

THE UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

GRADUATE SCHOOL

Report  
of  
Committee on Thesis

The undersigned, acting as a Committee of the Graduate School, have read the accompanying thesis submitted by Charlotte Raynsford Farrington for the degree of Master of Arts.

They approve it as a thesis meeting the requirements of the Graduate School of the University of Minnesota, and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

*W W Tyler*

Chairman

*Ernie Wright*

*Wallace Notestine*

.....1918

THE UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

GRADUATE SCHOOL

Report

of

Committee on Examination

This is to certify that we the undersigned, as a committee of the Graduate School, have given Charlotte Raynsford Farrington final oral examination for the degree of Master of Arts . We recommend that the degree of Master of Arts be conferred upon the candidate.

Minneapolis, Minnesota

.....191

*W. W. Dyer*

Chairman

*Ernest Wright*  
*L. B. Shippee*

PUBLIC OPINION IN ENGLAND

TOWARDS BELGIUM AND LUXEMBURG - 1866 TO 1870

A Thesis submitted to the  
Faculty of the Graduate School of the  
University of Minnesota

by

Charlotte R. Farrington

In partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of

Master of Arts

June

1920

UNIVERSITY OF  
MINNESOTA  
LIBRARY

MOM  
F298

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	page
Preface	I
Bibliography	III
<u>Chapter I</u>	
Situations Involving Belgium, Luxemburg, and England, Prior to 1866	
Early History of Belgium and Luxemburg -----	1
England's Particular Interest in Belgium -----	3
General Situation in Europe Early in 1866 -----	4
<u>Chapter II</u>	
The Question of Belgium at the Time of the Austro-Prussian War	
The Conference at Biarritz and the Schemes of Napoleon -----	6
The Attempt to Avert the War by a Conference at Paris -----	9
The Question of Compensation for France at the Close of the War -----	11
<u>Chapter III</u>	
The Question of Luxemburg, 1867	
The Reason for the "Question" -----	13
The King of Holland's Proposal for a Conference -----	15

290336

OCT 6 '28 1541.25

#### Chapter IV

##### The Years 1868 - 1869

	page
The Unimportance of the year 1868 -----	21
The Railroad Question of 1869 -----	23
The Final Settlement of the Railroad Question -----	23

#### Chapter V

##### The Crisis of 1870

English Mediation at the Beginning of the Franco-Prussian War -----	25
The Publication of the "Draft Treaty" in <u>The Times</u> -----	29
The Separate Treaties with France and Prussia regarding Belgium -----	35
Transportation of Wounded through Luxemburg -----	38
Alleged Violation of Neutrality by France -----	39

#### Chapter VI

##### General Conclusions as to

##### Public Opinion

In general, Non-intervention for England -----	40
Precedents Established -----	43

## PREFACE

It has been impossible, with the material at hand, to make a definitive and all-conclusive study of this subject, "Public Opinion in England towards Belgium and Luxemburg, 1866 to 1870". While further sources for judging public opinion would doubtless modify the conclusions presented, in general I think these conclusions would not be greatly altered. The most obvious lack in the material at hand has been the leading English daily newspapers of the time, such as The London Times (Conservative), The Morning Post (Conservative), The Standard (Tory), The Daily News (Liberal), The Morning Star (Liberal), The Globe (Liberal), The Daily Telegraph (Liberal, organ of the middle class), The Pall Mall Gazette (Independent at that time), and The Manchester Guardian (Liberal), not to mention many others. It would also have been desirable to have had access to more of the great English weeklies such as The Examiner (liberal), but the Saturday Review and the Spectator have been available to furnish the Conservative and Liberal-Conservative opinion expressed in the weeklies.

In pursuing this subject further, one should have access to The British Parliamentary Papers and other official publications relating to the subject; also, a bibliography of university and academic publications would be useful, as well as the publications of the historic and educational societies of the day; and, for the opinion of the leaders of the day, one should have available, as far as possible, the biographies, memoirs, reminiscences, and autobiographies of the men of the day. Add to this, English opinion as reflected and interpreted in the leading Belgian, French and German periodicals, and in the writings and speeches of the leading men of those countries, and one might then make a final

conclusion as to the trend of public opinion during these years. Of course, much of this material would doubtless produce merely negative results, as has much of the material already consulted, for this does not seem to have been a subject which called forth much expression of opinion as compared with the home and imperial interests of the day. The following discussion does not claim, then, in any sense, to be exhaustive, but is merely a beginning based on the use of the material at hand.

C. R. F.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

## I. Sources

- British and Foreign State Papers, Vol. 56-61  
Wm. Ridgway, London, 1877
- Hansard- Parliamentary Debates 3rd Series, Vol. 181-203  
Cornelius Buck, London

## II. General Histories

- Walpole, Spencer- A History of England from the Conclusion of  
the Great War in 1815  
New and Revised Edition, 6 vols.  
Longmans, Green & Co., London, 1890  
(Useful for general situation and history of Belgium  
prior to 1866)
- Walpole, Spencer- The History of Twenty-five Years, 4 vols.  
Longmans, Green & Co., London, 1904  
(Best and most detailed general account of whole  
question. Somewhat anti-French)
- De la Gorce, Pierre- Histoire du Second Empire  
7th Edition, 7 Vols.  
Plon-Mourrit et Cie, Paris, 1905  
(Very clear and full. Gives the French point of  
view on the question)
- Boulger, Demetrius C. - The History of Belgium, 1815-1865  
Sir Isaac Pitman & Sons, London, 1913  
(Too general to be of special value for this subject)
- Sanger, C. P. and Norton, H.T.J.- England's Guarantee to Belgium  
and Luxemburg  
George Allen and Unwin, Ltd., London, 1915  
(Written with the purpose of explaining the situation of  
1914. Emphasizes especially the legal obligations of  
the guarantees and gives a clear interpretation of the  
meaning of the treaties of guarantee.)
- Fuehr, Alexander- The Neutrality of Belgium  
Funk and Wagnalls Co., N.Y., 1915  
(This is rather anti-English but gives a clear general  
history of the relations between England and Belgium)



- Rothan, G. - L'Affaire du Luxembourg  
Calmann Levy, Paris, 1882  
(This is the most detailed account of the Luxembourg question of 1867. Very clear)
- Gribble, Francis - In Luxemburg in War Time  
Headley Bros., London, 1916  
(Too recent, not very useful for this period)
- Neilson, Francis - How Diplomats Make War 2nd Edition  
B. W. Huebsch, N. Y., 1916  
(Too general to be of great value for this subject)
- The Annual Register - New Series, Vols. 108-112  
London, 1866-1871  
(This was not particularly useful as it was very general and quoted mostly from the speeches made by leaders in Parliament, material originally found in Hansard. No newspaper comment)
- Encyclopedia Britannica - 11th Edition, Vol. XIX  
Cambridge, England, 1911  
(Used for list of English Newspapers)

### III. Memoirs, Biographies, etc.

- Benedetti, Le Comte - Ma Mission en Prusse  
2d Edition, Paris, 1871  
(Valuable chiefly in that it gives Benedetti's own account of his intercourse with Bismarck)
- Buckle, George Earl - The Life of Benjamin Disraeli, Earl of Beaconsfield 4 Vols.  
Macmillan Co., N. Y., 1916  
(This is of value for the many letters it contains, not only letters written by Disraeli but letters written to him by others. Unfortunately it is complete only to the year 1868)
- Cook, Sir Edward - Delane of The Times  
Constable & Co., London, 1916  
(This is of especial value in view of the fact that The Times itself is not available here for the years 1866-1870. It gives many of Delane's opinions on the questions of the day, opinions which we may assume were often voiced in The Times).

- Basent, Arthur I. - John Thadeus Delane, Editor of The Times  
2 Vols. N. Y., 1908  
(This, too, is valuable as the above, because for so many years Delane practically was The Times. This is even more detailed than Sir Edward Cook's biography and for that reason more valuable for our purpose).
- Elliot, Hon. Arthur D. - Life of George J. Goschen  
2d Edition 2 Vols.  
London, 1911  
(Has little bearing on this particular subject. Valuable only in giving general English policy of the period)
- Fitzmaurice, Lord Edmond - The Life of Granville George Leveson Gower, Second Earl Granville, 1815-1891  
2nd Edition 2 Vols.  
Longmans, Green & Co., London, 1905  
(This, also, is useful for the letters of the leading men of the day which it contains. Especially helpful on the Luxemburg question).
- Lee, Sidney - Queen Victoria, A Biography  
New and Revised Edition  
Smith, Elder & Co., London, 1904  
(Personal and rather brief on general policy)
- Loftus, Lord Augustus - The Diplomatic Reminiscences of Lord Augustus Loftus, 1862-1879  
2d Series, 2 Vols.  
Cassell & Co., London, 1894  
(Especially good for the German interpretation of the question)
- Lucy, Henry W. - Memories of Eight Parliaments  
Heinemann, London, 1908  
(No special bearing on this subject)
- Malmesbury, Earl of - Memoirs of an Ex-Minister  
3d Edition, 2 Vols.  
Longmans, Green & Co., London, 1884  
(Written as a diary with inserts of many interesting letters. Rather personal. Foreign questions discussed only in a very general way)
- Matter, Paul - Bismarck et son temps, 1862-1870 3 Vols.  
Ancienne Librairie Germer Bailliere et Cie, Paris, 1906  
(This gives very clearly and in detail Bismarck's interpretation of "Biarritz".)

- Maxwell, Sir Herbert - The Life and Letters of George William Frederick, 4th Earl of Clarendon  
2 Vols.  
Edward Arnold, London, 1913  
(Useful, very, for Clarendon's policy while Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. Superficial on Luxemburg)
- Morley, John - The Life of Richard Cobden,  
2 Vols.  
Chapman and Hall, London, 1881  
(Mainly concerned with domestic affairs)
- Morley, John - The Life of William E. Gladstone  
3 Vols.  
The Macmillan Co., N. Y., 1903  
(This is very clear and detailed in giving Gladstone's policy. Morley agreed with Gladstone on most points so it is a somewhat biased view)
- Morley, John - Recollections- John, Viscount Morley  
The Macmillan Co., N. Y., 1917  
(This is interesting in showing Morley's very Liberal viewpoint but is more concerned with literary matters than with political matters)
- Newton, Lord - Lord Lyons, A Record of British Diplomacy  
2 Vols.  
Edward Arnold, 1913  
(This gives a good deal of information on the Belgian Railroad Question, a question which seems to have been little known and discussed by the English)
- Trevelyan, George M. - The Life of John Bright  
Constable & Co., London, 1913  
(This contains practically nothing on this subject but it is interesting in that it gives a very radical viewpoint on England's foreign policy)
- Wemyss, Mrs. Rosslyn - Memoirs and Letters of Sir Robert Morier,  
1826-1876  
2 Vols.  
The Macmillan Co., N. Y., 1917  
(Morier was the ambassador at Vienna at the time of the Franco-Prussian War and his letters are interesting in that they voice much of the criticism of the Government's policy of that time)

## IV. Periodicals

- Blackwood's Magazine (Conservative), Vols. 99-108, Edinburgh, 1866-1870
- The British Quarterly Review (Conservative), Vols. 43-52, London, 1866-1870
- The Contemporary Review (Liberal), Vols. 1-15, London, 1866-1870
- The Edinburgh Review (Moderately Liberal, rather Independent)  
Vols. 123-131, N.Y., 1866-1870
- The Fortnightly Review (Liberal), Vols. 3-14, London, 1866-1870
- Freser's Magazine (Mainly literary), Vols. 73-82, London, 1866-1870
- Littell's Living Age Vols. 88-106, Boston, 1866-1870
- The London Quarterly Review (Conservative), Vols. 25-35, London, 1865-1870
- The London Quarterly Review (Conservative), Vols. 119-128, London, 1866-1870
- Macmillan's Magazine (Mainly literary, no political bias),  
Vols. 13-22, London, 1866-1870
- The North British Review (Liberal), Vols. 44-51, Edinburgh, 1866-1869
- The Saturday Review (Ultra-Conservative), Vols. 21-30, London, 1866-1870
- The Spectator (Moderately Conservative), Vols. 39-43 (42 missing)  
London, 1866-1870
- The Westminster Review (Liberal), American Edition, Vols. 95-94,  
N. Y., 1866-1870

## V. Special Articles and Pamphlets

Anderson, F.M. and Hershey, A.S. - Handbook for the Diplomatic  
History of Europe, Asia, and  
Africa, 1870-1914

Government Printing Office, Washington, 1918  
(Valuable for bibliography and account of violation  
of the neutrality of Luxemburg complained of by  
Bismarck)

Buxton, Charles - The Ideas of the Day  
North British Review, Vol. 44

Hackett, Hon, Frank W. - The Sources of Public Opinion  
The Independent, Vol. 52, 1900

Harrison, Frederic- Bismarckism  
The Fortnightly Review, Vol. XIV, p. 633

Ollivier, Emile- L'Entrevue de Biarritz  
Revue des Deux Mondes, Vol. 171, 1902

Peregrinus- Eavesdropping at Biarritz  
Blackwood's Magazine, Vol. 101, 1867

## CHAPTER I

## SITUATIONS INVOLVING BELGIUM,

## LUXEMBURG AND ENGLAND

## PRIOR TO 1866.

To understand the relations between England and the two small territories of Belgium and Luxemburg during the years from 1866 to 1870, it is necessary to sketch very briefly the history of these two, at least from the time of the Congress of Vienna in 1815. During the seventeenth century Belgium had been under the rule of the King of Spain; but during most of the eighteenth century it had been under the rule of the Emperor of Austria. During the French Revolution in 1792<sup>1</sup> this territory was annexed to France so that, at the time of the Congress of Vienna in 1815 it was necessary to make some settlement with regard to Belgium and Luxemburg. At the Congress of Vienna, Austria, Russia, Prussia and Great Britain agreed that Belgium should be united to Holland under the rule of William of Nassau-Dietz. This would be a compensation to Holland for the loss of some of her colonies to England during the Napoleonic Wars. Also, by this same treaty, the Grand Duchy of Luxemburg was given to the King of Holland in exchange for the hereditary states he held in Germany as Grand Duke of Nassau; and Luxemburg<sup>2</sup> became, at the same time, a part of the German Confederation. Before the Napoleonic era, the Duchy of Luxemburg had, at various times, been in the hands of the French, Spanish, and Austrians, and had been usually ruled as a dependency of Belgium, but in 1815 it was divided, the territory on the right bank of the

1. C.F. Sanger and H.S.J. Norton-England's Guarantee to Belgium and Luxemburg, p.4

2. State Papers, Vol. XIX, p. 784

Moselle being given to Prussia, and some territory on the French frontier being given to France, the remainder being formed into the Grand Duchy of Luxemburg with the King of Holland as the Grand Duke. But Luxemburg was a member of the German Confederation and its capital was a federal fortress with a Prussian garrison, whereas Holland was an independent sovereign state. The two were united only in a personal union.<sup>1</sup> "Geographically, however, Luxemburg had no connection with Holland. Race, language, and interest made its inhabitants gravitate towards Belgium".<sup>2</sup>

The union of Belgium with Holland was most unpopular for many reasons. Belgium is essentially an agricultural and manufacturing country, while Holland is essentially a seafaring and commercial country. Belgium is largely Roman Catholic, Holland Calvinistic; Belgium is mostly French in language and civilization,<sup>3</sup> Holland Teutonic in language and civilization. Of course an attempt to unite two peoples so different in character and without any special wish for that union on their part would, necessarily, result in failure. Belgian grievances against Holland began to accumulate. The Belgians thought the taxes on flour and meat unfair, the Concordat with the Pope was unsuccessful, they resented the recognition of Dutch as the official language, and general discontent grew. The King was obstinate and tactless, and, in 1830, the inhabitants of Brussels rose in revolt. The King of Holland asked the aid of the Powers, and on November 4, 1830, a Conference of Austria, Prussia, Russia, France and Great Britain was called in London.

The scheme of settlement drawn up by the Powers at this Conference was at first not acceptable to the Belgians, then not acceptable to the King of Holland,

1. State Papers, Vol. XIX, p. 784

2. Spencer Walpole- History of England, Vol. IX, p. 234

3. Sanger and Norton- England's Guarantee to Belgium and Luxemburg, p. 7



and it was not until April 19, 1839, that the so-called Quintuple Treaty was finally signed.<sup>1</sup> By this treaty Belgium became an independent neutral state guaranteed by the five Powers. A large part of the Duchy of Luxemburg was added to Belgium as Luxembourg Belge, and the remainder of the Duchy continued as the sovereign Duchy of Luxemburg under the King of Holland and still remained a part of the German Confederation.<sup>2</sup> Since 1839 there has been no real change in the international position of Belgium, but in 1866-7 the position of Luxemburg was changed as we shall see.

Now why is it that England has been, and is, so particularly interested in Belgium and more indirectly in Luxemburg? If we first attribute to England an altruistic policy we may answer that question by saying that England is interested in small and oppressed nationalities. Perhaps this is so. We like to think it is, at any rate, even if we can find no evidence of England consulting the wishes of this Belgium in arranging its future. At any rate, we do know that England has always felt that this land just across the English Channel is very vital to England, and she has evidenced this from the earliest days of her history when it was thought wise that England should have a "bridgehead" on the Continent. In fact, England did maintain a "bridgehead" until 1558 when she lost Calais. England has always felt that for her peace and safety this strip of land must not be allowed to fall into the hands of a strong power which might use it as a base from which to attack England. Lord Castlereagh expressed the sentiment of England when he wrote Lord Aberdeen in November 1813: "To leave Antwerp in the hands of the French would impose on us the necessity of a perpetual state of war".<sup>3</sup> Blackwoods says: "There was a time when the possession of

1. Alexander Fuehr- The Neutrality of Belgium, Chapter II
2. Treaties relative to the Netherlands and Belgium- Appendix, Alexander Fuehr- The Neutrality of Belgium
3. Quoted from Alexander Fuehr- The Neutrality of Belgium



the Scheldt by France was deemed the greatest menace that could be declared against Great Britain. I believe sailors still hold it that the Scheldt increases the peril of invasion fourfold, and that, to guard the Channel against fleets issuing simultaneously from Flushing and from Cherbourg would require such a force as we never have yet possessed". At the beginning of the Franco-German War Mr. Disraeli said in the House of Commons: "It is of the highest importance to this country that the whole coast from Ostend to the North Sea should be in the possession of free and flourishing communities from whose ambition the liberty and independence of England nor of any other country can be menaced". The words of these two eminent statesmen show that, while England does not covet actual possession of Belgium for herself she does intend to shape her fate so that her safety will not be endangered, regardless of what Belgium herself may wish. Of course one glance at the map is enough to convince anyone of the basis for England's interest.

Such was the general situation of Belgium, Luxemburg and England in 1866. When the Queen opened her parliament that year, February 6, she said: "My relations with foreign powers are friendly and satisfactory, and I see no cause to fear any disturbance of the general peace".

Her uncle, King Leopold I of the Belgians, had died December 10, 1865, and in her speech at the opening of Parliament the Queen referred to this incident in the following terms: "The death of my beloved uncle, the King of the Belgians, has affected me with profound grief. I feel great confidence, however, that the wisdom which he evinced during his reign will animate his successor, and preserve for Belgium her independence and prosperity". In response to this the Earl of Morley said that a neighboring and friendly nation had been de-

1. Blackwoods, Vol. 99, p. 132  
 2. Hansard's Parliamentary Debates, 3rd ser. 203, p. 1703  
 3. State Papers, Vol. 56, p. 1  
 4. Ibid, Vol. 56, p. 1

1

prived of a wise and sagacious ruler. We have other evidences of confidence in the continued independence of Belgium in the ceremonies of the funeral of Leopold I in Brussels, where there was shown every evidence of loyalty to the king and a lack of any desire on the part of the people to become part of France. Leopold II's speech showed that he is bound to Belgian nationality and to the Belgian constitution, and gave every assurance of continued independence for Belgium.<sup>2</sup> A further evidence of mutual friendliness between Belgium and England was displayed at the time of the Belgian celebration of their independence. The visit of a group of English volunteers was in itself an evidence of the sympathy between the two nations. In welcoming these volunteers the Belgians said their real purpose in the celebration was "to receive among us representatives of the nations which have given to Belgium numerous proofs of their sympathy".<sup>3</sup>

But, in spite of this general peace and apparent good-will, some were detecting warnings of the storm that was soon to come. The Journal des Debats has admitted that under circumstances France might deem it expedient to lay hands upon Belgium.<sup>4</sup> "Also, Deschamps, formerly Minister of Foreign Affairs in Belgium, scenting danger, has sounded a warning note, pointing out how the ominous conjuncture of Bismarck and Napoleon may imply danger to Belgium".<sup>5</sup>

- |                        |           |                     |
|------------------------|-----------|---------------------|
| 1. Hansard,            | Vol. 181, | Feb. 6, 1866, p. 37 |
| 2. Fortnightly Review, | Vol. III, | p. 507              |
| 3. Annual Register,    | Vol. 108, | p. 148              |
| 4. Fortnightly Review, | Vol. III, | p. 112              |
| 5. Ibid                | Vol. III, | p. 112              |

## CHAPTER II

THE QUESTION OF BELGIUM  
AT THE TIME OF  
THE AUSTRO-PRUSSIAN WAR

The Austro-Prussian war-storm did not break first in Belgium, however, as we know, but came to a crisis in Bohemia. Before the war really came, there had been rumors concerning Napoleon's designs on Belgium. These rumors apparently emanated from a conference between Napoleon III and Bismarck at Biarritz in October of 1865. La Gorce gives a vivid picture of the two men walking up and down carrying on their conversations, the one weak and infirm from a fatal disease, the other vigorous and in his prime, mentally and physically. As to the exact nature of those conversations the best of historians can not agree, as none but the two participants heard them and their accounts do not coincide. As M. Ollivier says in an article on the interview at Biarritz in the Revue des Deux Mondes, "Le récit que fait Sybel de ces conversations est in<sup>1</sup>exact". "Le récit de Sybel eut-il été rédigé sur un rapport de Bismarck, mes rectifications ne subsisteraient pas moins, car, nous l'avons déjà constaté et nous le constaterons souvent encore, Bismarck est un narrateur suspect. Il se souvient<sup>2</sup> mal". Of course, this is the view of a Frenchman. For our purpose, it seems unnecessary to determine whether or not Bismarck did really make any definite promises of Belgium as a reward for French neutrality. The fact remains that Napoleon III seems to have understood that Belgium would be the price paid for

1. La Gorce- Histoire du Second Empire, Vol. 4, p. 563-4  
 2. Revue des Deux Mondes, Vol. 171, p. 510  
 3. Ibid Vol. 171, p. 510

French neutrality and perhaps he was as unwilling to express his desire in open fashion as Bismarck was unwilling to accede to it in an open binding agreement. The Fortnightly Review, one of the leading Liberal organs, says that "there must have been an understanding at Biarritz"<sup>1</sup>. But it also says "the report that Bismarck and Napoleon have a secret treaty is as unfounded as that of a military convention between Austria and Russia. But it is none the less true that there is a decided rapprochement in both cases, which is illustrated by the withdrawal of the Prussian troops from the Rhine, and of the Austrian troops from Galicia and Transylvania". "There can be now but little doubt that an understanding exists between Napoleon and Bismarck in virtue of which the Emperor has agreed to make no opposition to the occupation by Prussia of the whole of North Germany, provided Bismarck will offer no obstacle to the fulfillment of the French designs on Belgium and on the Rhine"<sup>2</sup>. This understanding was shown plainly in a letter which the Emperor sent to M. Drouyn de Lluys, in which he declared that he thinks that France will not be called upon to draw the sword because she will be able to achieve her designs without fighting"<sup>3</sup>.

The question as to the attitude England must assume towards Belgium, if Napoleon's designs should be carried out, is an interesting one, for, of course, England was bound with four other Powers in the guarantee of Belgian neutrality provided in the Treaty of 1839. In regard to this the Fortnightly says: "The step of 1839 lays a heavy obligation on England. This is stronger than a defensive alliance. This country is bound by treaty, not only to commence, but to continue hostilities till the conquered country is restored. We have no choice how to act if the Belgian Government calls on us". We think that we ought never to have entered this Treaty and "that we should relieve ourselves from it as quickly as we can"<sup>4</sup>. This Liberal organ even goes so far as to say that England

1. Fortnightly Review, Vol. VI, p. 250

2. Ibid Vol. V, p. 239

3. Ibid Vol. V, p. 497-624

4. Ibid, Vol. VI, p. 752

has grown so averse to interfering in European affairs that she might think it her best policy to leave Belgium to her fate and, if she did not interfere no other country would. On the other hand, the Conservative Spectator says on July 14, 1866, that "whenever Europe goes through a process of political dissolution and new crystallization, we are quite prepared to accept the result that may satisfy the populations best, as, on the whole, that which is most welcome to English views". The Spectator, too, is critical of the policy of the Liberal ministry during the Danish question and lays the blame of England's situation in the Councils of Europe on this policy, for in its issue of May 12, 1866, it says: "If we had defended Denmark in 1864, we should have far less fear of ever being called upon to defend Belgium". The very conservative Blackwood's is indignant at England's lack of influence in the Councils of Europe; "our Radical leaders tell us \*\*\* that we have no rightful concern with the affairs of Europe. There was a period in our history \*\*\* when the prospect of French designs on Belgium would have called this country into active preparation". "There was a time when not a shot could be fired in anger on any part of the Continent of Europe without our permission". It is generally known that the English army and navy were not as strong at this time as they should have been, and perhaps this may account for the lack of a more active policy. In connection with this question of the fate of Belgium there seems to have been very little said about Belgium's point of view. Blackwood's says: "It is certainly not easy to understand the cry that Belgium desires annexation to France; but that there is a strong party who so wish, and that France has long intrigued to encourage these views, is beyond a doubt".

1. Fortnightly Review, Vol. VI, p. 752
2. The Spectator, Vol. 39, July 14, p. 766
3. Ibid Vol. 39, p. 514
4. Blackwood's Vol. 99, p. 133
5. Ibid Vol. 100, p. 406
6. Ibid Vol. 99, p. 132



Of course, it was these rumors concerning Belgium which compelled England to have an interest in the struggle between Austria and Prussia. Loftus, Ambassador at Berlin, says that just before "Bismarck on June 30 went to the seat of the war, he was visited with a French agent and told that France expected the triangle formed by the Moselle and Rhine, including the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg<sup>1</sup>". So that by the time of actual hostilities Napoleon's expectation of a reward for his neutrality was pretty definitely known.

The Queen had a real personal interest in the war, as it would divide her family in Germany. The Crown Prince was naturally identified with Prussia; but her son-in-law of Hesse, her cousin of Hanover, and her brother-in-law of Saxe-Coburg were supporters of Austria. She urged her ministers, Russell and Clarendon, to make every effort for peace, but Bismarck declined her advances.

A Conference of the Powers was proposed by Napoleon and supported by Russia, but the idea was abandoned June 9, 1866, for Austria demanded "that they should beforehand exclude from the deliberations of the Conference anything that would tend to give to any of the States invited any territorial increase or increase in power"<sup>2</sup>. According to Disraeli, speaking in the House of Commons June 5, 1866, "this, to the French Government, was equivalent to a refusal of the Conference or made it impossible, and the English Government agreed with the French Government"<sup>3</sup>. In speaking of the Conference the Conservative Spectator says: "How the British Government can have been deluded into joining in such a scheme, we are at a loss to conceive, unless, indeed, they are afraid of being taunted in Parliament with a refusal to exhaust all possibilities of peace"<sup>4</sup>.

1. Lord Augustus Loftus- Diplomatic Reminiscences, 2nd ser., Vol. I, p. 87
2. Sidney Lee- Life of Queen Victoria, p. 368
3. Hansard, Vol. 183, p. 1947
4. Ibid
5. The Spectator, Vol. 39, p. 1016

The two great parties in England seem agreed that England should assume an attitude of non-interference in the struggle itself, though they differ somewhat in their expression of this general policy. Speaking of Lord Stanley, the new Secretary of Foreign Affairs, the Spectator says: "He has very little, if any, desire to extend our national influence in Europe; how not to do anything great in European policy, may probably be his principal ambition. And there has never been a time during the life-time of the present generation when such an imperiously neutral bias as this hit so exactly the attitude of the English people in relation to Continental affairs". "For what we do all wish at the present, and are likely, as far as we can see now, to wish for some time to come, is to hold absolutely aloof from the complications of European politics, to abstain from all counsel even which savours of obligation, and resolutely to avoid every shadow of international engagement that might limit our freedom for the future. Now, of all men that one could select for this especial purpose, Lord Stanley would seem to be, as far as we can judge a priori on such a matter, the very best". "His international sympathies are cold; his preferences even are slight, and determined rather by a caustic instinct of antagonism to popular enthusiasm, than by any political emotion". Probably the most altruistic view is expressed by the Liberal Edinburgh Review, which says: "We do not intend to interfere in the internal affairs of foreign nations; we do not conceive that the interests or the dignity of England are affected by fancied consequences arising out of a modification of territorial possessions on the Continent; but if the great principle of the independence of nations were attacked, if advantage were taken of the present disordered state of affairs to establish any paramount authority by force of arms over the rights and liberties of other states, we are satisfied that the support of England would not be wanting to the cause of right

1. The Spectator, Vol. 39, p. 710

2. Ibid

3. Ibid

and justice. The first condition of the foreign policy this country desires to practise is a close and honest understanding with France,<sup>1</sup>\*\*\* We can not, with impunity, see the weak trampled on by the strong when by holding out a hand it is in our power to help them". The Conservative Saturday Review urges calmness. It says: "No result of the war is likely to affect England. This makes it easy for us to be calm and impartial. We are on the outside of these Continental disturbances".<sup>2</sup> Lord Derby in a debate on the subject of the Austro-Prussian War pointed out that the alternative to inactively witnessing the course of the present war was to interfere actively, which he believed neither party in the country was willing to do; and Earl Russell, though a Liberal, expressed his approval of this policy of non-intervention of the Government, which seems to prove<sup>3</sup> Lord Derby's point.

At the close of the Austro-Prussian War the question of compensation for Napoleon was broached. Benedetti was sent to the King of Prussia after Sadowa to arrange an armistice, and at that time he broached to Bismarck, on his own initiative, or perhaps under secret instructions from Napoleon, the subject of compensation to France. This was reported in Berlin, but Benedetti assured Lord Augustus Loftus, the English Ambassador there, that no reference had been made to Belgium.<sup>4</sup> Bismarck had replied to Benedetti that he could not see any necessity to give compensation to France, as the proposed territorial changes would not change the military power of Germany.<sup>5</sup> After the war Loftus says: "I wrote to Lord Stanley that I could not view with any dissatisfaction or fear of danger to England an increase of power to Prussia. All we could wish for was to keep

1. Edinburgh Review, Vol. 124, p. 150-151
2. Saturday Review, Vol. 21, May 26, 1866, p. 605
3. Annual Register, Vol. 108, p. 96
4. Lord Augustus Loftus- Diplomatic Reminiscences, 2nd ser., Vol. I, p. 102
5. Ibid p. 101



free from all engagements".<sup>1</sup> That the English Government really did not know exactly what Napoleon's demands had been, Lord Stanley stated in reply to a question in the House of Commons August 10, 1866. He said he did know that "communications to the effect he has spoken of have passed and are passing between the Government of Paris and the Government of Berlin. As to the precise nature of these communications, 'I am not in a position to state what they are! Still less am I able to say what the reply given by the Government of Prussia has been'".<sup>2</sup> The general Conservative opinion regarding French ambition in Belgium, as expressed by the Saturday Review, was rather unsympathetic towards the French. The Review says: "The only arguments for France are that she wants this territory and that she once had it".<sup>3</sup> English support of France in this claim is "defenseless in principle" and "irrational in policy", but probably most people will take a middle view- "we can have no real objection to France acquiring this territory except that it would be a piece of rapacity. It can not very much affect England. Our single object is to have a stable equilibrium established in Europe".<sup>4</sup>

At any rate, the fact remains that Belgian independence was not disturbed by this war and on the surface of things it appeared that "a stable equilibrium" had been again established in Europe. The situation of Belgium in Europe was expressed by her King in his speech at the opening of the Chambers in Brussels, November 13, 1866, when he said: "Au milieu des graves événements qui ont troublé une grande partie de l'Europe, la Belgique est demeurée calme, confiante et pénétrée des droits et des devoirs d'une neutralité qu'elle maintiendra dans l'avenir comme dans le passé, sincère, loyal et forte".<sup>5</sup>

1. Lord Augustus Loftus, Diplomatic Reminiscences, 2nd Ser., Vol. I, p. 99
2. Hansard, Vol. 184, Aug. 10, 1866, p. 2163
3. The Saturday Review, Vol. 22, Sept. 15, 1866, p. 322
4. Ibid, Vol. 22, Sept. 15, 1866, p. 322
5. British and Foreign State Papers, Vol. 56, p. 570

## CHAPTER III

## THE QUESTION OF LUXEMBURG 1867

The year 1867 is a significant one in the history of Luxemburg, and English public opinion was much absorbed in the question of this Duchy. The Spectator, as early as September 8, 1866, says: "We hear that within the last few days, the name of Luxemburg has turned up in diplomatic whispers on divers occasions in a manner to convey the suspicion of a possible disposition to effect by common consent its transfer to a new allegiance".<sup>1</sup> The reason for this question of Luxemburg was the fact that at the end of the Austro-Prussian War, the German Confederation had been dissolved and this had placed Luxemburg in a peculiar position.<sup>2</sup> Luxemburg had been unwilling to become a part of the new Confederation.<sup>3</sup> The people of Luxemburg were not German in sentiment, and did not like the Prussian garrison, nor did they want to be annexed to France. They really wanted to control their own affairs. Holland did not like her connection with Luxemburg since it had been a source of embarrassment to her.<sup>4</sup> Napoleon III had been looking for a reward for his neutrality in the Austro-Prussian War, and really negotiations had begun back in the summer of 1866, as noted above.<sup>5</sup> The question with Holland was whether Prussia would be angry if Luxemburg were given to Napoleon. In the secret treaty with Napoleon proposed by Holland, France was to undertake to obtain the consent of Prussia, and by that treaty the possession of Limburg was to be guaranteed Holland with protection against Prussia, and, in return, France was to purchase Luxemburg at the price of 20£ per inhabitant. M. Moustier had previously proposed a plebiscite for Luxemburg to determine whether

1. The Spectator, Vol. 39, p. 992  
 2. State Papers, Vol. 57, p. 1026  
 3. La Gorce- Histoire du Second Empire, Vol. 4, p. 158  
 4. Ibid

5. See Emperor's letter of Aug. 26, 1866, to M. Rouher- Benedetti- Mission en Prusse, p. 196

1  
 it would join France. By March 28, 1867, the King of Holland had consented to the cession and was about to sign, but the French Government had not yet obtained Bismarck's consent. Bismarck said that the Prussian Government had given no opinion, and would not give one until it had consulted the Powers of the Treaty of 1839.<sup>2</sup> The King of Holland also thought that it was not enough for Luxemburg alone to consent to the transfer, and that the other powers must also consent.<sup>3</sup> Napoleon had said in making the negotiations that he was willing to see Luxemburg annexed to Belgium if some small strip of Belgian territory were assigned to him. But Prussia raised protests, Belgium refused to entertain the suggestion,<sup>4</sup> and on April 5th the King of Holland informed the Powers that he had withdrawn from the project.

There were various suggestions for solutions of the problem. The Kolnische Zeitung, April 25, 1867, says that "Luxemburg is not German and is not French, and the past four centuries the community of religious ideas, the will of the people\*\*\* would recommend the reunion of the country with the system of the Belgian State".<sup>5</sup> Count Benst proposed that the King of Holland should retain Luxemburg, the fortress be neutralized, and the Prussian garrison withdrawn; or that Luxemburg should be united to Belgium, the garrison withdrawn; and that in exchange the district of Philippeville and Marienburg should be ceded to France.<sup>6</sup> It was even suggested by the English Spectator that "the King-Duke should have offered the Duchy to Germany. This would have caused no difficulty".<sup>7</sup>

As to the concern the question was raising in England, Lord Stanley wrote Lord Malmesbury, April 23; "We are asked to use our good offices and are ad-

1. La Gorce- L'Histoire du Second Empire, p. 159, Vol. 4
2. Sanger and Norton- England's Guarantee of Belgium and Luxemburg, p. 13
3. La Gorce- L'Histoire du Second Empire, p. 160
4. Sidney Lee- Life of Queen Victoria, p. 382
5. Francis Gribble- In Luxemburg in War Time, Appendix E
6. Sanger and Norton- England's Guarantee of Belgium and Luxemburg, p. 13-14
7. The Spectator, April 6, 1867, quoted from Littell's Living Age, Vol. 93, p. 315

vising Prussia to give way, as the concession is slight, the justice of the claim unquestionable, and no other course holds out a hope of preserving peace.

I am not sanguine of averting a war"<sup>1</sup>. Sir Robert Peel voiced the Conservative view when he said in Parliament, April 5, 1867: "Luxemburg is a question of great importance. This morning's papers say that negotiations for a transfer are at an end. I do not wish to see this country indiscreetly meddling upon every occasion in European affairs; but sometimes I think that it is scarcely wise that we should be isolating ourselves to the degree which I fear is becoming so conspicuous in regard to our relations with foreign powers. Nothing can be worse, and nothing more injurious, than that this system of our standing a-<sup>2</sup> part from other European nations should be carried out to too great an extent". Peel says that England needs peace in Europe for commercial security, and wants France fairly strong to offset a fear of Prussia. Lord Stanley, in reply to this, said: "I think we were right in declining to involve ourselves further in<sup>3</sup> a transaction which might be and still may be productive of serious consequences. He informed the House that he had told the parties concerned in Luxemburg that if war should come, England would be strictly and impartially neutral. The Earl of Derby presented the Government's point of view in the House of Lords on May 2, when he said that the King of Holland had proposed a Conference to consider the present position of the Duchy, and that the Government felt that hostilities<sup>4</sup> could be averted".

On April 23, Gortchakoff intervened with a proposal that there should be an European Conference on the basis of the evacuation of the fortress and the neutralization of the Grand Duchy with a guarantee such as was given to Belgium

1. Malmesbury- Memoirs of an Ex-Minister, Vol. II, p. 369

2. Hansard- Parliamentary Debates, Vol. 186, Apr. 5, 1867, p. 1249-1250

3. Ibid, p. 1250-1253

4. Ibid, Vol. 186, May 2, 1867, p. 1870

<sup>1</sup>  
 in 1839. On April 26, Bismarck said that Prussia was willing to enter a Conference and, while she was unwilling to accede to any terms beforehand, it was generally understood that the garrison would be withdrawn. England refused to take part in the Conference under these conditions, and it was not until Bismarck telegraphed his consent to evacuate the fortress that Lord Stanley finally, on April 28, agreed to enter the Conference. The Queen from the first had urged a peaceful settlement-(in fact, Lord Augustus Loftus in his Diplomatic Reminiscences says that the King of Belgium had added his plea to others that the Queen pursue this policy) and her efforts were finally rewarded by the London Conference which met for the first time <sup>2</sup> May 7, 1867. The Queen during the preliminary negotiations had appealed to Disraeli for a more active policy than Derby and Stanley seemed to be pursuing. She did not approve of England's detached policy and seemed to foresee the coming Franco-Prussian War and that it might be <sup>3</sup> prevented by a firm stand on England's part.

There was difficulty, during the Conference, in coming to an agreement regarding the neutrality of Luxemburg. Lord Stanley was unwilling to involve England in a definite guarantee of neutrality, and made two proposals of treaties to the Conference, which did not involve a definite guarantee. Prussia, however, was insistent on this point and proposed an amendment which would secure a collective guarantee for the neutrality of Luxemburg. The Queen could not understand Stanley's hesitation over this guarantee. Her arguments and those of <sup>4</sup> Disraeli prevailed, and finally Lord Stanley accepted this. Article II of the Treaty as ratified May 31, 1867, read as follows: "The Grand Duchy of Luxemburg within the territorial limits settled by the Act annexed to the treaty of April 19, 1839,

1. Sanger and Norton- England's Guarantee of Belgium and Luxemburg, p. 15-16

2. Ibid p. 18

3. George E. Buckle- The Life of Benjamin Disraeli, Vol. IV, p. 472

4. Ibid Vol. IV, p. 471



under the guarantee of the courts of France, Austria, Great Britain, Prussia and Russia, shall constitute henceforward a state perpetually neutral. It shall be obliged to observe this same neutrality towards all the other states. The high contracting parties undertake to respect the principle of neutrality stipulated by the present article. This last is and remains, placed under the collective guarantee of the signatory powers of the present Treaty, with the exception of Belgium which is itself a neutral state<sup>1</sup>. The Treaty in general recognized the independence and neutrality of Luxemburg under the King of Holland,<sup>2</sup> and the fortress was to be turned into an open village. This averted the war, and Bismarck seemed to feel satisfied that he had secured the guarantee he wanted. In his declaration to the North German Diet in the sitting of September 27, 1867, he said: "In exchange for the fortress of Luxemburg, we have obtained a compensation which consists in the neutralization of the country, and a guarantee which will be observed.\*\*\* I am convinced of that in spite of all quibbles, \*\*\*on the day of the supreme settlement of accounts. From the military point of view this guarantee completely compensates us for the renunciation of our right of occupation"<sup>3</sup>.

Of course, immediately the question of the reasons for this treaty and its interpretation came up in both Houses of Parliament. Lord Derby in a speech in the House of Lords, July 4, 1867, compared it to the Belgian Treaty of 1839. He said the Belgian guarantee was joint and several; the Luxemburg guarantee was collective; the Belgian guarantee imposed an obligation to maintain the status quo; the Luxemburg guarantee did not if one of the guarantors infringed the

1. Treaty 1867- Appendix, Sanger and Norton- England's Guarantee to Belgium and Luxemburg
2. British and Foreign State Papers, Vol. 60, p. 913
3. Francis Gribble- In Luxemburg in War Time, Appendix B, p. 209

status quo; and he said in being a collective guarantee it did not impose on Great Britain any duty to act separately.<sup>1</sup> As probably the only countries who might violate this neutrality would be one of the guarantors, this practically meant that England would be under no obligation to act. And then, as Lord Stanley said, the possession of Luxemburg had been guaranteed to the King of Holland under the Treaty of 1839; hence, there was no ground for the objection on the part of England that she had been involved in a new responsibility, but she had rather got a former one "narrowed and defined".<sup>2</sup> Further, he said that the collective guarantee meant "that in the event of a violation of neutrality all the Powers who had signed the Treaty may be called upon for their collective action.<sup>3</sup> No one of those Powers is liable to be called upon to act singly or separately".<sup>3</sup>

The interpretation given by these two men, of course, represented the official interpretation of the Conservative Government then in force; and it is interesting to note that Lord Derby, in the House of Lords, was supported by the Liberal leaders, Lord Russell and Earl Clarendon. Lord Russell said that the Foreign Secretary was right in agreeing to the terms proposed.<sup>4</sup> The Earl of Clarendon saw in the Conference a precedent for the settlement of disputes in this way.<sup>5</sup> Lord Houghton, a Liberal, said he did not agree with Russell about England having no real responsibility, for Luxemburg's position was such that her neutrality would probably be violated, and that would necessarily mean responsibility for England.<sup>6</sup> Lord Russell regretted the discussion of the question, as he feared it might arouse distrust of England on the Continent, which, as a

1. Hansard- Parliamentary Debates, Vol. 188, p. 971-974

2. State Papers, Vol. 60, p. 497

3. Ibid

4. Hansard- Parliamentary Debates, Vol. 188 (Lords) June 20, 1867, p. 146

5. Ibid p. 152

6. Ibid p. 147

matter of fact, it did. The Duke of Argyle criticized Lord Stanley's policy<sup>1</sup> when he said it "had reduced the whole thing to a sham and a farce". Lord Granville argued that, if the interpretation of the Government were the correct one, he could not understand why Prussia thought the collective guarantee so important,<sup>2</sup> or why Stanley hesitated so in agreeing to it. The Times, supposed on the Continent to represent the Government, agreed with Stanley's interpretation,<sup>3</sup> and assumed that "peace is the grand interest of this country". The Government's interpretation was, indeed, apparently accepted, for there was no very vehement protest from the other party, or from the other signatories of the Treaty. As Morley says in his Life of Gladstone,<sup>4</sup> "General non-intervention was the common doctrine of both our parties", and this seemed to be as near non-intervention as was consistent with the maintenance of peace in Europe, which was also the common desire of both parties. The Saturday Review, one of the great Conservative organs of the day,<sup>5</sup> says: "The interests of England are in no way concerned". "Also, England has acted as a diplomatic mediator, and the peace of Western Europe is temporarily assured".<sup>6</sup> "England is impartial, but sincerely desirous of peace".<sup>7</sup> "The fact that the guarantee is collective makes it almost inoperative".<sup>8</sup> Also, the Saturday Review observes regarding non-intervention: "The Liberals have led the cry of non-intervention, but now non-intervention is making its way from the Liberal into the Conservative program".<sup>9</sup> Some of the Conservatives looked on this as only a temporary settlement, for Blackwood's says:<sup>10</sup> "Luxemburg is still to let and in Dutch auctions the bidding is always downward",

1. Hansard- Parliamentary Debates, Vol. 188, p. 156
2. Ibid p. 154
3. Quoted from Littell's Living Age, Vol. 93, p. 666
4. John Morley- Life of Wm. E. Gladstone, Vol. II, p. 320
5. The Saturday Review, Vol. 23, Apr. 6, 1867, p. 419
6. Ibid May 18, 1867, p. 613
7. Ibid Apr. 27, 1867, p. 513
8. Ibid June 22, 1867, p. 773
9. Ibid Vol. 24, Aug. 24, 1867, p. 241
10. Blackwood's Magazine, Vol. 101, p. 590



And the Spectator speaks of the Treaty as "Stanley's patched up peace" which "will not, we fear, last long"<sup>1</sup>. In general, the Liberal Fortnightly Review approves of Stanley's policy in the Conference, but does not agree as to his interpretation of England's responsibility under the guarantee. It says: "We have now proved that we love peace, and that we have ceased to seek safety in isolation. Our very reluctance stamps the guarantee with force"<sup>2</sup>. Morley says in an article in this magazine that "isolation by a citizen is wrong, and so is isolation in a state"<sup>3</sup>. Also, the Fortnightly says that if the Treaty when violated collapses "like a bag of wind", as interpreted by Lord Derby, then "it will be better for us to leave diplomacy alone than to indulge in these transparent subtleties"<sup>4</sup>. Also, the Queen and Disraeli thought this a definite obligation and not as Stanley and Derby interpreted it.<sup>5</sup> In general, however, the Conservatives were inclined to agree with Stanley and Derby's interpretations, and the Liberals, while they counselled non-intervention, were more ready to see in the new treaty a real obligation for England.

1. The Spectator, Vol. 40, p. 827
2. The Fortnightly Review, Vol. VII, p. 759
3. Ibid Vol. VII, p. 621
4. Ibid Vol. VIII, p. 118
5. Buckle- The Life of Benjamin Disraeli, Vol. IV, p. 472

## CHAPTER IV

## THE YEARS 1868-1869

The year 1868 is rather an unimportant one as regards developments between England and Belgium or Luxemburg. Disraeli came into office as Prime Minister in February, 1868, and held that office through the year until December. In his Ministerial Statement in the House of Commons, March 5, 1868, he said that the foreign policy of the government would be the same as that of Lord Stanley. That policy was one of peace, because peace is for the general interests of the world. He said that this was not to be secured by a selfish policy of isolation, but by sympathy with other countries. Disraeli, however, never lost sight of the difference between meddling with the domestic affairs of European nations and interfering in their international relations when those relations affected British interest or public law. At another time, Disraeli said in the same connection: "The abstention of England from any unnecessary interference in the affairs of Europe is the consequence, not of her decline of power, but of her increased strength. England is no longer a mere European power; she is the metropolis of a great maritime empire;\*\*\*it is not that England has taken refuge in a state of apathy, that she now almost systematically declines to interfere in the affairs of the Continent of Europe; England is as ready and as willing to interfere as in the old days, when the necessity of her position requires it.\*\*\* She interferes in Asia, and Australia, and Africa. She has a greater sphere of

1. Hansard- Parliamentary Debates, 3rd. ser., Vol. 190, p. 1118

2. Buckle- Life of Benjamin Disraeli, Vol. IV, p. 468

action than any European power, and she has duties devolving upon her on a much larger scale. We are interested in the peace and prosperity of Europe, and I do not say that there may not be occasions in which it may be the duty of England to interfere in European wars". It is evident from the above that, while Disraeli might advocate a little more vigorous policy than that of Stanley, in general he believed as far as possible in the old policy of non-intervention for England where continental affairs were concerned.

There was a general rumor of an offensive and defensive alliance between Holland, Belgium, and France, but Lord Stanley denied this in the House of Commons July 31, 1868, saying that the Belgian Minister had told him it was not so.

Lord Lyons had gone to Paris in 1867, and in October of 1868 Lord Clarendon arrived there. As the Liberals were out of power he had no official position there, but he was well-known and enjoyed the confidence of many sovereigns, among others, Napoleon. Lord Lyons in writing Lord Stanley October 13, 1868, said that Lord Clarendon had given him accounts of interesting conversations with the King and Queen of Prussia and with General Moltke. The sum of these talks was that Prussia earnestly desired "to keep at peace with France; that she will be careful not to give offence and very slow to take offence; that, if a war is brought on, she will act so as to make it manifest to Germany and to Europe that France is the unprovoked aggressor; that a war brought on evidently by France would infallibly unite all Germany". This was an interesting statement in view of the chronic anxiety about the relations between France and Prussia. The return of the Liberal Party to power in December 1868 under Gladstone returned Clarendon to his post of Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

1. Buckle- Life of Benjamin Disraeli, Vol. IV, p. 467
2. Hansard- Parliamentary Debates, 3rd ser., Vol. 193, p. 1948
3. Lord Newton- Lord Lyons, Vol. I, p. 201
4. Lord Newton- Lord Lyons, Vol. I, p. 201

Early in 1869, there was a good deal of apprehension over the Luxemburg Railway Affair. The Belgian Chamber objected to an attempted amalgamation of a French and Belgian Railway Company. The objection was on the ground of the result of French influences within Belgian territory. An act was passed prohibiting<sup>1</sup> concessions of any railway without the authority of the government. This caused ill-feeling in France which made it appear that France might look upon these railroad concessions as a step preliminary to annexation, and instead of being a purely commercial issue it was made a political issue threatening the independence of Belgium. Of course, England could not be indifferent to the "peaceful<sup>2</sup> penetration" of France into Belgium. Really the first alarm came from the Queen when she had General Grey write Lord Clarendon January 14, 1869, to the effect that "England was bound, not only by the obligations of treaties, but by interests of vital importance to herself, to maintain the integrity and independence as well as the neutrality of Belgium. The best security for these would be the knowledge that any proceedings which seemed to threaten violation would bring England itself into the field".

Her Majesty did not mean that any official communication should be made on the subject, but that "the habitual language of our ministers at Berlin and Paris should be such as to leave no doubt as to the determination of England"<sup>3</sup>.

The difficulty was finally settled by a commission appointed to arrange a system of through trains over the two roads which would insure the commercial and economic development desired. The settlement was largely due to the efforts of Lord Clarendon who was aided by a fortunate change in ministers in France, for M. Lavalette was willing to consider this compromise. M. Rouher had insisted on the purchase of the Great Luxemburg Railway by the Eastern of France. It

1. Lord Newton - Lord Lyons, Vol. I, P. 211  
 2. Ibid  
 3. Ibid

is believed that Lord Clarendon impressed the Belgian Government with the belief that in the event of a rupture with France it must not look to Great Britain for<sup>1</sup> aid.

Mr. Gladstone, the Liberal Prime Minister, went so far as to instruct the English Ambassador to hint to the French Government that Belgium was under our special protection. Lord Clarendon, of the same political persuasion, wrote Lord Lyons March 16, 1869: "We are very anxious about the Belgian business because more or less convinced that the Emperor is meaning mischief and intending<sup>2</sup> to establish unfriendly relations with Belgium preparatory to ulterior designs". He thought Bismarck largely responsible for the situation and trying to create bad feeling between England and France.

The Conservative view of the question, as expressed by the Times, was unsympathetic towards Belgium. The Saturday Review said: "England might not be disposed to bring on an European war by defending Belgium when peace might be secured<sup>3</sup> by leaving her to her fate". This periodical also goes on to say that the Belgian Government must suspect the designs of France, for otherwise "it would<sup>4</sup> have no object in buying off the hostility it fears".

The settlement by the Commission at London reduced the question to a merely commercial one. So the year 1869 ended in peace and calm, although there had been dim forebodings of the struggle to come.

1. The Saturday Review, Vol. 27, Mar. 20, 1869, p. 371
2. Lord Newton- Lord Lyons, Vol. I, p. 215
3. The Saturday Review, Vol. 27, Mar. 27, 1869, p. 403
4. Ibid

## CHAPTER V

## THE CRISIS OF 1870

When the year 1870 came in, "European politics were unwontedly calm",<sup>1</sup> but the struggle between France and Prussia which had been but narrowly averted, as we have seen several times before, finally resulted in a definite rupture of peace July 19 of that year. The immediate occasion of this catastrophe was the question of the accession of Prince Leopold of Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen to the Spanish throne. France objected to this on the ground that the Prince, being a member of the Prussian royal family, would, by his accession to the Spanish throne, lay the foundation for a too great German Empire. The Duc de Gramont had reported to Lord Lyons that he had told the Prussian Ambassador, Baron de Werther, that "to this"<sup>2</sup> "France will not resign herself, and when I say that we shall not resign ourselves to it, I mean that we shall not permit it, that we shall use our whole strength to prevent it".<sup>3</sup> Also, he said that France would not tolerate any other Prussian Prince on the throne of Spain.<sup>4</sup>

England wanted peace and the Queen in private letters to the rulers of both countries constantly urged peace.<sup>5</sup> In fact, the good offices of England for mediation were offered but were rejected by France. Gladstone, even as late as July 14, 1870, assured the House of Commons that England would continue to do all that depends upon her for the removal of difficulties and the con-

1. Maxwell, Sir Herbert- The Life and Letters of the 4th Earl of Clarendon, Vol. II, p. 357
2. British and Foreign State Papers, Vol. 60, p. 784-5
3. Ibid
4. Sidney Lee- Life of Queen Victoria, p. 411
5. British and Foreign State Papers, Vol. 60, p. 384



1  
 tinuance of peace, and, as a result of England's efforts, Prince Leopold re-  
 nounced his candidature. This did not quite satisfy France, who demanded that  
 the King of Prussia should promise that no Hohenzollern should be a candidate in  
 the future. Lord Granville, then Secretary of Foreign Affairs, wrote Lord Lyons  
 July 14, 1870, that the English Government thought that France had no right to  
 demand from Prussia an engagement covering the future in the case of Prince Leo-  
 2  
 pold. The Queen regarded Napoleon's action as wholly unjustified, and her indig-  
 nation grew as Napoleon's real designs were revealed. England's weight in the  
 councils of Europe was very slight, however, and the opinion of England and her  
 offers of mediation could not stop the struggle which began July 19, 1870. Lord  
 Granville had announced as early as July 15 that Great Britain would declare her  
 3  
 neutrality in event of war, and in the Commons July 18 Gladstone said: "It is  
 the intention of the Government to issue a Proclamation of Neutrality at the  
 4  
 proper time." Gladstone did not seem to appreciate that the struggle was so very  
 near, for when Disraeli asked whether the Government had used their undoubted  
 right of intervention, whether they had tried to prevent the "precipitate settle-  
 ment" of long existing difficulties, whether they had, in fact, done their best to  
 prevent "melodramatic catastrophies" belonging to the last century, Gladstone re-  
 plied that there was "nothing in the conditions which had arisen to justify, in  
 5  
 the judgment and conscience of the world, a breach of the general peace".

A few days after the declaration of war Gladstone wrote Michel Chevalier:  
 "I can not describe the sensation of pain, almost of horror, which has spread  
 through the country from end to end at the outbreak of hostilities.\*\*\* One of the  
 purposes in life, dear to my heart, has been to knit together in true unity the  
 people of my own country with those of your great nation\*\*\* On the face of facts,

1. Hansard- Parliamentary Debates, Vol. 203, p. 256
2. British and Foreign State Papers, Vol. 60, p. 823
3. British and Foreign State Papers, Vol. 60, p. 834
4. Hansard- Parliamentary Debates, 3rd ser., Vol. 203, p. 409
5. Morley, John- Life of William Ewart Gladstone, Vol. II, p. 335

France is wrong, but, as to the personal trustworthiness of the moving spirits<sup>1</sup> on the respective sides, Napoleon and Bismarck are nearly on a par". In fact, Liberal opinion as expressed by Gladstone, Granville, and the Fortnightly Review, seemed to be rather unsympathetic towards France. The Fortnightly said: "The French Government has pursued a lawless and a covetous policy"<sup>2</sup>. Even the Queen, at first governed by her ruling instincts, was identified fully with the cause of Germany. But many Englishmen did sympathize with France, and finally the Queen's<sup>3</sup> tenderness of heart aroused pity for the French in their complete overthrow.

Both parties at this crisis seem distinctly to want peace and to make suggestions as to the means of securing this peace. The North British Review, an organ decidedly Liberal in tone, says that "England is enamoured of peace"<sup>4</sup> we may almost say determined against war". Another Liberal organ suggested as a solution of the difficulty that England should put herself at the head of a federation of the weak, which in itself would be a strong federation. She should bind Sweden, Denmark, Holland, Belgium, and Switzerland first in offensive and defensive alliances in which each member of the union should guarantee the inviolability<sup>5</sup> of each of the others with their whole force.

Of course, the real interest and concern of England in connection with the war was the question of Belgium, whose neutrality and security must be seriously endangered by a war between France and Germany. One can scarcely imagine a war between France and Germany which would not involve both Belgium and Luxemburg. Belgium has been called the "cockpit of Europe", and history has justified this epithet, for we know that this was the cockpit of the Napoleonic wars, as it was

1. Morley, John- Life of Wm. E. Gladstone, Vol. II, p. 336
2. The Fortnightly Review, Vol. XIV, p. 367
3. Sidney Lee- Life of Queen Victoria, p. 411
4. Buxton, Charles- Reform and Political Parties, North British Review, Vol. 44, p. 215
5. Harrison, Frederic- Bismarckism, Fortnightly Review, Vol. XIV, p. 633



of the recent world war. Belgium and Luxemburg are situated so that they are the natural and the shortest passage from Northern Germany into France, and in time of war the most direct route is the usual route. Then, too, for Germany control of Belgium would mean an extended seacoast on the North Sea to the south and west, which would mean easier communications to the west. To France, an open Belgium is a great economic asset, as much of French trade goes in that direction. Of course, this Belgian trade is of great interest to England, as is the strategic position of Belgium, so that one of the first questions rising at the beginning of this war was the question of the preservation of the neutrality of these two states. Sir Henry Lytton Bulwer asked the Lord of the Treasury in the House of Commons July 21, if he had had any assurance from France or Prussia regarding the neutrality of these states, especially Luxemburg, which was under a different guarantee from that of Belgium. Gladstone replied that satisfactory<sup>1</sup> assurances had been received regarding Luxemburg, Belgium and Holland. Disraeli, representing the Conservative Party, said that England was concerned with the neutrality of Belgium as a "modern diplomatic engagement". "I have no doubt that the distinguished men who negotiated that Treaty, as the representatives of the great Liberal Party, were influenced in the course they took by the traditions of English policy. They negotiated that Treaty for the general advantage of Europe, but with a clear appreciation of the importance of its provisions to England. The first object of a policy of neutrality is, no doubt, to protect our fellow-subjects from the calamity of war. The second object of a policy of neutrality is, on the right occasion, to be able to counsel the belligerents and bring about the restoration of peace. Then, sir, it appears to me that the policy of England should be not only neutrality, but armed neutrality"<sup>2</sup>.

1. Hansard- Parliamentary Debates, 3rd. ser., Vol. 203 (Commons) July 21, p. 644-5

2. Annual Register, Vol. 112, p. 98

Disraeli urged Gladstone to preparedness and emphasized the necessity by recalling the unpreparedness of England in the Crimean War. He said that this would "declare in a manner which can not be misunderstood that England, as heretofore, will maintain her engagements under Treaty, and thereby secure the rights and independence of nations"<sup>1</sup>. This policy, we shall see, was somewhat more forceful than that generally advocated even by Conservatives. In reply Gladstone said that he objected to "armed neutrality" as importing the direct opposite to what he hoped to maintain without reserve, "an equivocal friendliness to both parties"<sup>2</sup>. Morier, the English ambassador at Vienna, denounced this policy of Gladstone utterly. He said in one of his letters: "To feel that England is for the future but as a bit of wet blotting-paper amongst the nations does upset one's serenity". He felt that England should have entered a Treaty with Belgium to repel any invasion of her territory, and published this Treaty on July 19 when war was declared. "Instead, we do nothing. No one knows what our neutrality is intended to mean"<sup>3</sup>. In general, it would appear that England wanted peace, was concerned over the maintenance of the neutrality of Belgium, and intended to maintain neutrality herself. The Conservatives adopted a somewhat more forceful policy, and the most extreme of them advocated a kind of armed neutrality.

The excitement in England at the outbreak of war and the concern about Belgium were great enough, when an additional element of excitement was aroused by the publication in the Times of July 25 of the draft of a Treaty between France and Prussia. According to this Treaty, France was to recognize the territorial acquisitions of Prussia and to agree not to oppose the union of the North and South German States; and in return Prussia was to support France in the an-

1. Annual Register, Vol.112, p. 100

2. Ibid

3. Mrs. Rosslyn Wemyss- Memoirs and Letters of Sir Robert Morier, Vol.II, p. 206

nexation of Belgium and Luxemburg, (Prussia to negotiate with the King of Holland for the purchase of Luxemburg by France). The Treaty provided also for an offensive and defensive alliance between the two countries. Of course this created a stir in England. To a question regarding it in the House of Commons, Lord Granville said: "Both countries will be induced to explain to Europe all that concerns this matter". Granville also pointed out that France had already given to Belgium her assurance that Belgian neutrality would be respected, as had Prussia. As Sir Edward Cook says in his "Delane of The Times", "which of the two diplomats had been the principal and which the accessory, whether the nefarious project originated in the secretive mind of Napoleon III or was suggested to him by Bismarck as tempter; this is one of the enigmas of modern history". It is known, however, that the document was in Benedetti's hand-writing on the stationery of the French Embassy, and that the two men had discussed the subject outlined in the Treaty. As we have noted above, in October of 1865 in Biarritz there seemed to have been an understanding of this sort. On July 26 M. de Lavalette told Granville that the "Draft Treaty" had been originated by Bismarck who had talked about it with Benedetti, but that it had never had any serious basis and had been rejected by both parties. He said it had been written by Benedetti at Bismarck's dictation. In writing Lord Lyons on July 29, 1870, Granville said, according to Lavalette, the terms in which the Treaty is couched show clearly whence it came and deceive no one. In 1865 Bismarck had told M. Lefebvre de Be- hame that Prussia would willingly recognize the rights of France to extend her borders wherever French is spoken. These overtures the Emperor declined. In

1. British and Foreign State Papers, Vol. 60, p. 886-7
2. Ibid
3. Sir Edward Cook- Delane of "The Times", p. 227
4. British and Foreign State Papers, Vol. 60, p. 887
5. Ibid p. 890

1866 the French ambassador Benedetti had informed his government. "He reported nothing new in stating that Bismarck is of the opinion that compensation should be sought by the French in Belgium and offered to come to an understanding". The Government declined. Benedetti's explanation of the Treaty sent to the Duc de Gramont is that, "in order to know exactly what Bismarck proposed, he wrote it down at his dictation". The Contemporary Review seems to support Benedetti's defense in the following: "Bismarck says 'the different phases of French discontent and warlike inclinations which we experienced from 1866 up to the Belgian railway question coincided with the inclination or reluctance the French agents expected to meet with on my part regarding these negotiations'. How could they, on Bismarck's own admission, have expected to meet with inclination on his part to these propositions, if he had not from time to time freely expressed private inclinations in their favor as the French agents so uniformly assert".

The Prussian version of the Treaty comes from Bismarck himself July 29, 1870. "France never ceased to tempt us by offers at the expense of Germany and of Belgium. I never thought of accepting such offers. I thought it right in the interest of peace to leave the French diplomatists as long as possible under the delusion they had formed, without even making verbal promises. I was, therefore, silent as to their demands, and I negotiated dilatorily. When the negotiations with the King of the Netherlands for the acquisition of Luxemburg fell through, France renewed to me the proposals concerning Belgium. It is not likely that the French Ambassador should have formulated these proposals in his own hand-writing without the authority of his sovereign". Bismarck also said that this was not the first time that these proposals had been made. They were first made to him in 1862, but for the sake of peace he had kept these proposals a secret. The friendship of France to Germany in the Danish and Austrian Wars was

1. British and Foreign State Papers, Vol. 60, p. 890
2. Ibid p. 944
3. Lord Augustus Loftus- Diplomatic Reminiscences, Vol. I, 2d Ser., p. 130-3

1

a proof of this design of France.

It is difficult to judge from these two explanations and the material at hand just who was the originator of the proposals. As one reads of these two men and their times, the circumstances seem to point to Bismarck as the originator of this Treaty. At least, if he is not immediately responsible for the Treaty itself, he is responsible for constantly encouraging the idea, as we have indicated in various quotations above. The way in which the Treaty was finally used, apparently with the hope of embroiling English sentiment against France, would seem to indicate that it was part of Bismarck's well-laid plans to isolate France, and a study of the history of the years from 1864 to 1870 shows how Bismarck systematically schemed for this isolation of France. We know that the existence of such a Treaty was communicated to Gladstone and Granville first, in the hope that they would give it to the public; but when it was found that they would not, it was published in the Times. This opportune use of the "Draft" would seem to indicate that it was a part of Bismarck's general scheme of things. Also, in further proof of this fact that Bismarck hoped for cooperation from England, Lord Augustus Loftus, in a letter to Earl Granville July 30, 1870, said that Bismarck was "surprised that the policy of Great Britain should be one of complete abstention and apparent indifference, for he had wanted to work on the public opinion in England to cooperate". Another argument to show it was apparently a Prussian project and not a French one is the fact, as the Duc de Gramont points out, that, if his government had really wished this, it would have been easy to carry out with the support of Prussia. And yet it was not carried out.

1. British and Foreign State Papers, Vol. 60, p. 960
2. Spencer Walpole- The History of Twenty-five Years, Vol. II, p. 447
3. John Morley- Life of William Ewart Gladstone, Vol. II, p. 340
4. British and Foreign State Papers, Vol. 61, p. 672
5. Ibid Vol. 60, p. 966
6. Ibid Vol. 60, p. 944



This would appear to indicate that France did not quite trust the Prussian proposal, and thought the price she might have to pay in consequence would be greater than the advantage she might gain. Of course, there are many who agree with Dasent of the Times that the Draft Treaty was "perhaps the basest of any of the Emperor's secret intrigues"<sup>1</sup>. But we must not forget that the Times had repeatedly attacked Napoleon, and perhaps that is the reason it was chosen by Bismarck for his purpose. But our problem is not to solve this "enigma of history", and possibly the most accurate statement that can be made would be that of John Morley quoted above: "As to the personal trustworthiness of the moving spirits on the respective sides, Napoleon and Bismarck are nearly on a par"<sup>2</sup>. Perhaps, too, we may look to the Contemporary Review for a summary in the statement that Bismarck had "never ceased not exactly to lead France into temptation but to prevent her deliverance from evil"<sup>3</sup>.

The publication of this Treaty (supposedly drawn up in August 1866)<sup>4</sup> was a great surprise not only to the British people in general but to the Government as well. Public opinion was insistent that something be done, and Gladstone expressed the demand for action in a letter to Mr. Bright: "The publication of the treaty has thrown upon us the necessity either of doing something fresh to secure Belgium or else of saying that under no circumstances would we take any step to secure her from absorption."<sup>5</sup> "No government could at this moment venture to give utterance to such an intention about Belgium". As Dasent said: "As England was pledged to the hilt to preserve the independence of Belgium, the Government had no option but to propose to each of the belligerents a mutual agreement for the protection of Belgian soil from invasion"<sup>6</sup>. Lord Stratford de Red-

1. Dasent- Delane of "The Times", Vol. II, p. 266
2. John Morley- Life of Wm. E. Gladstone, Vol. II, p. 336
3. The Contemporary Review, Vol. XX, p. 173
4. Spencer Walpole- The History of Twenty-five Years, Vol. II, p. 447
5. John Morley- Life of Wm. E. Gladstone, Vol. II, p. 341
6. Dasent- Delane of "The Times", p. 266-7



cliffe urged Delane, the editor of the Times, (rather a Conservative but Independent sheet) to recommend in his columns "diplomatic remonstrance, if not actual intervention on the part of England"<sup>1</sup>. The Times did exhort the Government to speak some brave words and to speak them "with promptitude and energy". According to a Conservative critic, even the "promptitude and energy" would make little difference to Germany, "for the thing that counts is the power behind the Government and the Philistines are behind the English Government"<sup>2</sup>. There was general disapproval expressed, also, by Mr. Bernal Osborne. As to the Draft Treaty, he said: "I view the guilt of its concoction as only equalled by the shabbiness of its concealment. I was never more struck than in reading this Projet de Traite with the position of entire nullity, which we seem to occupy in the estimation of these two powers"<sup>3</sup>. Disraeli, also expressing the Conservative point of view, said: "The policy of this projected Treaty is one which this country has never approved and never can approve. I should look upon the extinction of the kingdom of Belgium as a calamity to Europe and an injury to this country, and I therefore trust that such an attempt will not be made; nor can I forget that, if such an attempt is made, the engagements into which the Sovereign of this country has entered with respect to that kingdom will demand the gravest consideration, not only of the Government but of the country"<sup>4</sup>. Gladstone said in speaking of the steps taken by the Government, that the Government "has adopted such steps as appeared to them best calculated to establish confidence, and security"<sup>5</sup>. Russell, a Liberal, speaking of the situation in the House of Lords, said: "The British people have a very strong sense of honor and of what is due to this glorious nation. The main thing is how we can best assure Belgium, assure Europe, and assure the world that we mean to be true and faithful. The great thing of

1. Dasent- Delane of the "Times", p. 172

2. Quoted from Pall Mall Gazette in the Living Age, Vol. 106, p. 702

3. The Annual Register, Vol. 112, p. 103

4. Hansard- Parliamentary Debates, 3d ser., Vol. 203 (Commons) July 25, 1870, p. 883

5. Ibid Aug. 5, 1870, p. 1577

all is that the members of the Government of this country should declare openly and explicitly that they mean to be true to our Treaty, and faithful to our engagements, and will not sully the fair name of England".<sup>1</sup> In sum, we may say that the Liberals wanted enough action to satisfy the people and the Conservatives considered the situation very serious, and that England must maintain her pledge to Belgium.

In general, the course taken by the Government was approved throughout the country, but not without some discussion and criticism, as we shall see. Granville proposed that France and Prussia each make a treaty with England. These treaties provided for the maintenance of the guarantees as established in 1839, but provided further that, if the armies of either of the belligerents should violate Belgian territory, Great Britain would cooperate with the other belligerent against the one violating neutrality, but without engaging to take part in the general operations of the war. This treaty was to hold good during the war and twelve months after.<sup>2</sup> Bismarck agreed immediately and France agreed after some hesitation.<sup>3</sup> The Belgian Government expressed its satisfaction with this arrangement, contending that the Belgian neutrality resting on the Treaties of 1839 had been "confirmed" by the Treaties of 1870.<sup>4</sup> The Mayor and Communal Council of Brussels sent an address to the Queen and the people of England to express their gratitude for England's steps in maintaining the neutrality of Belgium.<sup>5</sup>

Granville's ministerial statement before the House of Lords August 8, 1870, probably gives in the clearest form the idea of the Government in proposing these treaties. He said: "We were quite determined not to make useless

1. The Annual Register, Vol. 112, p. 107
2. British and Foreign State Papers, Vol. 60, p. 941-4
3. John Morley- Life of Wm. E. Gladstone, Vol. II, p. 340
4. Fuhr- The Neutrality of Belgium, p. 146
5. British and Foreign State Papers, Vol. 61, p. 676

complaints nor to deal in vague threats or indefinite menaces". He said that this was done not as a "menace to belligerents", but done to "increase confidence and calm alarm", and show that the Government had not been indifferent or idle. The obligations of 1839 had been expressly reserved.<sup>1</sup> Gladstone made practically the same statement in explanation to the House of Commons. There is also an interpretation of the Government's viewpoint in a communication from Lord Granville to Lord Lyons August 6, 1870, when he said (1) "Her Majesty's Government are of the opinion that in no case arising out of the Treaties shall the forces of either of the contracting parties occupy any of the fortresses of Belgium without previous concert with each other; (2) Her Majesty's Government understand that the territory of Belgium shall be immediately evacuated by all foreign troops whatever at the conclusion of peace; (3) Her Majesty's Government proposed that the Treaty shall continue in force for twelve months after a Treaty of Peace has been ratified, solely with a view to giving a reasonable time for the execution of the articles of such a Treaty".<sup>2</sup> In view of the interpretation which Derby and Stanley had given to the Luxemburg guarantee of 1867, it was perhaps necessary that England should "affirm before the world that to her the integrity of Belgium was of vital importance".<sup>3</sup> At any rate, that is apparently what was intended by the Government. Gladstone did not seem to feel that the Treaty of 1839 would be binding on every party to it "irrespective altogether of the particular position in which it may find itself at the time when the occasion for acting on the guarantee arises".<sup>4</sup> This being Gladstone's view, it was necessary that England assure the world of her position on this particular "occasion". There was praise and blame for this policy in both Houses. The Earl of

1. Hansard- Parliamentary Debates, 3d. ser., Vol. 208 (Lords) Aug. 8, 1870, p. 1671-5
2. British and Foreign State Papers, Vol. 68, p. 983
3. Fuenr- The Neutrality of Belgium, p. 63-4
4. Hansard- Parliamentary Debates, 3d. ser., Vol. 208 (Lords) Aug. 10, 1870, p. 1787

Shaftesbury said: "The Session ought not to close without an expression of thanks to her Majesty's Government for the dignified and patriotic course they have pursued in this great and trying emergency". But some of the more advanced Liberals were afraid of the policy. Bright said that there was "no wise policy for the House and the Government, but that of keeping entirely free from Continental entanglements". "There is nothing more grave or disastrous than for this country, on any pretext whatever, to enter upon a Continental war". He was, however, "willing to give his voice and vote for the protection of that which belongs to us, but not for Quixotic expeditions".<sup>1</sup> Sir Wilfrid Lawson, also an advanced Liberal, was "alarmed by the Prime Minister's statement that the Government was entering into new obligations as regarded Continental affairs".<sup>2</sup> The basis of criticism among the Conservatives was mainly that the guarantee of 1839 was enough, and that these Treaties would appear to make that ineffective, and also that the other guarantors of 1839 might object to these special guarantees. The provision that England should not enter into the war except for the protection of Belgian neutrality was criticised as impractical. Lord Cairns in the House of Lords said that the natural thing to have done would have been to notify the Governments concerned that England intended to stand by the Treaty of 1839. The course adopted would necessarily mean that if England entered the war for Belgium she would be a full belligerent in every sense.<sup>3</sup> The Duke of Cleveland said: "I thought with others, it was desirable that the Government should make it known that it was their express determination to maintain the Treaty of 1839, which is still binding on this and other countries." "I should have preferred some instrument of permanent character respecting which no doubt could arise" "a treaty entered into

1. Hansard- Parliamentary Debates, 3d. ser., Vol. 203 (Lords) Aug. 10, 1870, p. 1764p.
2. Ibid (Commons) Aug. 9, 1870, p. 1738-40
3. Ibid
4. Ibid (Lords) Aug. 10, 1870, p. 1746-1754

by the same powers including the belligerents<sup>1</sup>. Osborne called it a "childish  
 perpetration of diplomatic folly"<sup>2</sup>. The Quarterly Review, a Conservative organ,  
 saw in these treaties no provision for England's action if both France and Ger-  
 many violate Belgian neutrality, which is exactly what did happen; so, as this  
 editorial said: "This famous diplomatic document only came into effect to be  
 broken"<sup>3</sup>. The Saturday Review criticised Gladstone's policy as "indefinite  
 and ambiguous"<sup>4</sup>. It said, further: "There may be sufficient reasons at any given  
 moment for entirely passive non-intervention; but there is reason to fear  
 that the policy of the government depends not on considerations of immediate  
 expediency but on a fixed determination to escape all responsibility"<sup>5</sup>. It is  
 in connection with this policy of England's that we find originating in Germany  
 Bernstorff's expression "benevolent neutrality", which seems to sum up rather  
 well her general policy.<sup>6</sup>

In the midst of the war, Earl Granville wrote Lord Lyons at Paris to  
 ask if the French Government would be willing for a large number of wounded to  
 be transported from Saar Louis through Luxemburg to Aix-la-Chapelle. Lord Ly-  
 ons was instructed to say: "We are prepared, with a view to alleviate the mis-  
 eries of the war, to state to the Belgian Government, and to the King Grand  
 Duke, that we have no objection, and we will inform Austria and Russia accord-  
 ingly; but before doing so we wish to know the opinion of the French Govern-  
 ment"<sup>7</sup>. This proposal, however, came to nothing, as Belgium and France refused  
 to consider it, as did Luxemburg when she found the others unwilling.

1. Hansard- Parliamentary Debates, Ed. ser., (Lords), Aug. 19, 1870, p. 1762
2. Annual Register, Vol. 112, p. 107
3. The Quarterly Review, Vol. 128-9, p. 166
4. The Saturday Review, Vol. 30, p. 198
5. Ibid p. 415
6. Ibid p. 384
7. British and Foreign State Papers, Vol. 61, p. 691



The question of violation of neutrality did occur again during the war when Bismarck issued a circular December 3, 1870, to the Powers, complaining that the neutrality of Luxembourg had not been respected by France and the Grand Duchy. He said that the fortress of Chionville had been provisioned by trains from Luxembourg as long as France held it, and that after the battle of Metz, soldiers and officers had passed into the Grand Duchy and entered France again, that the French Vice-Consul had established offices at the Luxembourg Railroad station to aid fugitives, and that, therefore, the Royal Government could no longer consider it bound to any consideration of the Grand Duchy in the military operations of the German Army. Servais, the Minister of State for Luxembourg, protested against this on the theory that "the neutrality conferred on certain states of Europe would no longer have any real existence if the existence of a state constituted as neutral in virtue of a treaty, could depend on the will of a single one of the contracting Powers". England entered its protest against the action on the ground that it was a violation of the Treaty of 1867, and Bismarck replied that his action was merely a military measure for the security of the German army and not a denunciation of the Treaty of 1867. Luxembourg explained her offence on a purely commercial ground and the whole affair was thus brought to a satisfactory conclusion. It is an interesting incident in view of the real question at issue, which was, the right of one of the guarantors of the Treaty of 1867 to take action on the violation of that Treaty without consulting the other guarantors, - a question which Germany answered to her own liking in 1914 when she was the violator.

1. British Parliamentary Papers- Luxembourg No. 1 (1871) pp. 1-2 quoted from Sanger and Norton-England's Guarantee to Belgium and Luxembourg, p. 88
2. Sanger and Norton- England's Guarantee to Belgium and Luxembourg, p. 89
3. Ibid



## CHAPTER VI

## GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

## AS TO PUBLIC OPINION

In drawing general conclusions, from the foregoing and from the material at hand, one must necessarily assume that the leading men of the two great English parties do express the general trend of opinion in those parties, and that the Great English periodicals of the day do reflect the thought and opinion of the time. If granted this assumption, we may draw some very general conclusions as to English public opinion towards the two states of Belgium and Luxemburg during the years with which we are dealing. The note that seems to ring through all the speeches and comments of the time, in both parties, is a note of peace. England wants peace and wants it without intervention on her part to secure it. This we see in the notes of protest at the time of the Austro-Prussian and the Franco-Prussian Wars, and at the time of the Luxemburg Affair of 1867, when war was averted by the Conference of London. England is rather indifferent to affairs on the Continent, except in so far as they tend to disturb this much desired peace; or, in so far as England's personal interest in Belgium is threatened, for this is a personal interest. England is, and always has been, afraid to have a strong nation in possession of that territory. There is absolutely no evidence that her policy in dealing with Belgium has been concerned solely with Belgium's wishes. England's wishes and England's security have determined her guarantees for Belgium. As Disraeli has said: "It is of the highest importance to this country that the whole coast from Ostend to the North Sea should be in the possession of free and flourishing communities from whose ambition the liberty

and independence neither of England nor of any other country can be menaced".<sup>1</sup>

While non-intervention, both parties agree, is the desideratum for England, the two parties also agree that England must maintain her honor and the obligations required of her, though they differ as to the extent to which she must go in maintaining her honor. The difference ranges from Bright's rather radical idea that there is "nothing more grave or disastrous than for this country, on any pretext whatever, to enter upon a Continental war",<sup>2</sup> to the liberal opinion of the Fortnightly Review that "there has grown up in England such a dislike to interfering in the affairs of other countries that England might very likely think it her best policy to leave Belgium to her fate";<sup>3</sup> and from the Conservative Liberal opinion of the Contemporary Review that England's part in this contest (the Franco-Prussian War) "had been hitherto miserably small; that she had mediated when there was no danger in mediating and shrunk from mediating when there was; and that the Belgian Treaty was the laughing-stock of Europe";<sup>4</sup> to the ultra-Conservative opinion of "The Saturday Review which deprecates the attitude of the Government in avoiding all responsibility."<sup>5</sup>

The Liberal opinion during these years seems to be the only one with any altruism; the Conservative and Radical opinion seems to be almost entirely selfish. This altruism is expressed by Mr. Gladstone when he says that he and his colleagues had "enlisted themselves on the part of the British nation as advocates and as champions of the integrity and independence of Belgium". "If we had gone to war", he says, "we should have gone to war for public right, and we should have gone to war for freedom, we should have gone to war to save human happiness from being invaded by a tyrannous and lawless power. That is what I call a good cause, gentlemen".<sup>6</sup>

1. Hansard- Parliamentary Debates, Vol. 208 (Commons) Aug. 9, 1870, p. 1740
2. Ibid Aug. 9, 1870, p. 1739
3. The Fortnightly Review, Vol. VI, p. 752
4. The Contemporary Review, Vol. IV, p. 361
5. The Saturday Review, Vol. XXX, p. 415
6. John Morley- Life of Mr. E. Gladstone, Vol. II, p. 341

But with this altruism is a lack of force and a desire to shun any real responsibility as regards Continental affairs. The Fortnightly Review expresses this when it says: "If England's foreign policy has undergone a change, then her Treaties should also. While there is time she should release herself".<sup>1</sup>

The Conservative opinion does not form any real contrast to this. It is perhaps more forceful and less altruistic. The Saturday Review says England can afford to hold aloof because "no result of the war is likely to affect England".<sup>2</sup> Speaking of the designs against Belgium, this same organ says "any designs would demand our attention as a mere act of police".<sup>3</sup> In regard to the question of Luxemburg in 1867 the Spectator says: "England is paralyzed by internal dissensions, and indisposed in any event to interfere with France".<sup>4</sup> But later, August 27, 1870, the Spectator is more forceful when it says: "The country has decided to defend Belgium, and rightly". "It has been guided by a sense of duty and interest. We are face to face with our obligations. Antwerp must not be French. If we abandon Belgium we must recede from the Continent forever. It would be cheaper in the end for England to fight for Belgium than to retreat".<sup>5</sup> In this last sentence we see again the selfish note so characteristic of much of the Conservative opinion of the time. Probably the North British Review sums up the general public opinion of all parties (Conservative, Liberal, Union, Radical) and the general policy of England towards the Continent, when it says: "England is enamoured of peace\*\*\* we may almost say determined against war and is yet loath to relinquish the self-imposed and dangerous duty of volunteering advice and warning. Add to this that she is mistrustful of all foreign nations and will ally herself cordially, so that their joint interference might be authoritative,

1. The Fortnightly Review, Vol. VI, p. 752

2. The Saturday Review, Vol. 21, May 26, 1866, p. 605

3. Ibid Vol. 22, Oct. 20, 1866, p. 470

4. The Spectator, Mar. 30, 1867, quoted in Littell's Living Age, Vol. 93, p. 254

5. Ibid Vol. 106, p. 639

not even with France, and we arrive at a position very difficult to maintain".<sup>1</sup>

The Spectator, too, sums up the situation when it speaks of the British public as "openly anxious for peace and covertly anxious to see England respected among diplomatists".<sup>2</sup>

Perhaps it would be well to note here the apparently insignificant part that affairs on the Continent played in the opinion of Englishmen if one may judge from the time and space given to such matters in the current periodicals as compared with that given to other topics of the day. The periodicals are taken up for the most part with a discussion of local affairs, the Irish question, and affairs in India and Abyssinia. Indeed, many volumes have nothing at all, which fact is surprising when we judge the events of these years in the light of the importance history has given them. It does show that England had not yet reacted from a policy of isolation from the Continent. Continental affairs did not greatly concern or interest her, and her public opinion was more absorbed in home and imperial interests. This, of course, must not be emphasized too much, however, for we do find much written on the two wars of the period and are sometimes surprised by an occasional article on a supposedly little known subject. For instance, in Blackwood's of 1865 a writer under the name of Peregrinus writes under the title "Eavesdropping at Biarritz". Of course this has no real historic value unless the identity of "Peregrinus" should become known, but it is interesting that such an article should have appeared as early as 1865. It shows that at least someone was following affairs on the Continent.<sup>3</sup>

In conclusion, we might notice some of the precedents established during this period which were noted in public opinion and developed for the future.

1. The North British Review, Vol. 44, p. 215
2. The Spectator, Vol. 40, p. 491
3. Littell's Living Age, Vol. 92, p. 624, quoted from Blackwood's 1865.

or, at least, continued to live into the future. It is known that just prior to the Franco-Prussian War, Lord Clarendon had died "under the weight of affairs"; as Lord Granville said, "in the very act of trying to arrange a matter necessary to civilization in Europe".<sup>1</sup> This referred to proposals for disarmament which Lord Clarendon was making to the Prussian Government at the instigation of Napoleon III. As we know, these came to nothing, as similar proposals have since come to nothing but war, but the idea has remained for public opinion to toy with. In view of our recent attempt at a league of nations it is interesting to note the ideas advocated by more than one of the leading periodicals, that England should form a league of neutrals or a league of small states to oppose German or French aggression. This idea was voiced in the Contemporary Review as follows: "What is needed is a league of peace among states and the nation which dares to initiate such a league will carry the bulk of the civilized world with her. That initiative belonged of right, and, as it were by the instinct of the world, to England. Alone perhaps in all Europe, she has no reason to covet one inch of territory not her own: she demands but to be respected; her fleet must almost of necessity rule the seas. Alone in all Europe, she has, through the long enjoyment of freedom, learnt thoroughly the value of peace."\*\* Yet had she from the first stepped forward to organize a league of neutrals, half the world was already eager to enter into it".<sup>2</sup>

Another precedent was set during this period in the calling of the Conference to settle the Luxemburg question. As the Earl of Clarendon said: "The Conference has proved that nations between whom any serious difficulty has arisen ought always before resorting to arms to appeal to the friendly offices of neutral states".<sup>3</sup>

1. Esment- Delane of "The Times", Vol. II, p. 225

2. The Contemporary Review, Vol. XV, p. 362

3. Hansard- Parliamentary Debates, Vol. 188 (Lords) June 20, 1867, p. 152

Whatever may be said of the ineffectiveness of England's policy during this period or of England's public opinion, it seems to have been effective enough to have secured a maintenance of the status quo in Luxemburg and Belgium. There was also, we may say, a beginning of reaction against the policy of non-intervention in European affairs, which was to bear its fruit in England's great work in the recent war.