And there the matter did rest.² The rights of the parties were not immediately obvious. Bulwer had simply supported the Porte's right to ask for explanations from the Prince of Serbia, and to act on the Convention of August 1859 to discover the offence of Couza. Whether Bulwer felt it was expedient for the Porte to ask is not so certain. For he quickly emphasised Michael's having purchased the arms after the Belgrade incident as an extenuating circumstance. In addition he had not considered the quantity of arms excessive.³ Couza, whom he believed to have been culpable in importing arms into the Empire, contrary to treaty, he was reluctant to embarrass because of the internal situation in the Principalities. It is to be suspected that with Bulwer the initial support for the Porte's request was a matter of habit - the Porte's dignity was at issue. Even the personal rivalry with Moustier⁴ did not make Bulwer press the request with much enthusiasm. His preoccupation, a

1. Bulwer - Russell, 5 March, no.105, FO.78/1732.

2. See Riker, p.401.

3. Bulwer-Russell, 26 Feb., PRO.30/22 92.

4. Bulwer-Russell, 29 Jan., *ibid*: '...I hardly see how to get on satisfactorily with anything with Moustier who nevertheless is probably the reflex of his Government. One can never get on any subject a clear and general idea; a constant splitting of hairs on details; and a general indisposition to do anything are the chief, if not the only, characteristics of French policy here, and wear one out...'

sensible one in a British ambassador at Constantinople then, was merely 'to bring things between the Porte and the two Principalities back again to a decent condition'.¹

Early in the crisis Bulwer thought co-operation between the Moldo-Wallachian Principalities and Servia out of the question.² His views remained the same. Servia was harmless.

'The Prince may be ambitious', he wrote, 'but the people are not so, and a course of conciliation might separate the one from the other'.³

Later, he reflected:

'...the only important point, in my notions, is to keep the fortress secure. The taking of this is the only important mischief the Servians can do the Turks... A poor, thrifty people attached to the cultivation of their lands, with no aristocracy or military clanship, I can't look upon them as conquerors on a great scale: they will go on probably quarrelling about some small point of little value either to themselves or the Turks. It keeps their little political pot boiling'.⁴

Bulwer sounded the right note. Rumours of impending insurrection amongst the Slavonic races did not cause Bulwer to alter his tune.⁵ Foreign intrigues and support might achieve much, but the answer to these threats lay in Turkish ability and willingness to provide an effective administration and an equitable system of justice in outlying areas such as Bosnia-Herzegovina.⁶ Good relations between Servia and the Porte might affect strategical considerations, but could not extirpate the real causes of discontent. As for the

¹. Bulwer-Russell, 29 Jan., *ibid*.

². Bulwer-Russell, 9 July, PRO.30/22 90.

³. Bulwer-Russell, 5 Feb., *ibid*/91.

⁴. Bulwer-Russell, 19 Feb., PRO.30/22 91.

⁵. Bulwer-Russell, 25 June and 30 April, *ibid*/92.

⁶. Holmes-Bulwer, 14 Aug. in Bulwer-Russell, 12 Sept. '60, FO.78/1511. The situation had not changed from the one Holmes, at Bosnia, Serai, described then. Turkish rule was such, according to Holmes, that there was hardly any rule at all.

United Principalities, Bulwer had not dropped the idea of a Commission as the best way of resolving the political turmoil there, but Franco-Russian opposition prevented, and would continue to prevent, anything being done to influence the course of events.¹ He was convinced that a dictatorship of Couza or the introduction of a foreign prince was just a question of time while the Powers continued not to intervene.² Though he was justified in this belief, one suspects that too much zeal carried Bulwer along in his anxiety to bring about a more satisfactory settlement in the Rumanian Principalities. The diplomatic situation made any intervention - one might almost add, in any likely eventuality - impossible. Russell had already underlined the strategic obstacles in the way of effective, single intervention by Britain. As these applied even in the case of the foreign Prince becoming a possibility, the best thing Bulwer could have done was to wait until the European political situation altered, to press his more sweeping ideas. He would, in this way, have accomplished in Balkans diplomacy as much as he did in fact during his remaining period in office. Further the illiberal element in British policy would, thus, have been less pronounced.

¹. Bulwer - Russell, 19 March '63, op.cit. 91.

². Bulwer - Russell, 26 Feb. '63 ibid, 92.

CHAPTER V

Egypt: The Suez Canal

Of All the Near Eastern problems, the one which most nearly affected British interests was the one involved in the project to link the Mediterranean and Red Seas by means of a canal. To be built by Frenchmen through a country whose wayward government was dangerously under French influence, it seemed to offer a major threat to the safety of British communications with India. However, on no other question did the British government pursue a policy so confused in conception and application. How it could have been any other than confused it would be difficult to imagine, given the over-riding necessity to prevent the construction of the Suez Canal. Everything conspired to facilitate Ferdinand de Lesseps's task. By the end of 1860 it was apparent that France had determined to push the project; that the Viceroy Said favoured it; and that the Porte could not and would not do anything to stop it. From the winter of 1859-60 Bulwer tried to persuade his government to examine the problem with these factors in mind. After his visit to Egypt in November and December 1862 he redoubled his efforts to make his chief compromise. Bulwer, impressed by the progress on the canal, had to admit that the canal was going to be constructed with or without British approval. A few months later, having also at last agreed that the canal was technically feasible, the British government yielded to Bulwer's policy of compromise and approved his efforts. Subsequently, the diplomacy over this issue of the canal

resolved itself into hard but petty bargaining.

There were only three policies the British government could have pursued. It could have held aloof and waited till an embarrassment elsewhere obliged the French government to stand down. If the issue were of great importance, as it was in spite of Russell's occasional indifference or uncertainty,¹ then the use of force should not have been quite discounted. In the event it was never contemplated. The third alternative, offered by Bulwer, involved subordinating the Canal to the larger problem of influence at the Porte and in Egypt, especially the latter. It was French hegemony in Cairo and Alexandria that made the canal possible and also made it dangerous. If this influence were destroyed or replaced by an Anglo-French condominium, then the canal would cease to hold out a latent threat to British communications. Bulwer slowly came round to this idea as he became aware that Britain's diplomatic isolation in this question was a luxury which could not be afforded. Russell took an unconscionably long time in being persuaded, and in fact his willingness to compromise came too late to affect the other issue, that of influence.

The question which naturally poses itself is whether Russell, with a very poor hand, played a bad game, or a skilful and very subtle losing game, despite the poor hand. A short analysis here of the motives determining government policy towards Egypt during Bulwer's embassy will help to answer this and will also explain the distance between the preoccupations of London and those of Bulwer at Constantinople.

¹ *ibid.* See below, p.248, n.2.

There were a combination of influences affecting the policy decided upon by Russell and Palmerston. To begin with, Palmerston had opposed the scheme from the time it was first mooted in this second phase of active interest in it. When Palmerston returned to power there was a whole range of well-matured objections, pecuniary, political, and philanthropic, some more pertinent than others according to the moment.¹

Of primary importance were the strategical objections. These were considerations not to be ignored particularly when it was remembered that Britain had witnessed two serious attempts on the part of the French to make Egypt independent, attempts thwarted by Britain, as the Liberal government was always reminding the Sultan's ministers. Merchant ships were now as large as frigates so that the passage of the Canal would always be possible, no matter what the guarantees. A short route to India and the ability to threaten our trade communications would clearly be of advantage to the French, or at least that sort of reasoning was urged in despatches. But Russell and Palmerston did not exaggerate this danger in their own minds. After all, the now completed Alexandria-Suez rail-track, made by a British company, cut the distance by half as effectively as a canal would do and thereby offered, to a certain extent, the same dangers. The Foreign Minister sometimes believed the strategical objections barely plausible, as is evidenced by

¹. In the rough draft preceding the despatch to Bulwer, No.44, 21 Jan '60, FO.78/1556, in the Memorandum of Correspondence respecting Suez Canal with an appendix made up of generous extracts from 'Diaries and Correspondence of the Right Hon. George Rose', printed for use of the Foreign Office, 28 Dec. '59, FO.78/1489, and a Memo entitled 'Insuperable objections of H.M.'s Govt. to the Projected Suez Canal,' FO.78/1556.

the despatch to Bulwer 21 January '61. This stated that in a conversation with Musurus, Turkish ambassador in London, he (Russell) had declared that providing the Turkish Empire was not endangered, the interests of the British Empire certainly would not suffer by the completion of the Canal. In the rough draft of this despatch we find the strategical considerations examined and put on one side:

'...It is obvious that the opening of a new route to the East by Egypt and the Red Sea would be an advantage to Marseilles as against Liverpool'.⁺

The pencilled comment in Palmerston's hand is:

'and to Malta as against Marseilles'.⁺

The despatch goes on:

'It is not to be denied that in time of war a canal 300 ft. wide might when its Entrance was not blockaded, afford facilities to ships of war going from Toulon to Indian Seas'.⁺

Palmerston's comment above had answered this but in any case the danger was not so terrible, as the despatch states:

'Nor are the British arms by Sea and Land in such a state of inferiority that they need dread an advantage to an enemy which skill and courage on their part will enable them to counteract'.⁺

Curiously enough Palmerston had underlined the word 'enemy' and remarked at the side:

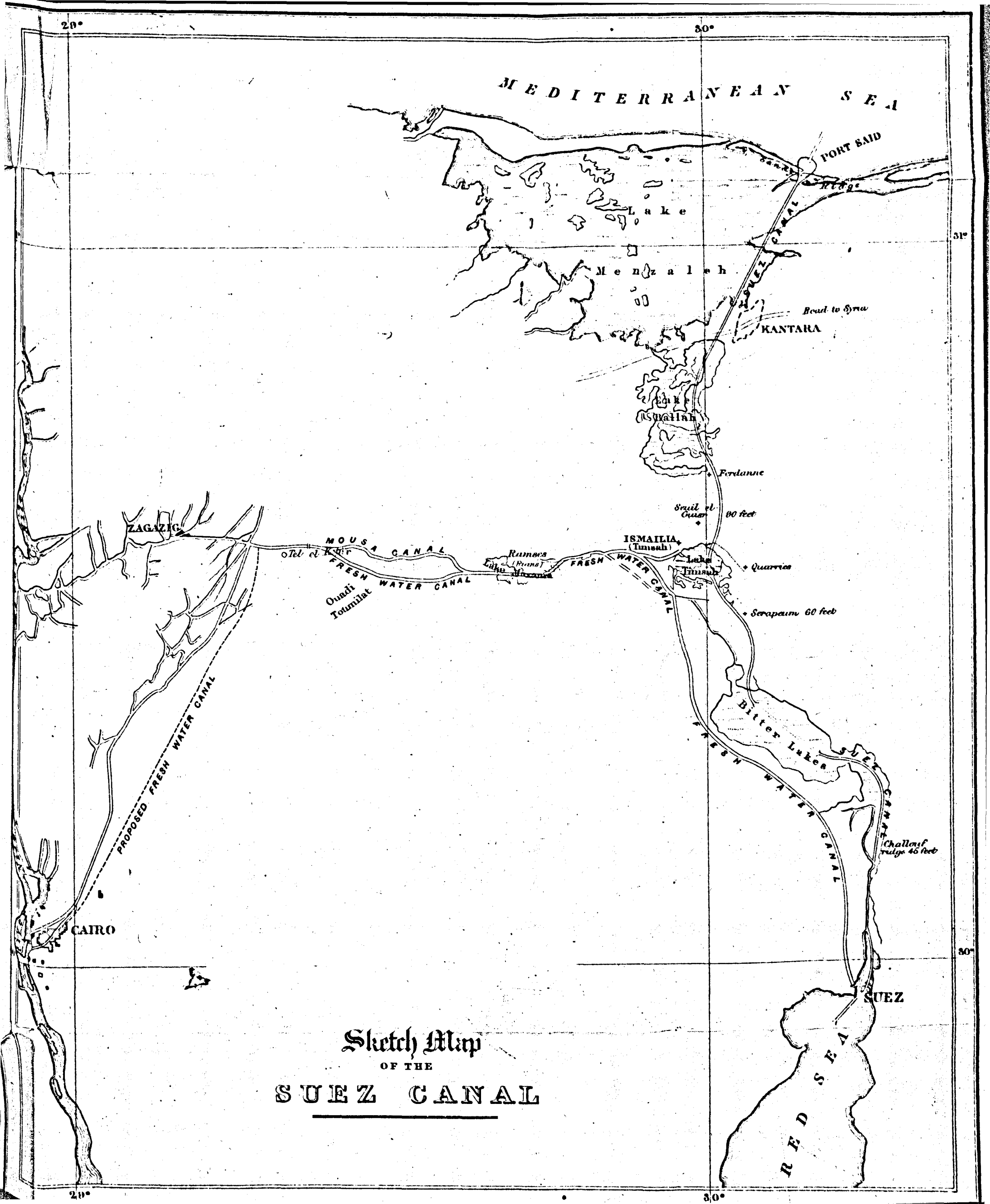
'I think this courts a construction, after Toulon has been named, which may have escaped notice'.⁺

Apparently, such was Palmerston's confidence, likewise Russell's and Bulwer's, in the superiority of the British fleet that by their own reasoning the strategical objections were not a sufficient

explanation of British policy. The fact that later having been induced by Bulwer to negotiate, the ministry easily dropped these arguments, was significant in itself:¹ often Palmerston was not so confident in English naval strength - or else he was very inconsistent.

Another fear that was certainly more justified was that France aimed at making Egypt dependent on France. The first step towards this end was to secure Egyptian independence of the Sultan. What gave colour to the view was the belief of the Foreign Office, since 1855, that the fortifications erected by French engineers along the Mediterranean coast of Egypt, had been planned by the War Office in Paris, as a defence against the Turkish fleet. Said's construction of the Great Nile Barrage was part of the same policy, namely to protect Egypt from the Turkish forces advancing up the Nile. To complete the edifice there was now to be a canal, cutting off Egypt from Syria and the Empire, a military necessity to prevent an invasion from that direction. The Egyptian government would be taught to look to France for support. By abusing the system of the Capitulations the French colony to be developed along the banks of the maritime and fresh-water canals, notably at Port Said, Suez, Cantara where the Syrian caravans passed, and Timsah (Ismailia), would usurp the real power in Egypt. And should the clash with Egypt eventually take place, the Canal could be blocked and fortified

1. Elsewhere, however, in the Memo entitled 'Insuperable objections of HM's Govt. to the projected Suez Canal' (FO.78/1556) we find it stated: '...if war should unfortunately arise between England and France, France would at once seize hold of the two ends of the Canal, which would thus be open for France and shut for England. A French expedition might start at once and carry by a coup de main, Aden, in time of peace weakly garrisoned and not fortified against an European force'.
More striking was the admission that the English Mediterranean fleet was not prepared for such an emergency.



Sketch Map
OF THE
SUEZ CANAL

at each end. Warehouses and other Company buildings were potential fortresses, likewise the dry Docks at Suez which were to be constructed by the Messageries Imperiales, a government sponsored body. The Foreign Office had a poor opinion of the Egyptian army. Limited by treaty to 18,000 men, it was felt that it could not put a sufficiently strong army into the field and man the Nile Barrage at the same time. Obviously the French government would supply the necessary troops. It was felt that another Straits question was developing. From January 1860 onwards the large grant of land to the Company and the possibility of its colonisation formed the substance of British objections to the Canal. That the government would not attempt to overcome these obstacles by negotiation until persuaded by Pulwer, and then with great reluctance, indicates the strength of feeling, on the part of Russell, against concession.

Commercial difficulties there were none. If anything the small gatherings which met Lesseps on his tour of England in April-July 1857 were favourable to the Canal.¹ Russell was quite certain that from a commercial point of view Britain had as much to gain as France. The chances were that the canal would be of little benefit to anyone owing to the tremendous fuel costs for the steam-ship lines, and the expense of vast coaling stations.²

1. cf. Mange-The Near Eastern Policy of Napoleon III, p.127 quotes Hansard, Ser.3, vol.146, 1043-1045, 7 July 1857, for Palmerston's reaction to Lesseps' success in England: 'The scheme is founded in hostility to the interests of this country - opposed to the standing policy of England in regard to this connection of Egypt with Egypt with Turkey..The obvious political tendency of the undertaking is to render more easy the separation of Egypt from Turkey. It is founded, also, on remote speculations with regard to easier access to our Indian possessions...'

2. That Stevenson and the other British experts could possibly be wrong in their judgment as to the feasibility of the canal and its
cont....

Forced labour on the Canal works was commenced on a large scale in May 1861 not to end until 1st June 1864, and this supplied the government with its most profitable source of objections, providing inspiration for eloquence in Parliament, and embarrassment for the country which had first proclaimed the rights of man. One complication was the fact that the railway built by an English Company had been constructed with the help of forced labour.

It is not easy to explain British hostility simply by the arguments outlined above. By the early months of 1860 the government still refused to commit itself to negotiations about the concrete objections, i.e. the land clauses and the possibility of the use of the Canal by warships. By the end of 1859 the Canal had been admitted by the Emperor's government to be a French interest. The use of force did not enter Russell's calculations. He merely shifted the emphasis of his 'policy' slightly, permitting Bulwer to use apparently conciliatory arguments while refusing to consider a substantial concession. His attitude was unaltered. The strangest aspect of the affair was Russell's refusal to acknowledge openly, or even to himself, that here was a British interest of prime importance. It was a Turkish interest. That Russell was embarrassed by a purely commercial venture which could not be opposed on political grounds, if only because ^{of} Parliament would be the obvious answer. In which case, the French government's willingness

(P233, N.2 conts.)

commercial potentialities naturally did not occur to Palmerston and Russell who constantly referred to them in Parliament. The report of the International Commission (January 1856) might at least have caused a doubt. It was not until March 1863 that the Foreign Office would be finally convinced by Mr. Hawkshaw's memorandum, that the Canal could be made.

to be a party in guaranteeing the Canal, and to sign a treaty or other diplomatic instrument with England which would have made her fears baseless, was of small account. But Russell did not concede that it was a commercial venture. That the ministry should have feared the activities of the Company, which, using forced labour in defiance of the laws of the Empire, had begun the works without the Sultan's permission, and when ordered to stop these works had carried on with the help of European labourers, was not surprising. But here the real danger lay in the decrepitude of Egypt which allowed the company to take such liberties. Its geographical situation and the tenuous nature of the relationship with the Sultanate made it especially prone to the dangers inherent in the Capitulatory system. Such an extreme remedy as Bulwer was to suggest for this particular malady was not palatable to Russell. The Capitulations were there to safeguard British interest and lives from Mahometan barbarism.¹

The whole complex of fears and intuitions which was the basis of policy towards the Suez Canal might have been justification enough for that policy. But its inadequacy, quickly apparent to Bulwer in the later months of 1859, might equally have provoked an attempt to define more clearly the interests involved. The attempts made in 1861 to clarify English objections merely illustrated uncertainty and confusion. So, at the time of the next French diplomatic initiative in December 1861, the liberal government was as unprepared as it had ever been.

¹ Russell-Bulwer, 12 May '60, F.O. 78/1637.

As for the obvious contradictions between the various strands in Bulwer's policy, these will be seen to be never more than apparent.

Sometimes he would wish to place greater emphasis on Egyptian autonomy and the Viceroy's whims. He would urge that the just influence of France should not be undermined.

Occasionally he wished to support Turkey, à l'outrance, in subduing the Egyptian government, once for all, and in spite of France. It is difficult to say whether, in this mood, he was threatening Russell with the long-term consequences of actual policy or whether he really thought that Turkey was interested in bringing Egypt back to the fold.

At the back of his mind there was always the wish that Turkey would discipline its vassal. For he attached great importance to the connection between Constantinople and Cairo for Turkey and Britain. In addition a vassal's insubordination always irritated Bulwer. His own inability effectively to counter French influence at the Porte, in this as in other issues, resulted chiefly from the opportunities for furthering French aims offered by the ambitions of the vassals. Bulwer may have actually hoped, if Russell had been favourable, to press an English alliance upon Turkey with the object of bringing Egypt into line. He would have failed in any case with the Porte which acknowledged its limitations. It could do nothing unless France and Britain agreed.

Yet above every consideration was Bulwer's determination to get the Suez canal controversy settled amicably so that there should be as little bitterness as possible between France and England in Egypt.

Patient negotiation offered the only practical solution. There were subtle nuances, the passing *arrière-pensée*, occasioned in a fit of pique and ill-considered, or encouraged by a momentarily favourable turn of events; but these emphasise Bulwer's quality as a responsive diplomatist and underline his singleness of purpose rather than show muddled-thinking.

On examining the development of Bulwer's policy, we shall see the ambassador gradually absorbing all the relevant data and presenting it to the government with such force and lucidity, that his arguments became irritatingly unanswerable. Russell was hostile to Bulwer towards the end of his embassy for several reasons. One of them, one suspects, was his independent view which he insinuated more than asserted and especially in his handling of this subject. The Foreign Secretary chafed under this treatment, likewise the Prime Minister because of the way they were led towards Bulwer's solution in spite of themselves. Palmerston's criticisms of Bulwer in his last two years may have been caused partly by this. On the other hand Bulwer, showing courage in questioning the official line, thought he deserved a peerage for the part he played in the negotiations over the Suez canal.

A significant promise had been extracted from the Grand Vizier, A'ali Pasha, just before Bulwer's appointment. In March he gave Alison the formal assurance that the Turkish Government would not give its consent to the construction of the Canal until the British

Government sanctioned that undertaking.¹ Further, the Sultan could not give a decision until the Great Powers had reached an agreement.² The Porte allowed itself a loophole by requesting its Foreign Minister to draw up a statement setting forth the Porte's readiness to view Lesseps's proposal in a favourable light on certain conditions, which the Company would be unable to agree to, so that in the event of a change in public opinion in England Turkish interests would be safeguarded.³ The Foreign Office, for its part, was obliged to have reasons other than political ones for objecting to the canal, because of the tacit agreement (1854 Dec.-Jan 1855) with France that neither government should press its views on the Porte beyond the bounds of courtesy, neither Power having a particular interest to forward.⁴

British advice to the Porte and the Viceroy from 1855-58, had therefore to be based upon the impracticability of the project, the expense it would involve and the political implications for Turkey of the severance of Egypt from Syria by this wide canal.⁵ In fact political considerations, in spite of the understanding with France,

1. Mange, p.129. The Grand Vizier denied having compromised himself. Of course, he had.

2. The Porte, the Powers and the Viceroys would continue this kind of shadow-boxing, and inevitably leave the real initiative to the Company.

3. Moore (attaché) - Alison (chargé d'affaires), 4 Jan.1858, FO.78/1421.

4. Mange, p.112.

5. The Foreign Office was supplied with reports from Commander Mansell, dated 3 November 1857, and from Captain T. Spratt, dated 11 March 1858, which showed that a Suez Canal was dependent for its success on harbours at each end. At the northern end the nature of the litoral at this exposed point, the shallowness of the water, the fogs and the strong currents from West to East, would make a harbour impossible. Even so the Foreign Office found the reports unexpectedly favourable.

were urged on the Porte. The Canal it was said was part of a scheme to bring about Egyptian independence.¹

These years witnessed de Lesseps at Constantinople trying to obtain a Firman authorising the concession: at Paris keeping the difficulties of British opposition before the French government: and in England where he succeeded in publicising the favourable attitude of the commercial classes there.² All the while he constantly came up against Palmerston's hostility in England, and Stratford de Redcliffe's opposition at Constantinople where the various ministers of the Porte, Ali, Fuad and Reschid, at different times seemed at worst unconcerned.³ By the late summer of 1857, such was de Lesseps's tenacity that, assured of Napoleon's personal support, and the good offices of the French representatives at Constantinople, and in Egypt, and taking advantage of the approval of the other Powers, he had organised a Company, which in December was given legal recognition by Imperial decree.⁴ Though unsuccessful in his efforts to persuade

¹. At this stage English Governments had not objected to the fresh-water canals. They were schemes for internal improvement. It was merely regretted that the Viceroy had not stipulated to make them himself.

². Mange, pp. 116-129.

³. On Palmerston's hostility there is a remarkable comment in Mange, p. 125 N. 118, based on so disinterested a source as Lesseps, *Lettres Ser.* 2, pp. 185-6, Lesseps-Ali, April 4th 1858, to the effect that Palmerston had let it be known to Lesseps that if he were favourable to a British occupation of Suez then British opposition would cease!

⁴. Two concessions and an explanatory codicil formed the bases of the contract between Lesseps and Said. From a strictly legal point of view the contract did not exist until the Sultan's permission (actually given in March 1866) had been obtained according to the terms of the original concession, dated November 1854. The articles which were to be the cause of so much contention later were:

'Art. 4. The works shall be done at the expense of the Company, to which all the land needed and not belonging to particular individuals shall be freely granted. The fortifications that the Government will erect will not be at the charge of the Company.

'Art. 7. Should the maritime canal follow an indirect route, and should the Company need to join the Nile to the direct cutting in the Isthmus, the Egyptian Government would abandon
cont...

the French government to take measures to have the neutral status of the Canal settled, he could be confident that sooner or later French amour-propre would be necessarily preventing the defeat of his plans.¹ In any case, as Mehemet Said wanted the Canal and the Porte neither could nor would stop him, Then England's opposition could at most only be a nuisance.

(cont. p.139 note.4):

to the Company for the duration of the Concession, the public domain now uncultivated, which would be irrigated, fertilised, and cultivated by the efforts and at the expense, of the Company'.

The lease of the land would last for 99 years after the opening of the Canal.

The original concession was replaced by a more specific one to the Compagnie Universelle du Canal Maritime de Suez (5 Jan, '56). The important detail was the grant of the Ouadi Toumilat area for the purpose of linking the Suez passage to the Nile by a sweet-water canal. The grant was for the duration of the lease and conditional on the construction of the fresh-water canal. It was free from all tax. In addition to this an explanatory codicil (dated 20.7.56) stated:

'The number of workers shall be set taking into consideration the seasons of agricultural work'. (cf. Landes, -Bankers and Pashas, p.181 n.2)

With this qualification, the Egyptian government engaged to provide at least four-fifths of the workers to be employed on the canal.

¹ Mange, p.133, though Marlowe erroneously holds in his book Anglo-Egyptian Relations 1800-1953, that support for the scheme depended on the personal welcome Lesseps received in Paris. Not only was Lesseps never other than welcome in Paris - he was the Empress's cousin - the support for his scheme did not depend on this factor. See Mange, p.108:

'Keeping such international situations (referring to the Eastern and Italian problems) in mind, it is not surprising that Napoleon limited his championship of the enterprise to a hearty personal and moral support until the existence of the Suez Canal Company was endangered in 1859'.

From 1854 the Canal had been favoured at the Quai d'Orsay as a French interest, and only political considerations, i.e. the entente with England, had prevented a policy of open support.

Bulwer came upon a strange situation, bewildering by reason of the hesitation of the parties concerned, namely the French government, England, the Porte, and the Viceroy, to admit openly their interest in Lesseps's project. Nor was there to be any radical alteration in this state of affairs for the next twelve months. No urgent crisis necessitated Bulwer's making a conspicuous effort towards, on the one hand, coming to grips with the legal and political niceties inherent in the Suez question, nor, on the other hand, his making any remarkable contribution to its settlement. He properly absorbed the information from the Consul-General in Egypt, and passed it on to Russell or Malmesbury. European Turkey occupied his attention. This negative policy permitted the Company to make some progress. The French government would become more engaged in the success of the venture as the Company's achievements made more likely the completion of the canal.

During August and September Lesseps had crossed his Rubicon. The Viceroy's permission to begin work on the fresh-water canals was obtained, and the Company's prospectus drawn up.¹

Eight months' later, 25 April 1859, at Port Said, Lesseps turned the first sod during a formal ceremony. The Egyptian government used force to stop further work on the canal, but Said could not long withstand the kind of pressure well-calculated to upset him. No direct French intimation of displeasure was needed.

¹. November 5th was the day subscriptions would be received. At Bulwer's instance Malmesbury went so far as to give instructions that not only the scheme for a maritime canal, but also the fresh-water canals should be opposed. It is difficult to believe that the docile Porte, anxious not to offend the Emperor, would by itself have objected to the fresh-water canals. More likely Bulwer persuaded the Porte to demand explanations from the Viceroy.

A shrug, a meaningful aside, the indirect insinuation, a silence, would be sufficient to break his nerve. So Lesseps was able to enjoy his first triumph. He was also given permission to study the ground and to use twenty labourers not to be furnished by the Egyptian government. Though small this success, it might have been sufficient to show the Foreign Minister in London the ineffectiveness of its policy of *verba non res.*, but it did nothing of the kind. While there was much activity at Port Said, building materials being assembled, artisans arriving, the first huts going up and the bases of a light-house laid; and while Sabatier's apparent lack of concern was itself favouring this progress, Malmesbury was only able to instruct Bulwer:

'M. Lesseps has gone so far as to lay the first stone of his Canal without the Sultan's firman and the Porte should give positive orders to stop a work which is a political and private piece of swindling.' ¹

Examining the events in Egypt within the wider context of the troubles fomented by the Franco-Austrian war, Bulwer for the first time began to see the delicacy of the whole situation. Where were the means of defending British interests should a revolutionary war break out? Bulwer felt that foreign interference might produce the severance of Egypt from Ottoman rule, and that if 'one or more great European Powers were to attack Turkey, and others did not come to her support, she would fall to pieces'.² The Viceroy, 'unreliable to friend or foe', could not be depended on to refrain

¹ Malmesbury - Bulwer, 17 May, FO.78/1489.

² Bulwer - Malmesbury, 21 June, PRO. 30/22 88.

from taking advantage of the preoccupation of the Great Powers with European affairs.¹ Turkey was too weak to defend her interests.

Although reassured by Malmesbury on the score of Turkey and Russian designs, Bulwer was quite unable thereafter to approach the Egyptian problems in the mechanical way of his early period at the Embassy. Further he would become more embarrassed by the isolation of Britain so vividly dramatised during the war.² When calm returned he confessed:

'...I sometimes, as an Agent, regret the loss of our old traditional policy, - which bound us up to certain Allies on whom we could rely, and who could rely on us'.³

During the critical months Bulwer had urged acting Consul-General Walne to be very firm with Said, and to see to it that the Vizirial letter, 1 June, asking for the works to be stopped immediately, was implemented. Unfortunately for Bulwer's policy the labourers were not Egyptian.

Said's was a tricky position for it seems likely that he had given credit to finance the '*études préparatoires*', in which case they were lawful, and the consuls could not interfere with their nationals any more than Said could. Also there was the point Lesseps brought up in his reply to the Cherif Pasha's circular requesting the consuls to restrain their nationals.⁴ *De jure non-*

¹. Bulwer - Russell, 6 July *ibid*.

². Bulwer's policies may only be explained in the context of the Zurich period and the war. Bell - Life of Lord Palmerston does not touch on it. Consequently he is able to say that after his tour of inspection of the canal works (Dec. '62) the ambassador wanted to sabotage the scheme. This is not only to oversimplify Bulwer's policy but to misunderstand its motivation, i.e. to help the Porte and the Viceroy to take a line that would not offend France.

³. Bulwer - Russell, 23 November, *op.cit*.

⁴. Cherif Pasha's circular dated 7 June. Memo of Lesseps-Cherif Pasha, 9 June, FO.78/1489.

existent, the 'Company' would not have formed de facto without the Viceroy's permission. Said did the only thing possible. He refused to take further action lest France, victorious, vent its wrath on him. He wrote to the Porte asking whether the canal might or might not be made and to communicate its wishes to the Ambassadors of the Powers.¹

For Bulwer this was a shameless advertisement of Egyptian weakness. Annoyed at the flagrant but quasi-legal disregard of the Laws of the Ottoman Empire, he could only hint at the larger problem for he could be sure of the response:

'...The position taken up by Foreigners in Egypt is surely one which requires attention!' 2

It was not until September that Bulwer's influence prevailed sufficiently to obtain a Vizirial letter (Sept. 19) requesting the several governments to halt the work carried on by their nationals. Then, Muktar Bey, Minister of Finance, went to Egypt and saw to it that the Foreign nationals ceased their activities.³

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1. A shrewd move, it might have succeeded with the Porte, equally sensitive about the results of the war. At least Bulwer thought so. He knew that the Grand Duke Constantine had brought the Suez Canal question before the Sultan (May). It was shortly after this the Sultan decided to visit Egypt, to do a deal with the Viceroy, it was rumoured. The Sultan turned back at Scio, chiefly because of Bulwer's persistent warnings to Fuad and A'ali that the English alliance was at stake (Bulwer-Russell 17 August, '59, PRO.30/22 88). Further by the first week in August the British fleet had anchored outside Alexandria.
 2. Bulwer-Russell, 24 Aug. PRO.30/22 88; Bulwer-Russell, 25 Jan. '60, *ibid*: 'We shall probably have malgré nous and malgré the Porte a French colony of no small extent in Egypt. Indeed, the fact is that anything like power and independence in this govt.-without the capitulations are re-examined, and their meaning, and application to existing circumstances refixed-Is I fear a delusion'. Also see below, p. 243.
 3. Mange, p. 133, accepting Lessep's evidence, suggests that Bulwer's violence was such that Thouvenel yielded under duress, as it were, to Muktar's mission. This is highly improbable. The consuls complied with the Vizirial letter in November.

After the Treaty of Zurich in October '59, the French government, as Bulwer had anticipated, took up the question with renewed vigour. Having had the opportunity of observing at close quarters the recent antics of the Porte and the Viceroy, and now only too aware of the shortcomings of his government's unyielding attitude, he prepared for the fray.

France was anxious to obtain British co-operation at the moment for settling the Principalities. So Walewski opened the attack as gently as he could. The French government, he explained, wished to enter into any engagement to obviate British objections to the canal.¹ This offer was rejected. Walewski then angrily explained to Cowley that the Emperor must now interfere. He had already told Thouvenel to support the demands of Lesseps when he arrived in Constantinople.

The French Government circularised the Powers, requesting their co-operation in the question of the Canal.² By the late December, Austria, Russia and Italy had replied favourably, Prussia assuming a passive attitude.

It became evident to Bulwer after some preliminary enquiries that the Porte could not resist such pressure. He quickly took note of Turkish attitudes; then tried to make the Porte promise as much as he could reasonably expect it to. All the time in his despatches and letters to Russell he would be advising compromise. His method would be to keep in front of Russell the radical alternative

¹ Cowley - Russell, 9 Oct., FO. 78/1489.

² Mange, p.134. Walewski to the representatives of the Great Powers except Turkey and Britain, November 3rd.

to negotiation, and, on the other hand, to feign disgust with the Porte's concessions which he would pretend to submit to rather than heartily welcome.

No longer on friendly terms with Bulwer, Thouvenel, in the meanwhile, did not mention the subject for the next fortnight, and waited, watching the wretched efforts of the Porte to rid itself of responsibility.¹ The Porte was less anxious than ever to offend France by making a blunt refusal.

Following a conversation with Fuad, Bulwer sent Russell a pessimistic analysis of the immediate possibilities. His first remark to Fuad, that the Porte was at liberty to destroy the works constructed without its permission, had produced a swift reaction. Bulwer went on to ask the minister if he would oppose the granting of the Firman. Fuad commented:

'...though we are opposed to it on our own account, I do not say that, if you and France were agreed, that we might not consider any proposals brought before us.' 2

It was enough. The moral for those with eyes to see was plain. The ambassador described the alternatives, if only by implication:

'...I feel it will be difficult to get the Porte to resist the French Government in any decided and positive manner unless we will give her a clear and positive assurance that we will stand by her whatever the consequences which may attend resistance'. 3

¹. Bulwer - Russell, 23 Nov., PRO.30/22 88 and Bulwer - Russell, 8 Dec. FO.78/1489. See Mange, p.134 n.p.186, quotes Hallberg-Suez Canal p.170, Walewski-Thouvenel, 3 Nov. '59. Thouvenel's coldness towards Bulwer resulted from his instruction to avoid as far as possible 'engaging himself in a struggle of influence with the Ambassador of Her Britannic Majesty'.

². Bulwer - Russell, 22 Nov., No. 262, FO. 78/1489.

³. Bulwer - Russell, *ibid.*

Under pressure from Thouvenel, supported by Austria, Russia, and tentatively by Prussia, the Turkish Cabinet was seriously divided during the first week in December. The Grand Vizier, Kibrisli Pasha, was for keeping the matter in Turkish hands lest Turkey receive the law from Europe; Fuad for escaping from the scrape by leaving the business to Europe. Bulwer opposed the latter course since it would in effect have made the Emperor arbiter and diminished the importance of Turkish opinion. He considered that the upshot of the division in the Turkish cabinet would be a proposal to investigate the feasibility of the scheme.¹

Not having authority to insist upon the Porte's making a blunt rejection, and certainly no authority to offer Turkey British support in the event of such a rejection, Bulwer now held himself aloof. In fact there was little he could do while his government pretended Suez was a secondary interest upon which he might only advise. Russell, as Bulwer knew, did not contemplate assuming an open opposition, if only because this would have been an awkward policy to defend in Parliament. Equally certain it was that Russell would not yield with grace. Everything conspired to make Bulwer tread more delicately than he would have liked. But it was a game he played well. To Russell he emphasised the proper role he had played in order not to encourage an acrimonious spirit amongst the representatives; how tender he was to the Porte, leaving it to the ministers to come to him rather than embarrass them with advice. An occasional hint

¹ Obviously the Porte would only adopt such a policy with Bulwer's encouragement.

reinforced his earlier allusions to the effect that all might be well, were one great Power to bind itself to the Ottoman Empire.¹

Russell's instruction to the ambassador illustrated a certain inhibitedness in the Foreign Minister's thinking. Why, he asked, did not Turkey state her objections bluntly? Britain could not, he wrote, 'undertake to make on behalf of her secondary interest a resistance to the scheme which Turkey, on behalf of her primary interest should decline'.² Bulwer raised two bogies, namely the danger from France, and the threat to British prestige and security throughout the East. In his own mind Suez was like a sharp frontal attack designed to distract attention away from these more lethal flank and rearguard actions. He complained:

'Our influence in the East for years past has been connected more or less with the issue to be given to this Suez Canal question...Consequently, if we are opposed to it now, and that this opposition tho' evident, is yet weak - it will be overborne - and a great blow struck at our moral power in all these countries.'³

A determined opposition or timely concessions made with such a grace as to disguise the appearance of defeat presented itself as the only

¹ Bulwer - Russell, 28 Dec., no. 312, FO. 78/1489.

² Even this estimate of the importance of the problem was an exaggeration, for in a private letter to Sir G. Lewis, Russell indicated with some indifference and much complacency that he felt that the attitude he had adopted would achieve little: 'I wish Clarendon had not taken it up as an English question, but it is difficult to abandon the ground he has taken. It is a question for Turkey more than us, and involves the separation of Egypt, but we should keep our path open so long as we command in the Mediterranean'. PRO. 30/22 13, 19 Dec. '59.

³ Bulwer-Russell, 23 Nov. '59, PRO 30/22 88. He added: 'Indeed, if we fail now, I am not altogether without the idea that the Ionian islands will sooner or later furnish matter for a new move of the same kind'.

R-6, 21 Dec. '59,
FO. 78/1489.

sensible choice. Divided on other issues, perceptibly drifting towards radically opposing positions, France and Britain were not likely to maintain for long the pretence of friendship:

'A greater calamity I cannot conceive, and I must add that I do not think that this question, on which public opinion in Europe would be against us, is the question on which to come to an issue'.¹

He was anxious lest a defeat 'in any question of influence' have grave repercussions in Persia and India provoking 'dangers which are now slumbering and apparently unconnected with it'.² Further, Catholic machinations in Crete and French designs in Morocco, were of equal significance with Suez.³ Would it not be wise to look to the whole Mediterranean?⁴

Thus a possible struggle with France for a paramount place in the Mediterranean, and a probable undermining of English power in the countries between the Caucasus and the Himalayas, were considerations, Bulwer pleaded, that should not be neglected by giving undue attention to the Canal. This reasoning reinforced Bulwer's desire not to take too positive a line at Constantinople. Two consequences were to be apprehended. First, Thouvenel, with whom, by the mid-December, Bulwer was again on friendly terms, might naturally take an opposite line, and the division between the two countries most interested in the canal would be hardened.⁵ Thouvenel's moderation had provided

¹ Bulwer - Russell, 7 Dec., ibid.

² Bulwer - Russell, 28 Dec., FO. 78/1489.

³ Bulwer-Russell, 12 Jan. and 8 Feb., PRO 30/22 88.

⁴ Bulwer - Russell, 4 Jan. '60, ibid: 'What do you think of my plan of having a certain number of unarmed ships at Malta, and having...a portion of our garrisons trained for naval service?'

⁵ See above, p. 246. It is possible too that Bulwer's own moderation had paid dividends. Certainly very early in his embassy Bulwer had similarly impressed de Lesseps. cf. Mange, p. 130: 'At the Turkish capital he (de Lesseps) found Sir Henry Bulwer, a personal friend, in place of the aggravating Lord Stratford. De Lesseps believed the new ambassador was anxious to put an end to the antagonistic feeling between England & France.'

Bulwer with the time he needed so he should not be antagonised needlessly and inadvertently. Secondly, Bulwer had to persuade the Porte to adopt a policy approximating as nearly as possible the one Russell might eventually be brought to accept. An hasty opinion on his part, might bring the Porte to ask for less than it might reasonably expect. Granted the Porte trembled before the might of France, which could create difficulties in other areas, even so it might expect the French government to appreciate that the canal was a subject which concerned most nearly the two maritime powers. Of one thing Bulwer could be sure; the unfortunate Porte needed to preserve English friendship.

The internal stresses within the Turkish cabinet facilitated Bulwer's task, enabling him to show Russell that so adverse were the circumstances, it would be risking everything to urge an unyielding policy. The real choices of the Porte were limited to two. Thouvenel himself conceded that little could be accomplished without an Anglo-French agreement; hence a settlement by a congress, though such a possibility was useful for inducing a more compliant attitude on the English side, was not long seriously considered. So the choice remained between the Porte's letting the Powers deal with the Suez Canal - leaving it to their mutual jealousy to protect the Porte's interests - and making France understand that previous to the Sultan's granting a Firman there must be an entente between the two maritime powers. Bulwer informed his chief of Turkish equivocation. He hinted at a line of policy which accommodated this uncertainty. Perhaps, he offered, a reasonable

basis for a settlement might be found in a preliminary examination of the Suez project, and in an agreement amongst the maritime Powers as to the security of the canal.¹ Russell's refusal to support Turkey in resisting the scheme, and his failure to suggest an alternative policy, obliged Bulwer to accept a plan of this sort. His hand was forced. He observed a tendency on the part of the Turkish ministers to favour granting the Firman immediately, and thereby obtain the good favour of France in imposing such conditions as would keep the Viceroy in dependence upon the Sultan; a course that would conciliate France, Russia and Austria. He thought it better:

'...no longer to resist what I saw it was the determination to adopt viz:- An appeal of some kind, somewhere or other; but to endeavour to restrict that appeal within certain limits'.²

He agreed with Fuad on a mode of procedure. The actual scheme should be divested of its most obnoxious clauses and be examined with a view to discovering the advantages and the expenses of such a canal. It should contain nothing contrary to the Laws of the Empire. Bulwer emphasised that a special guarantee of the neutrality of the Canal to which England should be a party, would be the sine qua non of the undertaking.³ These conditions were inseparable and further, Britain and France would have to be in agreement on them before the Porte would enter into more detail.⁴ The alternative,

1. Bulwer - Russell, 7 Dec., PRO. 30/22 88.

2. Bulwer - Russell, 28 Dec., no. 312, FO.78/1489.

3. Fuad's identic despatches to Musurus and Djemil Pashas, in London and Paris, reproduced these points.

4. This last point expanded A'ali's promise to Alison in March 1858, so possibly Bulwer's first ideas were gleaned in deliberations with the Turkish ministers.

he reminded the Foreign Secretary, was a close understanding between England and Turkey with the object of encouraging the Porte to reject outright the French demands.

Bulwer apologised for raising the subject in such a way. At least, he wheedled, the scheme would be shown as a piece of charlatanism. He advised Russell to simulate dissatisfaction as he himself was doing, in this way the Porte might be made to 'toe the line'.

Thus, Bulwer had encouraged small concessions only, but, he anticipated, sufficient to prevent the slicing of the Gordian knot.

Not only did Russell negative Bulwer's plan and the drastic alternative, he proposed nothing else.¹ He objected to the idea that Turkey might consent provided she obtained certain guarantees, believing rightly, in view of recent events, that the Porte could not successfully keep up a struggle at Alexandria, Constantinople, and Paris, should any clause in the concession be ignored or contravened. Russell did not like the policy recently elucidated.

Were it to become effective the Sultan must know that:

'...he must not count upon the support of Great Britain to avert dangers which by his own acts he will have drawn upon himself'. 2

Russell, informed Musurus that the Porte was the best judge of the particular points to do with the Laws of the Empire; and that, should the construction of Suez be compatible with the safety of the Empire, Britain would not stand in the way, nor would her

¹. It was not an alternative in fact for no party thought of resorting to military measures to obtain its ends.

². Russell - Bulwer, 24 Dec., no. 254, FO. 78/1489.

interests suffer.¹ Further, though not encouraging Bulwer to act upon his views, Russell felt obliged to yield something to his arguments, doing so with the appearance of disagreeing. If the land clauses were withdrawn the Sultan might form an expert commission to examine the scheme; as it was, it violated the laws of the Empire; and, lastly:

'That were the plan divested of these provisions, it still would not be such that H.M.'s Govt. could give any guarantee of the nature suggested by the Porte'. 2

The plan Bulwer advocated was intended primarily to release the Porte from an intolerable pressure which it could no longer sustain. It was a manoeuvre to gain time. Bulwer's anxiety to see it accepted by Russell indicates too a belief that it provided the basis of a settlement. Yet the guarantees necessary for its success the English government refused to give, as Bulwer knew it must. Bulwer possibly realised that a de facto reversal of the procedure he described might happen in spite of his or Russell's wishes. A commission might first report and declare that its findings could only be implemented when the guarantees were given. The evidence is lacking which would give us an insight into Bulwer's thoughts. At a superficial glance it seems, however, that Bulwer's strong arguments in favour of the new proposals reflected more than a desire to gain time for the Porte. Perhaps he wished to take advantage of the situation to bring about a major change in British policy.

¹ The Turkish Note was dated 4 January. Communicated to FO. 17 Jan.
² Russell - Bulwer 21 Jan., FO. 78/1556.

Bulwer was obliged to do nothing and to wait on events.

In May Fuad complained to the French government that the works were being continued despite the Porte's wishes. The following June the Company made further progress. The Viceroy pledged himself to the Company for 87 million francs. Colquhoun reported with some naivete:

'...I am unwilling to believe this, for it will place the Viceroy in the light of one who has deliberately deceived those he ought to consider his best friends'. 1

But it was a fact. De Lesseps promised to make no call on the Viceroy for two years to enable him to pay off his floating debt.² Said had thus officially confirmed that he had given the Company the wherewithal to declare itself constituted in French Law.³ The Viceroy conceded that he did not 'know whether commercially speaking the scheme be a good one or not,' but he was sure that his name would be immortalised if the canal were accomplished under his auspices, in his time.⁴

If the Porte could be badgered on the question of the prompt payment of loans, and consequently have to pay more attention to the demands of the Powers, so much worse was the position of the Egyptian government which participated in a French Company.

1. Colquhoun - Russell, 2 June '60, *ibid*.

2. The relations between the Company and the Viceroy were shortly to be defined (August '60) in an agreement bearing on the first 100 francs per share. By consenting to pay his liabilities to the Company - for the most part unpaid on his death - by means of Treasury bonds, Said imposed the burden on his successors.

3. In 1858 Said had accepted 64,000 shares in the new company, and had been willing to take up to 96,000 shares, the total allotted to the Ottoman Empire, but the 178,000 (44% of the capital) which Lesseps put on his account were not altogether welcome. The official pledge now made that decision irrevocable.

4. Colquhoun - Russell, 3 June '60 FO. 78/1556.

Bulwer hardly exaggerated when he telegraphed Russell that the Viceroy had pledged himself in favour of the Canal 'placing Egypt in the hands of France'. Bulwer claimed:

'The Porte thinks of calling him to order, and invoking the late agreement (presumably a reference to Fuad's note of Jan.4): but nothing short of his deposition would succeed; and as this would be a serious act, the support of Her Majesty's Government would be required, if it were decided upon'. 1

By the last phrase Bulwer meant that his government's support would be necessary if it allowed him to press for the Viceroy's deposition. The response to this overture was negative. The status quo must be preserved at all costs.² After pressing that a person with authority should be sent to Egypt Russell urged that the Sultan should warn the Viceroy that he had not the power to appropriate the revenues of the state to the Canal. Russell failed to appreciate that so long as the Viceroy paid the tribute he could do just that. Even so, he was sufficiently impressed by the new development to forget for the moment his attitude to the three guarantees which Fuad has asked for, to write to Bulwer:

'The Sultan should declare that if a Canal to Suez is to be made, he will undertake it himself after enquiry by Engineers, naval men and merchants:....' 3.

Bulwer had, at last, persuaded Russell that the situation was critical. Here was a significant turning point.

Preoccupied elsewhere, the English government had been fortunate in not meeting with embarrassments that would have resulted from a

1. Bulwer - Russell, 15 June, '60, FO. 78/1556.

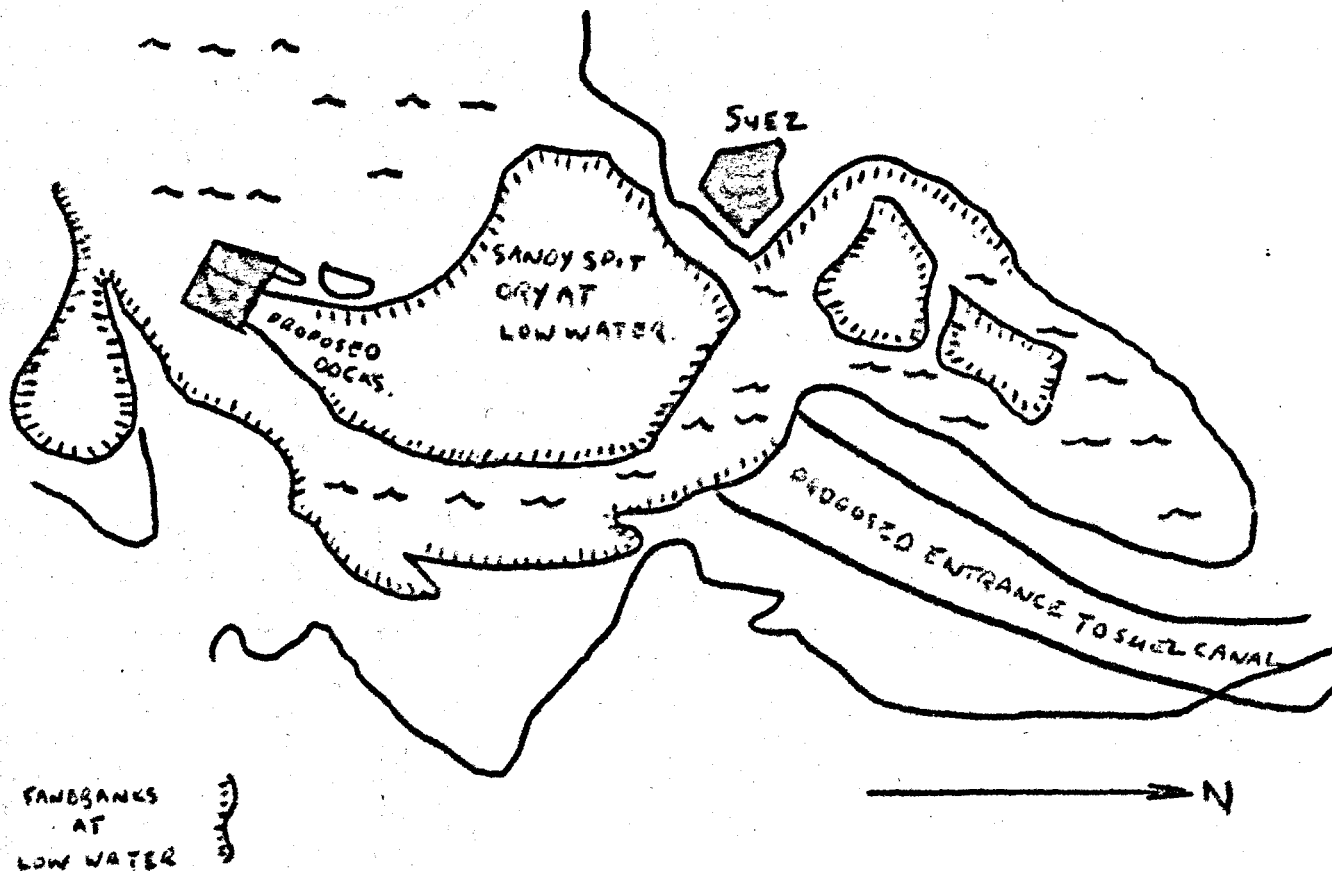
2. Russell - Bulwer, 18 June, FO 78/1497.

3. Russell - Bulwer, 19 July, no. 342, FO. 78/1556.

forward policy on the part of the French government, equally busy in other areas. Bulwer had now to contend with ^{the} Viceroy's openly expressed determination to accomplish the project. During May verbal orders had been given for 10,000 fellaheen to be sent to work on the canal. Later it was rightly suspected that a further 40 - 50 thousand had been promised.

In Egypt the company was faced by serious obstacles in the way of the construction of the harbours at each end of the route. Its striking success was its purchase in November from the Viceroy of the Ouadi Toumilat estate through which the Pelusium branch of the fresh-water canal would pass. This was some 24,000 acres over and above that granted on each side of the canal in the original deeds of the Concession.

Colquhoun's chief anxiety was the plan of the Messageries Imperiales to construct the dock just outside Suez, at a point commanding the entrance to the channel. As the good offices of the French Consul-General were vital to the Egyptian Government in evading the demand of Laffitte, a French banker, for the whole of a loan of 28 million francs, it was felt that advantage was being taken of this circumstances by the French government to press for the docks concession. What was of more importance was the possibility of the docks being built on land actually allotted to the Company. Questions of privileged title and exclusive occupation might arise. A special secret clause, allowing the French government to take over the docks in the event of hostilities, was thought to be in the contract. In addition it was known that



Based on map enclosed in Colquhoun-Russell, no. 52, 17 June 1861,
FO. 78/1715.

the Comptoir d'Escompte, almost certainly with official support, had advocated the supervision of the Egyptian budget and treasury.¹

These factors tended to give the Canal a significance such as obscured what was of real importance, namely the paramount influence of France.

As soon as the Syrian affair was concluded Palmerston was looking to a completer harmony between France and Britain. In a letter to Russell he expressed a suspicion of the projects encouraged by French capitalists, but hoped:

'...that the Imperial Government harbours no such designs on Egypt as these transactions are by many supposed to indicate'. 2

However, as soon as Thouvenel suggested a European Commission to examine the practicability of the scheme, Palmerston reverted to his former negative attitude.³ He explained:

'The proposal...sounds fair and plausible, but would be a dangerous measure. It requires only a glance at the map of the world to see how great would be the naval and military advantages to France in a war with England to have such a short cut to the Indian seas when we should be obliged to send ships and troops round the Cape. Thouvenel proposes, indeed, that the passage of ships of war should be forbidden as at the Dardanelles, but I presume he only expects us to receive such a proposal except (sic) with a decently suppressed smile'. 4

1. Landes, p. 109, n.2

2. Palmerston - Russell, 23 Nov. '61, PRO. 30/22 21

3. This was the beginning of the inversion of that procedure which Fuad had proposed.

4. Palmerston - Russell, 8 Dec. ibid. All this was contrary to his reasoning in the Memo of April '60. His only positive suggestion was that Britain and France should cease to interfere on political grounds, and leave the question to be settled by the experience of the money market!

Not so afflicted with Franco-phobia, Russell simply enjoined Cowley to keep silent for the moment. Refusal would look bad while acceptance would send up the shares. Colquhoun had suggested that the bubble would soon burst, and Russell was hoping that such an event might save him from further embarrassments. This was certainly a possibility. By the end of 1862 300 francs were called up per share, tripling the Viceroy's immediate liabilities to the Company, from over 15 to nearly 46 million francs.

Bulwer tried to discover means whereby the Viceroy might be released from his dependence on French monied interests.¹ The only political remedy he had to suggest was the usual one, the one which entailed giving the Porte full diplomatic support and an acceptance of the consequences of this.² It was Bulwer's way, one suspects, of underlining the impossibility of accomplishing anything while the French and English Cabinets were at odds on this issue as over others. He went on to point out that it was likely that the Sultan and his court had been bribed in the previous December during the Viceroy's visit.³ Thus, it was doubly imperative that the Viceroy be not embarrassed to such a degree that he would yield any further to the French. He persuaded A'ali

¹ It was learned in May 1862 that the dock concession had finally been given to the Messageries Imperiales. Beauval, the French consul in Alexandria persuaded the Viceroy to grant the French group of Pastre, Valensin, and Dervieu, the privilege of remitting the tribute to England when the present concession should lapse. A form of tender had been adopted till then.

² Bulwer - Russell, 21 Jan. '62, FO. 78/1648.

³ Bulwer - Russell, *ibid*.

Pasha to assent to the loan which Said wished to obtain through Oppenheim.¹ The idea in Bulwer's mind was that the Porte's consent to the loan might be made conditional.² Advantage could be taken of the financial situation in Egypt to enforce the Porte's suzerainty, to the benefit of British long-term interests, by the establishment of a Financial Council in which the heirs to the Pashalik should be represented.³ Its purpose would be to control expenditure, limiting it in the future to the Viceroy's net income. Inevitably nothing came of the scheme, in spite of Foreign Office support.

In November 1862 Bulwer, with Russell's approval visited Egypt. He had no specific instructions, for the trip was a short holiday, Bulwer not having had the time to take his delayed leave of absence.

He went representing the policy of subjecting Egypt to the Porte's authority - that is, in as much as he was the agent of a Government which desired this. What Bulwer would do as we shall

¹. Rather than through the French interest, Dervieu.

². This was nothing more than a quick adjustment to a change in atmosphere. The Turkish cabinet were inclined more than ever to give in during these early months. Its depression coincided with Said's anxiety to obtain money. There was a pressing need to strengthen the will of the Porte. The imposition of Turkish authority in Egypt was the bait which Bulwer used. If successful the ambassador would have found himself in a stronger position at Constantinople. But it was only a passing phase. Bulwer's basic notions had not changed, i.e. though he was still orthodox on the Canal, his preoccupation was with his actual and potential diplomatic isolation because of the policy of simple obstruction. Hence the manoeuvre over the loan in spite of Russell's hostility; to any loan. Russell - Bulwer, 19 Jan '62, FO. 78/1728.

³. Loc. Cit.

see would be to impress on his own government that its policy was stultified by its lack of influence and inability to bargain: that it was inadequate for dealing with a situation where Bulwer could neither protect the Viceroy from foreign dictation, except by exerting political pressure, nor prevent the country from becoming a French oasis, save by instigating a commercial struggle.

Full of paternal good-will, official maxims, and the saving grace of being able to interpret these in such a way that it seemed he was doing the Viceroy a favour, Bulwer had nothing with which to tempt the Pasha. He would be blunt with him, but the Viceroy would retire behind a smoke-screen of confessions of weakness leaving Bulwer greatly disturbed for the future of the country under such a ruler.

The Pasha's opening gambit was for Bulwer's benefit:

'As for me, I'm done for. I shall not get over this sickness, and even if I do I've seen enough of affairs. Nobody has understood me. Moreover I have made serious mistakes. I am conscience stricken for the way in which I have misdirected the Treasury funds'. 1

The Viceroy expanded on the evil-eyed rumours of his friendship for the French, his relations with the Porte, and his ability to defend the country with 80,000 men and the Nile barrage, from any foreigner who threatened his independence.

Bulwer assured the Viceroy that British policy was for things to remain as they were regarding Egypt's connection with the Sultan. Professing satisfaction at hearing the prince speak so resolutely he explained that his government:

1. Bulwer - Russell, 15 Dec. '62, FO. 78/1715

'...could never permit any other foreign power either forcibly to possess itself of Egypt or indirectly to acquire a greatly preponderating influence over it'. 1

He emphasised the danger of colonisation. He held that the canal was impracticable, and used up resources to the detriment of the country's agriculture.² It opened up Egypt to any strong maritime power, which knowledge would add to European tension. In fine the best thing to do was to drop the whole project.

There were no illusions as to the tangible result of this tête-à-tête, a mere promise that the Viceroy would do nothing yet about the loan being urged on him. Bulwer felt that this, without the Porte's sanction, was an attempt to create a precedent for future transactions of the same kind.³ The Viceroy also promised not to take any step which might complicate the Suez business still more by another financial agreement with Lesseps; and that was all.⁴ Bulwer only half-realised how tricky and untrustworthy was Said.

After a tour of the Canal works the ambassador tried to place the question on an entirely new basis.⁵ He was so impressed by what he saw that he had to conclude that a drastic revision of British policy was urgently required, lest his government lost all

1. Ibid.

2. Mange, p.136, note.199. In 1863, a good year for cotton, Ismail would find it particularly galling. The effective abolition of forced labour was a question of time after this.

3. Bulwer - Russell, 12 Dec. '62, FO. 78/1652.

4. Bulwer - Russell, 15 Dec., FO. 78/1715.

5. Bulwer, even before his tour of the works, was pondering over other possible policies. Bulwer-Russell, 16 Nov. '62, PRO. 30/22 91: 'My opinion in short is, that we should be quite wrong in slumbering quietly on the fact that the project we look at is impracticable. The thing to feel sure about is, whether the plan which the French look to is impossible'.

means of influencing the eventual settlement. No doubt existed in Bulwer's mind as to the feasibility of the Canal.¹ He stressed the point that it was possible and would be accomplished. Although Bulwer had no knowledge of the Company's negotiations during the previous months for new heavy machinery, finally to supersede force labour, he was nevertheless unprejudiced enough to accept the fact that the Canal was going to be built.² Whatever financial straits the Company got into Bulwer refused to agree that money difficulties would halt the project. He examined its advantages compared with those offered by the railway, shortly to be improved, and reached the conclusion that:

'...the Canal will very probably not greatly, if at all, benefit commerce; but if it does, we shall receive as much as any nation, except Greece, the benefit of it. If I see then no great advantage to us from the Canal, I see no loss, neither do I think it will in itself cripple our maritime power'.³

But this was to examine the whole affair out of its context. Given viceroynal pusillanimity and duplicity, the financial power of European capitalists, and a system of consular influence synonymous almost with corruption, the whole thing took on a new aspect.⁴ In the long run too, the increasing abuse of the capitulatory regime would aggravate these problems. It was easy for the French to take advantage of a situation which the Foreign

¹. Bell - Life of Lord Palmerston, completely misinterprets this phrase.

². Bulwer - Russell, 3 Jan. '63, FO. 78/1795. Bulwer - Russell, 16 Nov. '62, PRO. 30/22 91, where Bulwer comments on de Lesseps with some enthusiasm: 'Whilst being a charlatan, he is a great charlatan'.

³. Bulwer - Russell, 3 Jan., PRO. 30/22 91.

⁴. Bulwer - Russell, 10 Nov. '62, PRO. 30/22 91.

Office deplored and sought to reform. An English consul could not have adopted the means at hand. It was the long-term consequences of this situation rather than the Canal that worried Bulwer:

'Port Said, Timsah and Suez will be French towns - the new lands called into cultivation will become...French territory, and governed actually by French authority'...¹

The first change should be in the Canal scheme for, amongst other things, it might create a position for France, 'such that she may find it impossible to recede from a ground which, on the other hand, it will involve her in great difficulties to maintain'. Mere obstruction now was not enough; a more imaginative policy was called for, which involved to an extent, taking France into one's confidence so that the dangers inherent in the Canal scheme might be dealt with the more easily. Bulwer did not think the Canal in itself to be dangerous to British interests or maritime power, rather the manner in which it was to be constructed and the terms of the concession. The solution was, briefly, to purchase the French Company out.² The Canal should be carried on by the Egyptian Government according to its convenience; the Canal and Egypt to be placed under a special guarantee. The accession of a new ruler in January 1863 provided an opportune moment for a change of direction.³ The new Viceroy had not had time to take up a positive line, and was,

¹. Bulwer - Russell, 3 Jan., FO. 78/1795.

². Russell's reply was that it would be an excellent proposal if the Canal were likely to finish. But should the Canal fail there would be no point in wasting £2 million in the purchase of the Company's rights. Bulwer's suggestion was not so ridiculous for it has to be remembered that in a little while Ismail would be anxious to buy up the ordinary Suez shares. See below, p. 278, n. 1.

³. Said died 18 January 1863.

in fact, embarrassed by all these complications.¹ A swift English initiative leading to a settlement conducive to better relations between him and the Porte, and to a lessening of pressure from England and France, while still permitting the construction of the Canal might end the constant embarrassment which this problem caused the Liberal ministry. For Bulwer, Russell's replies were consistently unhelpful:

'If the Sultan makes any proposal on the subject, you will refer it to H.M.'s Govt. and wait their answer'. 2

and:

'...you will be careful in no way to commit Her Majesty's Government to any course of policy respecting it which shall not have previously received their express sanction'. 3.

The most definitive was the communication:

'The British Government can in no case guarantee, promote or favour the Suez Canal, which they would wish to see abandoned'. 4

Palmerston commented on this approvingly:

'I see you are sending a good answer to Bulwer about Suez Canal. His proposal of a Guarantee of the Canal tends towards its completion while on the contrary our interest tends to the giving up or failure of the scheme'. 5

Quite unmoved by Bulwer's description of the situation, he went on to say that the effective abolition of forced labour would ruin the Company.⁶

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- ¹ During his visit to Constantinople in February-March Ismail was clearly assessing the strength of the various parties, see below p 269-70.
 - ² Russell - Bulwer, 26 Jan., FO. 78/1795.
 - ³ Russell - Bulwer, 30 Jan., ibid.
 - ⁴ Russell - Bulwer, 1 Feb., ibid.
 - ⁵ Palmerston - Russell, 1 Feb. '63, PRO. 30/22 14.
 - ⁶ Palmerston - Russell, 1 Feb. ibid. Ismail's first act as ruler was to abolish the corvée. However forced labour on the works did not cease till 1 June '64.

Russell wrote in this vein to Bulwer in spite of the latter's insistence that financial difficulties would not halt the progress of the Company.

In Egypt, Bulwer did what he could to improve matters, applying himself to the problem of the weakness of English influence in that country. He tried to remedy this by the only means left to him, by supporting the power of the Viceroy as a means of insinuating Colquhoun into the Pasha's favour. He encouraged Said to make a stand against consular pretensions and to lean on British support to defeat the intrigues of the consuls. It was unfortunate, Bulwer felt, that he had to rely on the too courteous Colquhoun. He was not the person for the task Bulwer had in mind.¹ As there was little the consul could do to alter the situation radically, Bulwer considered that he ought at least to be more self-assertive and command more respect.² Colquhoun, frittered away a certain reserve of influence which was always contained in the very name of the English agent, by complaining to the Pasha about everything. As Bulwer saw it, there were certain fundamental problems, such as forced labour, the Suez Canal and viceregal relations with the Porte, upon which a British representative might have to take a stand. It was important that at the critical junctures when these problems should confront him, ~~that~~ the ruler

¹ Bulwer - Russell, 19 Feb. '63, FO. 78/1733: 'Mr Colquhoun has, I think, suffered himself to be too much effaced, and though great courtesy makes you loved in the East, one must also at times show the spirit which inspires fear'.

² Bulwer - Russell, 26 Feb., PRO. 30/22 92: 'I fear Colquhoun is getting too old lady-like for the post Egypt will now become'.

should be favourably disposed to listen to him, because of the agent's moderation on other occasions. Bulwer thought the English consul's task was to reinforce viceregal authority when foreign influences were jeopardising it.¹ This could only be brought about by the agent's supporting the Viceroy as far as possible in all matters of internal administration. Bulwer especially complained to Russell of the consul-general's common-sensible arguments in favour of the use of forced labour in a country where the use of wage-labour inevitably would entail foreign exploitation.²

During these months Bulwer applied himself to the task of making British objections more specific and capable of forming the basis of a practical policy. In particular he tried to persuade Russell of the rightness of such a policy. He asked for the endorsement of this policy which was:

'First, to get out of the present Canal scheme.
Second, if possible to get the scheme of a Canal set aside either formally or practically altogether.
Third, to arrive at these ends without putting the Porte in such a situation as it has not the force to sustain'. 3

Bulwer thus described British objections in such a way that Russell could hardly sanction them for, by implication, the statement contained a positive procedure. The latter seemed to have suspected this for his response was not a simple approval:

'Your views are correct, but I must request you not to take any step as to Suez Canal without referring the question home'. 4

¹ Bulwer-Russell, 13 Feb. '63, FO. 78/1795 and Bulwer-Russell, 19 Feb. PRO.30/22 92, and Bulwer-Colquhoun, 27 Feb., FO. 78/1733.
² Bulwer - Russell, 26 Feb., PRO. 30/22 92.
³ Bulwer - Russell, 4 Feb., FO. 78/1795.
⁴ Russell - Bulwer, ibid.

Thus, Bulwer was prevented from taking a definitive step. The ruthless logic with which he had defended his scheme for dealing with the Company, rather than the Canal, was, evidently, not enough to undermine the official policy.¹ He had explained:

'There are three courses then for the Viceroy to adopt: First, to stand on the legality and risk all the consequences. Second, to repay the Company and undertake the work. Third, to let things take their course and trust to the Company's becoming bankrupt and stopping in the natural course of things'. 2

He added, to emphasise his point, that he feared the debt of the Pasha was a government debt, in which case the first possibility might be put on one side. But if it were adopted, then British support 'à toute outrance' was needed. As to the third suggestion, 'it would be in my opinion a very hazardous one: too much of the

¹ He also exposed the weaknesses in Russell's nebulous ideas. He enquired whether Russell's aim was to leave the task to the highest bidder without there being anything profitable in a newly devised contract. Bulwer-Russell, 4 Feb., FO. 78/1795. He was not even sure what Russell meant when he said that 'the Sultan should come to a compromise about Said's shares'. Bulwer went on: 'This - if it alludes to the Sultan's buying the said shares - besides being ruinous to Turkish finances would enable the company to continue its labours. It also says, 'Suez Canal should be left to private speculation'. But in this case would not the French Company have the first right to be the speculators...and little perhaps would be gained by the overturning of one foreign company in favour of another as far as Egyptian independence is concerned unless a Company started altogether on a different basis'. The occasion of the recent accession of Ismail proved to be the only real opportunity Bulwer could have used to settle the Suez question with Egyptian support and without loss of face for Britain. Though Bulwer underestimated French determination to see the French company succeed, the Company's funds were particularly slight at this stage. In any case, support for the Viceroy would at least have prevented the Company obtaining further advantages from the Egyptian government. Russell's and Palmerston's reactions to this we have already observed (see above, p. 265.) After a whole month had elapsed (Russell-Bulwer, 13 March, FO. 78/1795) Russell would approve of concession but the Viceroy would then have no confidence in English support.

² Bulwer - Russell, 4 Feb., FO. 78/1795.

work has been done and can be done with the money at the Company's command to render failure likely'.¹ At all events, he concluded, 'there is an urgent necessity, if Egypt is to be saved, that the French Company and the rights of the Company should be set aside'.²

To Ismail, on a visit to Constantinople, Bulwer stated the official objections to the canal project.³ The concrete proposal he put to him was that he and the Porte should take their share of responsibility in getting rid of those conditions in the contract which were pernicious to Egyptian independence. Ismail was subdued on the topic.⁴ On the previous occasion Bulwer had met him he had been the avowed opponent of the scheme. Colquhoun's weakness did not account for everything, so Bulwer assumed that the Porte was hesitating again. He had a conversation with A'ali and the Viceroy together. It became apparent that they were loath to antagonise the Emperor.⁵ Bulwer considered he had exorcised this fear, having persuaded them that if no party suffered pecuniary loss then none was hurt, and the Emperor had no cause to be irritated. The Viceroy agreed to answer questions which the Porte would ask in an official

1. Ibid,

2. Ibid.

3. Naturally he made a point of adhering to the official line where the Viceroy was concerned. At the Porte and in his correspondence with London he inclined to search for alternative solutions.

4. Bulwer had been much deceived in his first impressions of Ismail, believing that this solid landlord type thought as he did about the Canal. The Pasha was in fact feeling his way.

5. More significantly, ever sensitive of the Sultan's rights, the Egyptian ruler found it irksome to co-operate with his suzerain. This was the greatest difficulty Bulwer had to contend with. Till the end of his embassy he would never quite succeed in producing harmony between the two parties.

note. The Porte was to base on the answers a declaration to England and France. Nevertheless, before departing, Ismail confided to Bulwer that the Porte would not give him power, nor take on itself the responsibility that should go with power. He pleaded for better support from Colquhoun, and insisted that the Porte's instructions should not be delayed long, for the Company was pressing for labour to finish off the fresh-water Canal to Suez. Ismail could not make excuses for longer than the next three weeks. As the Viceroy seemed unconvinced that England would firmly support him, or that the Porte would send clear instructions Bulwer sent him words:

'...That the character of the Porte's instructions as to clearness etc. must depend very much on the Document from him which it would have before them and that therefore he must bear this in mind with respect to what he now stated'.¹

Bulwer was experiencing the same uneasiness he had felt when he had chatted last to Said. There was nothing firm here. One thing only could prevent the success of the Canal, and this was a direct intimation by Russell to the French government that England refused to permit the construction of the Canal. To have expected any Pasha, even supported by the Porte, to have done more than he was prepared to do was unreasonable. Bulwer's insistence that the only alternative to negotiation was a willingness to support Turkey à l'outrance in a policy to halt French schemes, had at least the merit of being logical. In the light of Bulwer's comments

¹. Bulwer - Russell, 3 March '63, FO. 78/1795.

Russell's hopes that something might happen to cause the Company to wind up its affairs were not justified even had the Company ~~have~~ been dependent on forced labour for its success.¹ As Bulwer constantly repeated, the French government would not allow the scheme to fail just because of a lack of funds.

Russell, yielding to the arguments in Mr. Hawkshawe's² Memorandum, quickly approved of the tentative negotiations between the Porte and Egypt which Bulwer was directing.³ This relaxation on Russell's part was too late for on the Pasha's return to Egypt French pressure for a definitive arrangement, in a sense contrary to Bulwer's ideas, became irresistible. Ismail came to a financial agreement with Lesseps, confirming that of August 1860 regarding the first 100 francs per share. The remaining 2/5ths. (35 million francs = £1,500,000) were to be paid from Jan. 1864 in monthly instalments, - i.e. £720,000 yearly. There was also a new agreement with the Company whereby the Egyptian Government was to construct, under Company supervision, a Canal from Cairo to the Ouadi.⁴

The Porte made its move, consenting to the Canal provided its neutrality were guaranteed. Forced labour and the alienation of Egyptian territory were to be forbidden. Meanwhile no forced labour was to be used on the works. After the initial shock of

¹Landes, p.180-1. Gang labour, as the Foreign Office should have known, was at this stage, no longer economical.

²An official employed by Admiralty.

³See above, pp.269-70.

⁴Landes, p.231, nq. 1 The Company, whose funds were running low, technically forfeited its privileges by requiring the Egyptian government to build any section whatsoever.

Ismail's academic reply in which he confirmed - seemed in fact pleased to confirm - that the debt contracted by Said was a government debt to the Company, Bulwer vigorously urged that Notes should be written to the Porte's ambassadors at Paris and London, and to the Viceroy, pressing the compromise tentatively foreshadowed in previous negotiations.¹

All might be well again, Bulwer thought, in spite of Ismail's lack of enthusiasm. The English Government was satisfied that the terms of the Notes, yet to be sent, placed things on a not too objectionable footing. So, persuaded as he was that he had solved the Egyptian riddle, Bulwer, when he learned of Ismail's fresh determinations, lost his temper, and could only believe that Colquhoun had let him down.² He complained:

'Whilst I have been settling the Canal business here and carried my point, Colquhoun has allowed the Viceroy to make a new Convention with Lesseps. It is too bad... after this I can answer for nothing'. 3

Though not an unjust accusation - Colquhoun was ailing and not showing enough energy - on the other hand Bulwer was scarcely warranted in making him a scapegoat. The truth was that in spite of the little faith he professed to have of any real benefits coming from his talks with Said and then Ismail, even so Bulwer had rated the value of them too highly. Further, when he had decided that the great issue was one of influence and that British policy should be so adopted as to make allowance for French

¹ Forced labour and the land clauses were to be abolished, then the Porte would take the other clauses into consideration, seeing to it that there would be no pecuniary loss if the Company were obliged to give up as a consequence. The Sultan would look for ways to continue the project without the present risks.

² See above, p.33. A peerage was also at stake.

³ Bulwer-Russell, 6 April, FO. 78/1795.

susceptibilities, he had not taken the French minister into his confidence, the obvious next step. Perhaps it was simply because he assumed that legitimate French interests were comprehended in his plan, or more likely his dislike of Moustier - shared by all the representatives at the Porte - prevented his taking him into his confidence. There was no doubt that without French concurrence the plan could not succeed. If he hoped by his own personal representations at the Porte, and with the support of a revitalised Colquhoun, and the Viceroy, to give these parties sufficient courage to enforce this compromise on the French, he sadly miscalculated both as regards the backing he could expect from London, and with regard to the interests of the Porte and its vassal. And, of course, the time was past when he could have exploited a fairly fluid situation. He might negotiate such a compromise with the French, but to arrive at one without them could only be in French eyes part of a policy directed against them.

Soon after the Sultan's sanction to the measures Bulwer had concocted with A'ali, Moustier objected to them so violently that a Great Council was held at which the Sheik 'ul Islam and all the dignitaries of the Empire were present.¹ Even so, eventually

¹ Russell's reaction was characteristic: 'If the Sultan is deterred by menaces from carrying these measures into effect, he in fact abdicated his sovereignty in Egypt...if the principle is abandoned by the Sultan, the independence of Turkey is abandoned by the Sultan, and can no longer be supported by England'. Russell-Bulwer, 2 April, FO. 78/1795. Palmerston was under the impression at this stage - in spite of his derogatory expressions later about Bulwer's exertions - that some sort of settlement was now to be expected. Roused by the Council's stand to write to Russell he commented: 'We fought one round of this battle very successfully in 1840 and '41...now we have the Pasha on our side, and that makes the thing much more easy. ...I scarcely think the French will not give way. -

despatched 6 April, the Porte's Note was in accordance with Bulwer's wishes.¹

The visit of the Sultan with Fuad, the Grand Vizir, to Egypt, in the second week of April produced no change in the situation. The Viceroy, refusing to answer the Vizirial letter, seemed to be hoping that London and Paris would settle his difficulties for him. Prince Napoleon was expected to arrive during the next few days, and it was perhaps because of this that Ismail refused to commit himself in the questions of forced labour and the land question. Fuad, likewise, refused to take any further step. Bulwer actually suspected that he wished to back out of the position he had taken up.

At last the Pasha responded. He sent Nubar to Constantinople.² It became plain that the Viceroy sincerely desired to obtain the lands ceded by Said and was willing to pay for them. He would continue the works himself. On the other hand forced labour could be peremptorily abolished only with the direst consequences. Bulwer emphasised his government's determination to see these uncivilised

(cont. p.273, note 1)

At all events our honour and our interests equally require that we should give the Sultan and the Pasha our active support.' 5 April PRO.30/22 14. Apart from showing a lamentable ignorance of the real situation in Egypt, this reasoning failed to comprehend the opportunities - or rather lack of opportunities - for bargaining. See Mange, p.136, for details of negotiations between the Viceroy and the Sultan. The Vizirial Note to the Viceroy was dated 2 April and the Note to the Porte's ambassadors, 6 April.

¹ The Note, in a great measure the end product of so much British diplomacy, significantly began: 'It does not enter the consideration of the Sublime Porte to wish to prevent the realisation of an enterprise which might be of general utility'. It is enclosed in No 171, missing from FO. 78/1795, and actually in FO 78/1796.

² cf. Mange, pp.136-8, for an extremely ingenuous account of French diplomatic activity from 1863 to 1865.

habits discontinued, but he was obliged to admit after long discussions with Nubar, Fuad and A'ali, that the British Government could not reasonably expect either party to offend France by carrying out English wishes. The French Company had to be accepted as the agency which should carry out the enterprise. This was fundamental. Bulwer accepted the fact and tried to devise a scheme which he hoped his government would find unobjectionable.

What he stressed was the need for an immediate settlement, for any fresh development was bound to be adverse. He explained:

'First, that the Viceroy should accept the prescriptions of the Vizirial letter and agree to carry them out within a certain period, say four or six months...

Secondly, that if he can make an arrangement...with the Company for getting possession of the Fresh-water canals and the land annexed to them, this should be considered satisfactory.

Thirdly, that forced labour should be declared abolished; but that regulations should be drawn up for supplying free labour, such regulations being equally applicable as to (sic) whether the present company or a new company or the Egyptian Government itself should continue the present seawater canal.' 1

In this way he hoped to leave the supply of labour in the hands of the local government. The resources of the Company would be less flexible when forced labour was effectively denied to them.

The plan offered two advantages for the British Government. It embraced the effective English objections to the project, namely 'to the land clauses and forced labour, and it saved face. It also pointed the way to better relations with the viceregal government, in the circumstances the only real security for British interests. Bulwer's analysis of the specific advantages to be anticipated from this scheme was unanswerable:

1. Bulwer-Russell, 11 June '63, FO.78/1796.

'The purchase of the fresh-water Canals and the adjoining territory will necessarily put a certain sum in the hands of the Company, favourable to the construction of the main canal but on the other hand its resources on this head are at once and for ever limited; whereas now, looking at the value to which land at Suez, Timsah and Port Said may rise, if the great canal is ever constructed these resources are indefinite and almost incalculable'.....

'A question of this kind having advanced so far and having engaged so many interests, the fears of the Pasha and the Porte having to be counted upon as well as their interests, it is by no means easy, even with the best intentions and the soundest views both as to equity and policy, to arrive at a tolerable solution'...1

The sugar for this pill was the time limit within which the Vizirial letter should be executed, i.e. within which forced labour should be effectively abolished.²

Russell's approval arrived eleven days after the sending of this despatch. Gradually coming round to appreciate the sense of Bulwer's views, Russell gave a positive instruction for Bulwer to act upon his views. That very day Bulwer had telegraphed for a quick answer for time was running short.

These were critical weeks that were to follow. Bulwer maintained a constant watch on the Porte and on the Viceroy, represented by Nubar. Both parties were under pressure to evade a possible agreement, and Bulwer had cause to assure Nubar that the French government would not use force to make the Viceroy supply forced labour.³ Indicative of the mood of Ismail and of what he was intending was his declaration that he would not have Turkish troops in any fortifications to protect the Canal. As a means of anticipating the French wrath to come Nubar hinted that a tacit

1. Bulwer-Russell, 11 June, *ibid*.

2. By March 1864 the English government had agreed to an extension of this from six to eight months.

3. Bulwer - Russell, 25 June, FO. 78/1796.

agreement between the Sultan and the Viceroy to supply 6,000 workers per month, free if possible, might be an effective reinsurance. Bulwer did not shift from the terms of the agreement. If French pressure were to determine it then the fresh scheme would in fact alter nothing.

The Vizirial letter was sent.¹ Requiring first of all a sufficient guarantee that the Canal would be used exclusively for commerce, that the fresh-water canal clauses in the contract be suppressed, and that forced labour be abolished, the Porte intimated that it only remained for the Viceroy to see to it that the lands were retroceded and no forced labour was employed. All that there remained to do was to await the outcome of Nubar's mission to Paris where the negotiations with the Company were to take place.

All parties were heartily glad at the prospect of seeing these tiresome and long drawn out negotiations brought to a timely end.

Late in the day Russell had yielded to Bulwer's argument that if Britain were not to lose everything in a single throw it must compromise on this point.² The Porte and the Viceroy had to be saved further embarrassment.

The French government wished to see the enterprise succeed. Questions of influence, dignity, and interest, were all intimately bound up with the achievement. Otherwise, Napoleon, and especially Drouyn de Lluys were heartily sick of the interminable affair.

¹. Dated 1 July, enclosed in Bulwer- Russell 22 July, FO.78/1796.

². FO. - Bulwer, 12 Aug. Bulwer's handling of the delicate situation received well-merited praise.

The Porte desired nothing more, and nothing less, than to be left alone. Its interest in Egypt was marginal.

Ismail was the weak link, Ismail the unpredictable. He rejoiced, of course, that he was permitted to negotiate directly with the Canal Company - whatever the cost of the privilege.¹ And here now was the opportunity he had been awaiting to put into practice the plan which he had communicated to Bulwer earlier in the year.²

¹. cf. Landes, p.184 on Nubar's success! 'Even the British ambassador felt that an important step had been taken toward the revision of the concessions'. A curious comment.

². cf. *ibid*, pp.182-7, where we find all the details of the scheme which the writer puts forward as a mere hypothesis based upon the flimsiest of evidence. There is ample material in the Russell Papers on this episode. Bulwer-Russell, 5 March '63, PRO.30/22 92:

'...the Viceroy intends on his return to see quietly if he cannot purchase all, or nearly all, the Canal shares. He will thus have it at his disposition and thus without any question on the subject, the matter will be in his hands. He told me this in the strictest confidence saying that if the plan got out it must fail..' There is an interesting reference in a letter from Bulwer's friend, Stevens to Bulwer, 1 April *ibid*:

'From the tenor of his (the Viceroy's) conversation I am disposed to believe that he will ultimately throw over de Lesseps and that if properly dealt with, it will not be a difficult task especially if it comes to a question of his assuming the whole undertaking according to your original idea'.

Had Bulwer first suggested the scheme and in deference to Foreign Office susceptibilities given it to be understood that Ismail had fathered it? Or had Bulwer conveyed the impression to Stevens that this ingenious scheme was his brilliant device? There is no material which might provide an answer.

A more curious letter illustrated a certain ignorance on Bulwer's part, remarkable in this case because he was by now quite an authority on the subject in all its intricate details: Bulwer - Russell, 11 June, *ibid*:

'...The Viceroy has already a right to a large portion of the Canal shares. He is ready instantly to buy up a large majority of these shares which would probably be done by first producing distrust amongst the shareholders. In this manner His Highness would be, before the six or four months named are expired, sole master of the Canal, his right having been acquired in a quiet unostentatious manner: the Committee would be removed from Paris, and established at Alexandria, and be soon composed of the Viceroy's functionaries.. this project would not interfere for the moment with the other arrangement-but it would eventually supersede it'. cont...

Ismail's market dabblings achieved nothing. On 30 January, so far had Nubar failed to persuade the Company to negotiate on the terms in the Vizirial agreement, that the Viceroy was obliged to ask the Emperor to arbitrate between the two parties. Lesseps had refused to budge in the matter of the land grants and corvée - though he needed neither. He did not wish to give up valuable bargaining counters. After all, Ismail still owed 400 francs per share.

French pressure was exerted at Constantinople and Cairo in a more determined fashion than had been the case in the immediate post-Zurich period. Since the negotiations were in Paris there was not a thing the English government could do.¹

Bulwer, on leave, had talks with the Emperor in Paris before returning to the Embassy. They illustrated nothing more than the Emperor's ignorance of the details which quite evidently did not interest him. People, Bulwer suggested to him, would look upon the scheme as one of 'French ambition and not of general utility' if Europe were not generally admitted to participate in the venture. A specific reference to India gave some substance to the otherwise nebulous arguments about the Porte's and Viceroy's interests. To the

(cont. p.278, note 2):

- That such a scheme should have been considered practical politics was typical of Ismail. Based as it was on the fallacious supposition that French opposition to his contract would not be encountered, it could not but fail. If Napoleon wanted negotiations to succeed, Ismail could do nothing about it. In any case, no matter how many shares Ismail obtained, he could not acquire a dominating influence without obtaining the preference shares as well.
1. Very impertinently the French government hinted to the Porte that at the Congress which it was hoped would be convened to settle European problems, it would not be disagreeable to the Emperor for the Viceroy to be present with the Sultan. Erskine-Russell, 9 Dec., FO.78/1796. Nor did the knowledge that Britain refused to attend such a Congress make the French government anxious to encourage an amicable arrangement.

Emperor's remark that the lands might be put up for sale, Bulwer returned the answer that it would make no difference. A polite comment, pointing to the only obstacle, i.e. the Company, followed the Emperor's proposal that the Viceroy should purchase the lands. With great assurance Bulwer also wrote to Russell about his conversations with the Duc de Morny, who was in the Emperor's confidence, and, too, had a stake in the Canal project:

'The Duke...told me most confidentially, that he thought as I did, that if the Emperor wished the Canal to succeed as a general enterprise, it should be stripped of any particular character which seemed to advantage one Nation at the expense of another'. 1

During the first week in May, Bulwer learned of what actually resulted from the talks between Morny and Lesseps and Nubar in those months. On 21st April, by his master's order and encouraged by Drouyn de Lluys, Nubar Pasha had signed an agreement with the Suez Canal Company.² The provisions were of a far-reaching nature, leaving the French Emperor to decide what indemnity should be given to the Company for the withdrawal of forced labour. The Emperor would decide whether the Company should or should not keep the fresh water canals. He would determine the sum the Viceroy was to pay for the lands bordering them, and which lands in the vicinity of the Canal were to be retained by the Company. These were the main

¹. Bulwer-Russell, 12 Jan. '64, FO.78/1849

². Originally the Viceroy's request to the Emperor for a decision on 'certaines question' undecided by Nubar and the Company, was an attempt to implement the Vizirial letter of 2 April. It was just a question of minor details. The Moniteur, 7 March, had simply declared that as a result of the Viceroy's request the Emperor had expressed a determination to appoint a Commission 'offrant toutes les garanties d'impartialité et de lumières'; this Commission would facilitate his task of making the decisions.

provisions of the agreement which provoked such a strong reaction on Bulwer's part. He commented:

'Now forced labour was never granted with the permission of the Sultan, and is against the laws of the Empire, Were the Emperor of the French to decide whether a concession against the laws of the Turkish Empire is valid, and whether the vassal can sanction acts affecting the laws of the Empire without the Sultan's sanction, the authority of Constantinople over Egypt is transferrèd to Paris'. 1

Concerning the lands bordering the canals and the fresh-water canals themselves, he dryly stated:

'The absurdity of purchasing a property which was to result from the Canals, without obtaining the Canals, is so great that it needs no comment'. 2

As for the last point he commented:

'The Emperor is alone to decide what lands are to be handed over to the Company as useful for the constructions it contemplates, or, in words more vague, the prosperity of its 'exploitation'. 3

The whole thing was incompatible with the spirit of the five-power guarantee of 1841. The Emperor, Bulwer considered, had placed himself in a false position.

His scheme, worked out in the previous June, had thus come to nothing owing to Egyptian and Turkish weakness and mutual distrust. Circumstances had radically altered within a month of Ismail's accession. Bulwer never had another chance to direct the course of the negotiations, though in the months after the Compromise, he continued to produce scheme after scheme. They were savoured by the government, never welcomed by it.

From this point Bulwer indulged in a series of rearguard skirmishes, losing his hold on each position only when the odds were too great.

1. Bulwer-Russell, 9 May, op.cit.

2. Bulwer-Russell, 9 May, ibid.

3. Ibid.

His government offered him little encouragement. He was in fact out of favour; his days were numbered.¹

His initial reaction was to attempt to make the 'Compromise' less dangerous. He kept before his government the need to bear in mind that the Emperor's dignity was involved. Should the Viceroy think fit, Bulwer proposed, the Emperor might decide what sum the Viceroy should pay for the fresh-water canals and the adjoining lands. The Company should be assured of a supply of fresh-water. Then he explained:

'The Emperor should not, in my opinion, be given the power as to forced labour of compensating the Company, because after having infringed the law with immense profits, it is no longer allowed to do so, nor should he be left to determine what the force of that law is; but if the Viceroy is disposed to ask the Emperor's advice, His Imperial Majesty may express an opinion to His Highness as to the gratuity which it would be generous to allow for the abolition of a privilege, upon which the Company might have counted, though it was illegally granted'.²

The Porte alone had the power to decide which lands the Company should have in the vicinity of the salt-water canal, though its decision might be arrived at after an international commission of European engineers had visited the spot. The Porte adopted this reasoning and during the following months attempted to prevent the French government from exceeding the scope of the Vizirial letter of 2 April. For the moment it held its ground, demanding 'the retrocession of the fresh-water canals, and, as a result of

¹Palmerston-Russell, 11 Sept. PRO 30/22 14: 'What you say of Bulwer is quite true. All the geese he hatches are swans, till their real character shows itself. About two years ago he wrote to me that having entirely settled the Suez Canal Question, he thought that great exploit entitled him to a peerage'.

²Bulwer-Russell, 9 May, FO.78/1849.

Bulwer's encouragement and inspiration, the appointment of a mixed commission to decide on the portion of land strictly required by the Company."

However, the determination of the French government to put an end to the business was strengthened by the Porte's irritating tergiversations. On 2 July the Imperial Award, based on the recommendations of the Commission presided over by M. Thouvenel, granted an indemnity of 84 million francs to the Company.¹ To be paid by the Egyptian Government, this was chiefly in return for the retrocession of the lands and for the withdrawal of forced labour.²

Anxious to make the best of the situation, no matter how bad it was, and impatient to see the negotiations, now at last going on with a purpose, terminated in as little disadvantageous a manner as possible, Bulwer employed all his craft to persuade his government that the Porte's ambassador at Paris, Djemil, could not be blamed, nor the Viceroy criticised too harshly.³ His efforts on behalf of both failed to impress Russell, and indeed they were transparently misleading.⁴ The Porte he explained had placed the matter on an business like footing in the Vizirial letter which offered the Sultan's consent to the Canal provided the French Company resigned forced labour and its territorial acquisitions. Thus the fresh-

¹.cf. Marlowe, p.70: 'Britain made no effective protest. This quiescence was presumably taken by the Porte as an indication that Great Britain had retired from the contest'. This is erroneous.

².The manner in which this sum was calculated invited astonishment rather than revulsion. cf. Landes, p.224, and Bulwer to Russell, 16 August 1864, FO.78/1849.

³.Bulwer-Russell, 25 May, *ibid*: 'I would profit by the intervention of the Emperor and the Compromise as far as it is possible to do so; and try to get what is impossible altered'.

⁴.Bulwer-Russell, 16 August, and 7 Sept. *ibid*.

water canals would have been placed in the hands of the Viceroy who would have been glad to compensate the Company for the loss entailed. Unfortunately, Nubar's initial failure led to his asking the Emperor to arbitrate on the pecuniary questions. The Commission appointed by the French government drew up with Nubar a project of an arrangement, the Compromise, which embraced matters beyond the mere pecuniary question. Only after the event did the Porte realise what had happened in Paris, and then protested. By telescoping the events of this month and emphasising the Porte's worthy attitude towards the Emperor's final award in July, Bulwer contrived to gloss over the ignominy of it. Russell's comment must have evoked a sigh of relief from Bulwer. It was exactly what he might have expected:

'Although the affair lasted thro' the summer and was notorious to all Europe, you state on the 7th of September, that it was not clearly known to the Porte till that time. How came the Porte never to enquire what was going on?' 1.

As an answer to Russell's question, what he revealed later, while on leave in Paris, was a brilliant piece of diplomatic manoeuvring on the part of the French government, and of crass stupidity on the part of the Turks.² The Porte had enquired what the powers of the Commission were. It enquired of the Viceroy and the French government, the former returning no answer and the other an evasive one. Djemil questioned Drouyn several times as to the latitude given to the Commission. Drouyn returned that the Emperor and the Viceroy's agreement prevented his interfering with the deliberations of the Commission until its decisions were announced.

1. Russell-Bulwer, 23 Sept., FO.78/1849.

2. Bulwer-Russell, 30 Sept., ibid.

Seemingly, Djemil had at once made it plain that the Porte could in no wise be bound. As for the three days delay in informing Nubar of his fresh instructions, Djemil complained that when the Viceroy's agent returned from Marseilles he did not come to the Turkish Embassy. How was he to find his whereabouts?¹ Convincingly though the tale was told, Russell was not taken in.

By working on Djemil's pride and keeping Djemil in ignorance of the exact details, which was quite a feat considering the proximity of all the parties concerned, the French succeeded in maintaining his isolation from Nubar. Nubar in turn was won over by the Duc de Morny's assurance that the Emperor's final decision would not be based on the Compromise. The hint that any action embarrassing to the Company, while the matter was pending, such as the cessation of forced labour, would be looked on by the Imperial Government as a threat, sufficed to dissipate what little determination Ismail had shown till then.

In a turgid atmosphere of mutual recrimination, Bulwer threw himself quite cheerfully into the task of exploiting the situation. After all, not all his arts could have brought the English government to pursue negotiations. If the present bases for talks were unfortunate, at least the English government could not afford to keep out of the talks.² Almost any opportunity to liquidate this embarrassing problem was bound to excite Bulwer, daily confronted

¹. Colquhoun-Bulwer, 7 May 1864, FO.78/1849. Strangely, Nubar had called on Djemil on the Friday and Saturday preceeding 21 April.

². Palmerston was suspecting at last, that the French government would see the Canal completed even at their own expense. With Tunis in mind he added: 'They are pursuing their scheme of getting hold of all the Southern shore of the Mediterranean in order...to keep us out of it'. Palmerston-Russell, 24 Oct., PRO.30/22 14.

with the practical implications of French hegemony in the area, especially in Egypt.

His memory still retaining a vivid impression of the gracious manners of the Emperor and his deferential attitude towards himself, Bulwer preferred to believe that the Emperor would certainly be glad to accommodate the Sultan's objections on certain points - to do with the amount and location of land to be conceded. The Turkish Ambassador, previously briefed by Cowley, should make a personal appeal direct to the Emperor. Practical details Bulwer limited to one, namely that an International Commission of engineers should make an on-the-spot report upon the lands question, this to guide the Sultan and Viceroy when they would decide upon the amount and location of land. When the question of neutrality and guarantee should be agitated, Bulwer reasoned, such a report would be a necessity. Given the mode of the recent agreement how could other Powers, as the question then stood, be brought to guarantee the neutrality of the Canal?¹

Having previously approved of Bulwer's views on the lands question Russell now had second thoughts, going so far as to repudiate Bulwer's translation of opinion into diplomatic activity. Bulwer's argument had been that:

¹. Bulwer - Russell, 16 Aug., FO 78/1849: 'The question of the lands, which are to be given the Company involves a variety of political questions, over which the Porte is bound by her own interests and engagements with other powers to exercise a certain control'. Bulwer was particularly anxious that the land given to the Company at Suez and Said, Timsah, and certain other points, should be restricted to a bare minimum. Otherwise his inclination was to be generous for the sake of France's good will.

'A certain margin of land on each side of the Canal should be conceded to the Company for public purposes; this in fact would be property belonging less to the Company than to the Canal...It is perfectly fair, also, that the Company should have a sufficient ground accorded to it at different spots for warehouses, and those other buildings which it may require, and I would even go so far as to say that the Porte's consideration be extended to new wants in this respect, not perhaps at present apparent: but it is equally just and expedient that the extent of this grant should be determined by a commission in which the Porte should be duly represented; that the nature of the buildings to be made, the locality in which they are to be erected, should all be fixed by this commission'. 1

Russell's acceptance² of these generous proposals was half withdrawn a few weeks later when he telegraphed Bulwer the instruction that it was 'of vital interest to the Porte not to allow a dangerous concession of land in Egypt to a foreign Company which may in the end deprive both the Sultan and the Viceroy of all Independent Sovereignty, and of all domestic administration'.³ Unfortunately for the Foreign Secretary, on the very day this instruction was relayed, Bulwer had completed the negotiations in which he had been persuading Nubar, recently arrived, and the Porte's ministers, hesitating before trying again the Emperor's patience, to make a joint démarche on the basis of his proposal for a commission of three to solve the lands problem.⁴ In a veritable sunshine of optimism the ambassador explained:

'I am happy now to think that there is not likely to be any necessity for our coming to any serious difference with the Cabinet of the Tuileries hereupon, a matter always to be avoided if possible. ...I look...upon the communication

1. Bulwer - Russell, 7 Aug., *ibid.*

2. See above, p. 277.

3. FO - Bulwer, 7 Sept., *op.cit.*

4. The other main point was that a term be fixed for the completion of the Canal; otherwise the retrocession of the fresh-water canals, conditional on this completion, would be worthless.

to be made by the Porte with the perfect concurrence of Nubar Pasha as of the greatest importance...When all differences are arranged, the intention of the Porte is that the Viceroy and the Company should make a new contract according to the terms agreed upon, and that the Porte should then give its sanction to this contract'. 1

From the moment Bulwer had learned of the final decision of the Emperor (published in the *Moniteur*, 2 August), he had been working feverishly to re-establish such a concord between the Viceroy and the Porte. He had been favoured by the Viceroy's positive alarm and irritation at the way he had been treated. The latter blamed the French in Paris for their venality.²

Quickly rejecting Bulwer's proposal,³ Russell contemplated exerting pressure in Paris to have the Emperor agree to the Sultan's appointing his own agent to visit Egypt, and report on the quantity and location of land to be conceded.⁴ Further, a fresh contract should be drawn up by the Sultan's own confidential officers.⁵ When it became clear that Bulwer had set the wheels in motion Russell delayed and then cancelled his protest.⁶

From this point negotiations were centred on Paris, and only to a lesser degree at Constantinople.⁷ Russell's response to his

1. Bulwer - Russell, 7 Sept., FO.78/1849

2. cf. Landés, p.226. He had quickly given orders to British firms for machinery totalling £1,000,000.

3. Russell - Bulwer, 20 Sept., op.cit.

4. Russell - Bulwer, 23 Sept., ibid.

5. Russell - Bulwer, ibid.

6. FO-Grey, 26 Sept. and Stuart-Russell, 27 Sept., ibid.: 'The French government had already agreed to the principal provisions...the appointment of a mixed commission to fix upon (*délimiter*) the amount of lands to be allotted to the Company and the transfer of the fresh-water canal to the Viceroy within a fixed period of six years'.

7. Much depended on the meaning of the word '*délimiter*'. See above note 6 where the English interpretation is evident. The French contended that it meant to define what had already been granted. English pressure ensured that the land grant was restricted to one-sixth of that conceded in the Award of 2 July.

manoeuvres Bulwer could not refrain from gently criticising. In fact, his appraisal of what had happened and what might follow was little short of patronising, while his advice to Djemil, to have an agent sent to Egypt whose report might be the basis of the Porte's instructions to its Commissioner in the Mixed Commission, could only have looked something like disobedience to Russell after his recent protests. Bulwer defended himself, pointing to the weakness in British policy:

'The fact is, that things were allowed to go on too many years unchecked; and it was difficult, not to say impossible, to alter their current after it had been permitted to run for so considerable a time in a direction that gave a sort of legitimacy to the dangerous privileges which the Company had been able to acquire'. 1

However, he begged many questions when he suggested that the privileges could be modified if the available means of influence were 'vigorously and firmly employed'. He knew only too well the difficulties of achieving anything in that strange Levantine world where rulers, especially Viceroys and Sultans, were motivated by impulses as strange to an English gentleman as they were alien.

But the ambassador made a capital hit when he remarked:

'But almost every plan or policy depends less on the manner in which it is defined than the manner in which it is executed'. 2

Bulwer's attempts to seize the initiative had been thwarted twice by his government's desire to watch and wait. Finally, he persisted in his idea of a Mixed Commission, concluding:

1. Bulwer - Russell, 30 Sept. Paris, FO.78/1849

2. Bulwer - Russell, *ibid.*

'There can be no doubt that the whole affair even with its reduced conditions, is favourable to French aggrandisement, but the Porte alone will not be able to resist this. The resistance must come from giving France clearly to understand that there are encroachments which Great Britain and other States would not submit to'. 1

Negotiations dragged on, the British government having given its assent to the Canal scheme, 4 March 1865, insisting that no excessive grant of land should be given to the Company; the Viceroy requiring that he should have power of appointing its Director, and the Egyptian government be the arbiter in disputes between natives and the Company.² By 25 April, the Porte had assented to the terms agreed upon by Cowley and Drouyn de Lluys. The acceptance of the Imperial Award in the appeal from the Sultan in May was the quid pro quo for the Emperor's acceptance of a Mixed Commission to fix the amount of land to be given to the Canals.³

The English government could boast that it had put an end to forced labour, and the colonisation schemes presumed to be involved in the land grants, and that, in spite of Turkish waywardness and the refusal of the Porte's agents to execute their instructions, it had helped to put the questions of the fortifications and the maintenance of Egyptian jurisdiction, on a satisfactory footing.⁴

1. Bulwer - Russell, *ibid.*

2. The Egyptian government and the Company settled their differences in the Conventions of 30 Jan. and 22 Feb. 1866. See Mange, p.139.

3. cf. Mange, p.139, for a melodramatic but insubstantial account of the reasons for the Porte's conceding the Firman permitting the construction of the Canal.

4. See 'Results of the Opposition of Her Majesty's Government to the Suez Canal scheme'. FO.78/1898

More to the point was the fact that the government had failed in its initial determination to stop the canal being built. Palmerston castigated everyone but especially the English public and Bulwer for this. He protested that though Bulwer was 'a very clever man, and according to his own statements he directs everything', he had 'no dignity of character'.¹ Quite possibly, he suspected, his influence was not very great. The Prime Minister looked forward to 'a good ambassador at Constantinople and an energetic man like Stanton' giving Britain 'the best chance of saving something out of the scramble'.²

Bulwer protested at once against the notification of his recall and its connection with the Egyptian negotiations.³ He justly lay the blame - if blame had to be apportioned - for the unsatisfactory state of affairs, at the feet of Russell. As he explained, it was his efforts in the previous year which had brought the Viceroy and the Porte together, and made an agreement, based on a Commission to calculate the amount of land for the Canal, feasible.

'The fact, indeed, is that when that Commission was proposed it was granted by Drouyn de Lluys and the whole affair settled', he wrote. 4

It was hardly his fault that Drouyn was able to back out,⁵ later to agree again providing a French government representative sat on the

¹. Palmerston-Russell, 12 July, PRO.30/22 15. Palmerston was only consistent in his inconsistency towards Bulwer. Palmerston-Russell, 11 July, *ibid*: 'I have been reading those long but able despatches of Bulwer about the Suez Canal'.

². Palmerston-Russell, 12 July, *loc.cit*.

³. Bulwer-Russell, 18 June, PRO.30/22 93.

⁴. Bulwer-Russell, *ibid*.

⁵. *Ibid*.

Committee, which Bulwer had intended should consist only of representatives of the Porte, the Viceroy, and the Company.¹ He complained he felt it hard 'to have the barb penetrate my heel where I thought it was invulnerable'.² 'I think you let the French a little too well off', he added, before going on to hurl a final shaft at his chief:

'If it was necessary that I should be immolated to procure you a prosperous voyage to the Temple of Fame or any other such glorious place, I think I would screw up my courage to the act of sacrifice, but as all winds blow in your favour, and there seems no sort of danger of your vessel even being shipwrecked, I am rebellious at being a victim to the barbarous deities of Drouyn de Lluys'.³

Reluctant to leave his post, he felt that his contribution towards a satisfactory settlement of the Suez question might have been in his favour. 'You will not be surprised', he complained, 'that after the zeal I have shown, the knowledge I have acquired, and the success which has hitherto attended the affairs I have been personally connected with in relation to the Suez Canal, I should have thought my services concerning that affair more likely to be useful to the Government than those of anyone else'.⁴ He felt, however, that the full exposition of his views, recently, had obliged the government 'to name an agent who had not declared himself in the same manner'.⁵ Significantly, he pleaded 'that as long as I served under your orders, I should have strained every nerve to make any plan you had adopted successful; whatever I might have thought it my duty to say as to the dangers or the difficulties

1. Bulwer-Russell, 26 April, *ibid.*

2. Bulwer-Russell, 18 June, *ibid.*

3. Bulwer-Russell, 18 June '65, PRO.30/22 93.

4. Bulwer-Russell, 2 August, *ibid.*

5. *Ibid.*

attending it'.¹ This was no flash of self-knowledge lighting up the inner recesses of unfathomable darkness. Bulwer had been advocating a policy different from that his government desired, and though, of course, he had attempted to do his duty, his personal predilections had at least encouraged those efforts towards a settlement which French pressure induced. His sympathetic understanding of the Porte's difficulties was itself an obstacle in the way of persuading the Porte to stand firm.² The tensions between the ambassador and his chief prevented Bulwer's ever taking the initiative as we have seen above. However, Bulwer's independent line succeeded at least in easing the transition between antagonism to the whole project and obstinacy over the details. Given the international situation, the British Government possessed no means of halting the Canal, though it delayed - not so much the construction which went on despite English diplomacy - but certainly the settlement of its legal bases. This, of course, was what had given Bulwer cause to rethink after Zurich, and later, after his trip to the Canal. If the Canal were to be made it would be just as well to have the details settled amicably in accordance with the views of the British government and not as a result of a fight for influence between France and Britain. He failed because Palmerston and possibly Russell were intent on overlooking the struggle for influence. The government always saw a principle at stake; Bulwer wanted to push it to the background as the sensible thing to do, and in the interest

¹. Bulwer-Russell, *ibid.*

². Especially in November-January 1859-1860 and February-April 1863.

of prestige the only thing to do.

He was ideally equipped to deal with the Egyptian riddle, both by his remarkable resourcefulness and his adaptiveness to circumstances. Frustrated in his desire to adopt a different line by a government which was more aware of its strategic limitations than he was, Bulwer responded characteristically by producing an abundance of schemes, all of which found their source in a well-reasoned policy. This, comprehending the narrower issue, also took care of British interests in the East generally. He tersely explained his approach in a letter to Consul Reade, in which after admonishing him about speculating and interfering in the internal affairs of the local government, went on:

'I wish you would just take up two or three great ideas. We want not to pull down but to build up a Government in Egypt strong enough to control the usurpations of foreigners and adventurers. It will be our only chance in that land of passage of keeping it from falling into the hands of everybody which is nobody. We want moreover to be well with the government of Egypt for large questions and not to go out of our way to quarrel with it on small ones'. 1

Bulwer was vigorous in his insistence that the Viceroy's rights, guaranteed by treaties, were as sacred as those of the Porte, and that just as Egypt should be held in its present relationship with Turkey so the Porte should not be encouraged in demanding more of the vassal government than was legal.² Bulwer was half-inclined to

¹. Bulwer-Russell, 24 August '64, T/101

². In his brilliant last despatch, 10 Oct. '65, FO.78/1898, to Stanton, he develops this:

'To make him independent of the Porte would be to withdraw from Egypt the protection it derives from being part of the Ottoman Empire. To sink him down to the condition of an ordinary Pasha would be to make the fate of Egypt entirely dependent on that of Turkey: whereas if any catastrophe befell other Turkish provinces, it might still be our wish
cont...

approve of the desire of Said, also Ismail's, for the establishment of the law of primogeniture for the succession, but feared that this would be too much of a shock to the laws of the Empire. Egypt was, for Bulwer, a British question and it was his constant endeavour to have it treated as such,¹ though Russell persisted in dealing with it as if it were a secondary interest, threatening that if the Sultan refused to insist on his rights in a problem of the first magnitude, Britain would consider itself bound no longer to preserve Turkish integrity. Cowley at Paris, and Bulwer in Constantinople, and Colquhoun at Cairo, had to take the line, for the most part, that they were merely reminding the ministers of the Viceroy and the Sultan of their own interests; that they were willing to help the Porte and the Viceroy against French pressure, but that, the question being of secondary interest to Britain, they must first of all make their position clear and stand firm. This pretence was seen through, and ineffectual, inasmuch as both the

(cont. p.294,note2):

and our policy to preserve the territory which commands the Red Sea from a foreign yoke; and in such a case, it would be a great help to find a Government constituted and accustomed to exercise a sort of national authority'.

Where the Capitulatory regime and consular pretension affected the problem he felt:

'A little consideration, however, will show that by these means we transfer power from a known legitimate and uniform authority, with which we shall always have great weight, to an undefined, irregular and divided authority, wholly independent of us. The small share that we shall have in the general usurpation will be of trifling national consequence'.

¹ Bulwer-A.H. Layard, 20 May '65, Bulwer Papers, T/102:

'...I can't help looking on Egypt as a thorough English question. In fact I think our great fault has been not to state this openly from the first not as against the Canal but as against everything which gives to the Canal an exclusive character in favour of French interests'.

Sultan and his Vassal could seldom see what they ought to have seen as their interest, and when under British pressure they could, were reluctant to take a strong line. It also shackled Bulwer who would have preferred to have assured the Porte at the outset that Britain would stand by it in a policy they had agreed upon. Again Bulwer, as in the double-election crisis, over-simplified the situation, not fully appreciating the difficulties which such a strong line involved for a British government.

It was important to remember, at least Bulwer felt so, that the Suez question was part of the bigger problem of British prestige in the East, so that if we were not prepared to win because the Government refused to take the only alternative, an alternative which really did not exist, the sensible policy, Bulwer felt, was not to antagonise France. And perhaps here, Bulwer was wiser than his Government. He outlined his views in a letter to Stanton, the new Consul General:

'It is therefore not desirable for us to have a quarrel with France on Egyptian matters, nor is it desirable for us that the Viceroy of Egypt should have one;'... 1

After explaining that the best thing was a good understanding between the French and British consuls on the spot, he went on:

'But it by no means follows by this, that we are either to allow the French to take the precedence over us, or to advise the Viceroy to make the slightest concession which is inimical to British interests, or the interests of Egypt, or the Ottoman Empire. On the contrary, I think we cannot make it too clear, practising all courtesy, that we will not allow France to assume directly or indirectly in a great or in a small degree a predominant situation in Egypt, or over the Egyptian Government; and also think we cannot make too clear to the Viceroy of Egypt that such is our view'. 2

1. 10 October, '65, FO.78/1898

2. Ibid.

Bulwer added that Britain, nevertheless, should not encourage the Viceroy in any way to exclude French influence.

While Bulwer had tried to have the Canal accepted by his government, refused to encourage anti-French attitudes in the Porte and at the Viceroy's court,¹ and asserted Britain's right to an equal voice in matters pertaining to this area, he had clearly made an honest attempt to apply his ideas. What was said of Salisbury might with justification be told of Bulwer though in a different sense:

'He recognised from the first that to secure and consolidate our position there, and to do so without quarrelling with France, was a result only to be achieved at the cost of very substantial sacrifices in other directions'. 2

1. Especially in matters connected with financial projects and concessions.

2. Cecil - Biographical Studies, p.57.

CHAPTER VI

In Conclusion.

His disappearance from the Turkish scene had something characteristically Bulwer about it. Just as his whole period of office lacked the drama attaching to Stratford's last years, and certainly the glamour of Stratford's pre-war years, so Bulwer's leaving had this same anti-climacteric quality. Enjoying a few months leave of absence, January-May 1865, in Paris, Cairo, the Lebanon, and then again in Egypt, he still continued to mix business with pleasure and convalescence. He criticised the last phase in the Suez canal negotiations,¹ and sent in reports on the pernicious effects of the combination of French economic penetration, the capitulatory regime, and a weak ruler. He seems to have been temperamentally incapable of 'sitting back' while the chargé d'affaires, Stuart, carried on what was merely routine business. Russell's chief concern was that the dividends on the guaranteed loan of 1855, and on the loan of 1862, for which he felt some responsibility, should be paid. He had decided that Britain should not be involved in the scheme for the conversion of the public debt.²

From May until September, back at Constantinople, the only task of importance Bulwer had to perform was to try with Moustier to persuade the other representatives to agree on the expediency of

¹ Bulwer-Russell, 11 and 24 April, and 24 March 1865, PRO.30/22 93.

² Russell-Bulwer, 8 June '65, FO.78/1853. Bulwer was 'utterly to abstain' from giving any sort of advice. He was simply to remind the Porte of its liabilities.

inviting Couza to Constantinople, in the hope of averting another constitutional crisis in the United Principalities. He failed in this.

Yet the quietness of the exit and the undramatic nature of the performance in these years should not lead us to belittle Bulwer's achievement. We have already debated his character, which, owing to the slight nature of the evidence at our disposal, remains still enshrouded in mystery, though certainly not in the romantic haze which traditionally surrounded it. This much has become apparent, that the man who had to leave Spain in 48 hours in 1848, had, during his years in lesser capitals, in a way in the wilderness, arrived at maturity. Still short-tempered except in the important meetings of the representatives, still inclined to evade instructions and capable of moral imprecision, and still giving fleeting glimpses of bad tactical judgment, nevertheless the overall impression is that of a sound ambassador. The power for detached observation, always his strong point, remained unimpaired, witness his views on Egypt even though he knew they were unpalatable in London, and the capable manner he conceptualised British policy towards the Balkans and Turkish reform. His intellectual calibre, one feels, should have impressed his contemporaries. As this did not, it is not difficult to understand why neither his character nor performance as a diplomatist did. I think no more may be said of his character than that it was unsympathetic. He could never do anything to satisfy unscrupulous missionaries and their English

audience.¹ And he must be blamed for this. The policy he had to follow was not an inspiring one, likely to kindle a flame within the breasts of Victorian gentlemen, at once generous and hypocritical; nor was it a spirited policy. Even so, an essential quality Bulwer obviously lacked, the ability to make people feel they had received something, when, in fact, they had received nothing. Then, aside from the image which he projected, he seems to have been too human in a little way, and indiscreet in his private life. In the heyday of Victorian England, to receive applause, it was necessary to be at least respectable, and, if possible, largely human like Stratford de Redcliffe, or, like Gordon, and Kitchener, and Lawrence later, even godlike. His contemporaries could hardly have said to him what Theocritus said to Eumenes:

'Where you have come is not a little way;
This much you have done is a great glory'. 2

But Bulwer's accomplishment has to be seen like Eumenes' one idyll.

It was thorough and workmanlike. The skill he displayed in the

¹. Bulwer had written to A'ali on the matter of closing certain inns near the Turkish bazaars where Protestant Missionaries had been preaching against Islam, and exhibiting Turkish converts. The result was that though the hawking of bibles could go on, doors of missionary establishments had to be kept shut, - all as before. Bulwer wrote to Russell of missionary complaints. Bulwer-Russell, 20 Oct. '64, PRO. 30/22 93: 'What do these gentlemen want that is not allowed except preaching publicly against Mahomet?... They talk of Stratford; they never attempted in his time what they have done recently... It was easy to get privileges up to a certain point; beyond that it may be impossible to extend them: and even unwise to do so were it possible. As to the nonsense of my having done nothing about the bible shop - there is my note to A'ali and his to me - why listen to such stories. The Hornbys are at the bottom of all this'. Bulwer-Russell, 24 Sept. '64, *ibid*, admitted he must conciliate the missionaries, but added: 'The misfortune is that these Missionaries are not very scrupulous as to their assertions, or they are most grossly imposed upon by those who report to them'.

². C.P. Cavafy, 'The First Step', trans. John Mavrogordato.

two arms crises, especially the first, was of an high order;¹ the patient manner with which he countered the ridiculous attitudinising of Moustier in the committees on the Servian issues,² indicated not only unusual powers of endurance but also good sense; while, with regard to Moldo-Wallachia, his contribution of knowledge, based on experience, and his sympathetic attitude towards Couza's difficulties, proved an invaluable aid to the diplomacy of Malmesbury and Russell. He had honestly opposed the official line on the Suez canal, having in mind the serious eclipse of British influence in Egypt. Sooner or later British policy would have had to adjust itself to the fact of the canal. It was to Bulwer's credit that the adjustment happened earlier than it would have done unless he had so strongly urged a compromise.

As for the strength of British influence at the Porte when Bulwer left, scarcely more can be said than that the days were gone when personality could succeed should the policy be lacking in attraction. However, Bulwer had tactfully refrained from worrying the Turkish ministers on the score of reforms, ^{moreover, he had even made known to the} and, ^{3 like his private opinions} on the missionaries,⁴ and on Hornby, whose support of the capitulatory rights of British citizens was ruthless. Further, the Turks had been fortunate in having a representative who was such a perfect foil to the

¹. See above Chapter IX, p. 158, and Part III, p. 222.

². See above Chapter IX, Part III, p. 213.

³. Temperley, 'British Policy towards Parliamentary Rule and Constitutionalism in Turkey (1830-1914)', p. 161: 'Bulwer from the first made it clear to the Sultan that he would not embarrass him by pressing for more religious concessions'.

⁴. Bulwer-Musurus (Turkish ambassador in London) 13 Oct. '64, T/52, stating he could not tell Russell that, although permitted in practice, the hawking of bibles must remain officially forbidden. 'However, it is not', he wrote, 'an important question... If you take away the privilege the comparison between Stratford and me will be too obvious, and I cannot expose myself to the public wrath which will fall on Turkey and change our policy'.

self-opinionated Moustier. In the Servian crisis, and during the prolonged Suez canal negotiations, Bulwer never lost sight both of Turkish interests and limitations. There is no reason to suppose that Bulwer's influence was any less than Moustier's, though exactly how much influence either of them had at a time when the reactionary tide was in full flood in Turkey, it is impossible to state with confidence. The state of international relations was as fluid as it had been in 1858. So, judging from the manner in which the ambassador had adapted himself in the previous seven years, I feel there was some unwisdom in the withdrawal of such an experienced man. He would have been a good agent to have had at Constantinople in the ensuing years. If only on the strength of these considerations, I suspect that just as his appointment to Madrid in 1843 was unjustified by his qualities, so his dismissal in 1865 was premature, and only to be accounted for by his moderate virtue.

APPENDIX A

Bulwer had a running quarrel with Sir Edmund Hornby. His relationship with the occasional chargé d'affaires, Erskine, was not an amicable one, while his quarrel with Secretary Lumley resulted in a forced leave in London for the latter.

Sir Edmund Hornby, Judge of the Supreme Consular Court in the Levant, was given to exalting his own importance, had nothing but contempt for diplomatists, thought Lord Stratford was not a diplomatist but an honest and straightforward man, and consequently in his dotage, writing his autobiography, so-called, made a serious attempt to ridicule Sir Henry Bulwer. The cause of their mutual antagonism was clearly a natural antipathy. It was exacerbated by differences of opinion over the application of the Capitulations and the various laws that had been gathered under that omnibus term. This led to a row over spheres of influence in which Bulwer, with the support of the English Community, rejected Hornby's attempt to implement his literal inspirationist approach to law.¹

Unfortunately for Bulwer, Hammond was Hornby's protector. One may perhaps detect a tension between the much respected under-secretary and the ambassador in two letters, one to Hammond,² and one to Layard Parliamentary Secretary, in which Bulwer complained of Hammond:

¹. Bulwer-Hornby, 12 August '59 T/16. For the attitude of the community see J. McCoan-Bulwer 4 June '60, T/35. McCoan was the editor of the 'Levant Herald' whose grant from the FO. was stopped 'for no fault under Heaven but that I have given temperate voice to the universal public feeling about Sir E. Hornby and his Court - a species of "protection" of abuse which will, to say the least, sound indifferently before Mr S. Fitzgerald's Committee'. McCoan-Bulwer, 5 Jan '63, T/66. Hornby-Bulwer 15 March '62, T/66, explained his own attitude to trial by Jury. *By an order in Council, June 1863, Trial by Jury was conceded.*

². 27 Nov. '62, T/64.

'In regard to our policy here and the ignorant attacks recently made upon it, there is no disguising, and it would be well that Lord Russell and Lord Palmerston will understand this, that it all or nearly all proceeds from the Consular Court, and with some experience I tell you honestly it will be impossible to maintain the one and the other, i.e. our policy and the Courts. It is not only on account of the language and views of the Court itself, but also on account of the various persons sufficient to form an English opinion in an Eastern Town that it gathers round it. Clients, lawyers, all interested or ignorant, lounging, talking, catching travellers at the hotel tables, etc. ...The institution (the separate legal establishment) is alike foolish and pernicious, and tho' Hammond's mind on the subject "squats on a hole", I am quite confident if he knew the country practically and looked at the greater objects we have connected with it he would share my opinions'. 1

All Therapia evidently knew about the differences between the Judge and the Ambassador.²

This quarrel Bulwer extended to Gladstone who apparently had misgivings about British policy towards Servia and had defended Bulwer badly in a recent debate. The 'omission' made Bulwer feel insecure in his office.³ He wrote a bitter letter to Gladstone, explaining: 'Every man is beset by calumnies here, my predecessor, if not more, as much as myself!'⁴

The quarrel with Erskine had its origins in Erskine's unthinking occupation not only of the rooms offered but also of Bulwer's rooms as well during his chief's absence in the previous summer. Twelve months later, Bulwer raged to Layard:

'Of all the disagreeable, cold-blooded fellows, critical par excellence, Erskine is the worst. It is impossible to animate him into good fellowship and he seems lying in ambush for a quarrel'. 5

1. 11 June '63, T/70

2. A'ali Pasha - Bulwer, 19 Oct. '64, T/79

3. Bulwer-Russell, 25 June '63, T/70

4. Bulwer-Gladstone, 25 June 1863, T/70

5. 9 July '63, T/70

Further evidence of this tentative paranoia one finds in Bulwer's highly excited reaction to Secretary Lumley's misguided intimacy with Lavalette, chargé d'affaires of the French Embassy, and with Novikoff, the Conseiller of the Russian Legation. Lumley, for no solid reason, considered himself slighted, and poured out his heart to the French and Russian agents, in spite of Bulwer's previous efforts to establish a satisfactory working relationship with Lumley.¹ Bulwer, however, expanded on the theme of disloyalty to such a degree that he clearly envisaged the whole of the capital conspiring against him. He protested:

'I cannot swear to the fact but I believe Mr Lumley has been in correspondence, and this on public matters, with Lord Stratford, and if I am not mistaken that letter Lord Stratford read in the Lords of the necessity of Union between France and England was from Mr Lumley, and the one from Smyrna from our Consul Blunt... Moreover, a letter against myself and in absurd eulogy of Lord Stratford appeared in the Morning Post. I discovered the author to be a man who was sent away from the Ottoman Bank at Beyrout, and has been since employed by the proprietors of a new Bank at the head of which is a M. Revelacki-famous in our annals as the secret agent of my predecessor. Now, my dear Lord John, put all these intrigues together; add those of the palace, got up, I have every reason to think, by the Seraskier and others interested in destroying my influence, and I think you will see my only chance was to act with resolution; and at the same time that I crushed the plot with² Sultan maintain my authority in my own Embassy, ...'

Uneasy lay the head that wore De Redcliffe's crown.³ Though Bulwer, in spite of these suspicions conceded that 'these are my impressions - they may be wrong', he nevertheless must have given his government a very poor impression of his state of mind which saw little phantoms in every corner and transmogrified them into furious harpies.

1. Bulwer-Layard, 28 Aug. '60, T/93

2. Bulwer-Russell, 1 Sept. '60, T/93

3. His preoccupation with Stratford was quite obsessive. On the occasion of the latter's complimentary visit to the Sultan, Bulwer too easily lost all sense of proportion. Temperley states with some warmth, (The Last Phase of Stratford de Redcliffe, 1855-58', E.H.R. Vol. 47, no. 186, April 1932), that Bulwer's comment on the mission of his hero 'is conceived in the worst taste and is dubious in its assertion'.

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