

MEMOIRS
OF
AN EX-MINISTER.

AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY.

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MEMOIRS OF AN EX-MINISTER.

D I A R Y.

1859.

January 1st.—Yesterday we danced at Windsor, and when the clock struck twelve all the Royalties embraced. I had the honour of dancing a country dance with Her Majesty.

January 2nd.—Returned to Heron Court.

Lord M. to Lord Cowley.

Heron Court: January 7, 1859.

My dear Cowley,—I will send you a very important paper in a few days (the Queen must approve of my reply first), which I have got from Bloomfield, asking me on the part of the Prussian Government what we mean to do if Austria and France go to war. I have answered, neutrality at all events, and as long as possible. We are ready, if Austria and France choose to join, to improve the Legations, to give our moral support, and even to consider a reconstruction of the *Central* territory if we see hopes of improving the condition of the people without weakening the spiritual authority of the Pope; but we will not consent beyond this to any alterations in the territorial arrangements of 1815, which have ensured the longest peace on record.

Lord M. to Lord Cowley.

Foreign Office: January 11, 1859.

My dear Cowley,—You will see that we have taken a line, and I leave you to carry it out with your usual straightforward exactness. If the Emperor cares for the public opinion of this country, he must be made to understand that it will be against the aggressor, whoever he may be, who is the first cause of a European war. That it will cost him his life or his crown I have not the least doubt. Eventually, as it spreads, Germany is sure to be found united against the Latin nations, therefore it is as a friend I wish to warn him before he decides at his age and in his position on such a *coup de dés*. Persigny went back yesterday to intrigue against Walewski and Her Majesty's present Government. I conclude the Buol escapade is over. Pélistier, as usual, approved of my conduct, and is disgusted at being kept in the dark as to everything that is going on at Paris. The Russians are trying to get ports in Spain, Sicily, and Egypt, like Villafranca—that is, military ports. You should ask Walewski quietly how that suits France? It is very well known Russia is with her, but does she wish to have her a maritime Power in the Mediterranean? The Russians boast that we have overreached ourselves because she was blocked up at both ends before for nine months, and at one end all the year, while now she can keep a fleet all the year round in the Mediterranean. When the Emperor pretended to Clarendon that he did not know where Villafranca was, it was clearly a *comédie*. Of course you will see the Emperor himself, and give all the solemnity you can to the advice, leaving all the consequences and calamities of a European war on his head if he begins, or *allows Sardinia to begin*.

January 12th.—The King of Sardinia has made a speech which can only mean war. Things look bad all over Europe, and it will be very difficult to avert

a general war if Louis Napoleon wants one. Great panic in Paris, and war very unpopular. The Emperor is getting alarmed at the feeling in France and the extraordinary fall in the funds; also at the unpopularity of the marriage arranged between Prince Napoleon and the King of Sardinia's daughter. Lord Cowley writes that he was much depressed at his ball; but I believe it is his fear of assassination, which haunts him perpetually, and has robbed him of all his former courage and coolness. It is driving him on to war, thinking that by supporting the cause of Italian nationality he will disarm those men who, in his earlier days, were his confederates in Carbonarism, and to whom he is pledged by former promises, and perhaps oaths. Cavour, knowing these facts, works upon them to induce him to take part openly with Sardinia. Austria is behaving with a folly which is perfectly inconceivable considering her position surrounded by enemies on all the frontiers. But what can one expect from Buol? I care for neither Austria nor France, but Lord Derby and I are determined to use every effort to prevent war, which would cost 100,000 lives and desolate the fairest parts of Europe. My whole mind is occupied by that object.

Lord M. to Lord Cowley.

Foreign Office: January 15, 1859.

My dear Cowley,—We are extremely obliged to you for keeping us so well *au fait* of everything at this critical moment. I hope and believe that Walewski knows he is not the man for a War Minister, and this will keep him in his pacific path. I am very glad you liked my *great* despatch, and I hope you will approve of the one I wrote Hudson, which was as strong as I thought it prudent to write at first.

Your offer to submit your views to Palmerston is a patriotic one, and, if he receives it as I do, it will be to thank you. The great duty of every honest man must be to prevent the scourge which two or three unprincipled men would inflict on mankind for their personal profit; though, as to that, I believe a war would sweep them from their high places. Laffitte was with me on Thursday. He is here to borrow 2,000,000*l.* for Cavour, and cannot get 2,000*l.*, ditto Austria. Laffitte speaks of Cavour as a desperate adventurer, who has ruined his country by his expenses. He says he is ready to go anywhere for a sum to cover his financial bungling, and that if he does not have a war he will be turned out on his Budget. He works the Orsini gang by saying, "Don't be such fools as to kill the only man who can help Italy, but frighten him into it." Hence the continual terror agitated around the Emperor, about which Bernard's publication respecting the great *canardière* at Palmerston's bootmaker's, and his rhodomontade speech, is a specimen. Tell Walewski this. It is an abominable *trame*. We are really forming no Anti-French League beyond begging the Germans to remain united and independent of external politics until obliged to take a part.

Yours truly,

MALMESBURY.

January 16th.—I fear war cannot be avoided. The Emperor of the French seems determined, though his country is strongly against it; but I hope he will be induced to pause, especially as he finds he cannot draw England into taking his part. Lord Cowley says the Emperor avoided talking to him at the last ball. The Queen and Prince are very anxious, and the latter has written to me. The Emperor threatens Belgium if she does not go with France. The Prince de Chimay is evidently for the French alliance.