

THE JAILER OF SAINT HELENA

BY RENÉ PUAUX

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A GERMAN traveler who visited Smyrna in 1826 does not give the 'Pearl of the Levant' of that date a very good character. The 'Franks,' or natives of European descent, seemed to him hopelessly frivolous and lamentably immoral. 'A part of the population,' he wrote, 'is Christian, of various confessions, many of whom are sharpers, bankrupts, thieves, and vagabonds.' A horde of pro-Greek adventurers had taken refuge in the city after the recent setback to the Greek revolution, either despairing of making their fortunes in Greece proper, or if they were sincere champions of liberty, waiting for the triumph of the cause to which, in a moment of enthusiasm, they had devoted themselves.

Pierre David, the consul of France, was greatly embarrassed by this undesirable clientele. He had found places for the best of them, mostly half-pay officers of the Grand Army, as instructors in the Ottoman forces. A few others he sent back home. But the consulate funds were totally insufficient for the relief to the great majority.

The consul, an excellent Greek scholar, and a poet in his hours of leisure, sympathized with Greece. He had intervened courageously at a time of certain massacres in a neighboring island, and their grateful inhabitants had sent him secretly a gold-hilted sword. This had got him into difficulties with our ambassador at Constantinople; for our government was pro-Turk, while the English were strongly pro-Greek. It

was not until later that Russia, England, and France united to take the latter country under their protection. Our consulate, in the meantime, became a sort of warehouse for the treasures of the Greek churches. An inventory of the things stored there late in 1826 suggests that it had become a veritable museum of bric-à-brac. The man in charge was a feeble old gentleman, Charles-Auguste Parvy, whose two sons were also employed as clerks in the consulate.

Parvy and his five children had drifted into Smyrna late in 1815 in search of a precarious livelihood. Little was known of his past, as he was a modest and retiring man. He had served in the Grand Army, had later studied law, and had qualified as a notary. After various vicissitudes due to political changes in France, which had deprived him of his position, he found himself one day, with his young children, set down practically penniless on the wharves of Smyrna. Our consul, finding him competent in his profession, had employed him in his office, where he had labored faithfully for ten years among its dusty archives. No one would have suspected that this modest employee was to be the hero of an episode which would set diplomatic notes going from Smyrna to Constantinople, and from London to Paris.

Late in 1826, Hudson Lowe had left London for India, whither the government had sent into honorable exile, the jailer of Saint Helena. He passed

through Bucharest, on February 3, carrying letters of recommendation from Metternich, and after a sojourn of a month at Constantinople, reached Smyrna late in March.

The British frigate *Cambrian* was in the harbor. Commodore Hamilton, commander of the British fleet in the Eastern Mediterranean, was on board. Both Hamilton and the aged British consul, Francis Werry, an ancient servant of the Foreign Office, received Lowe with great respect. At that time Smyrna had little accommodation for strangers. The German traveler, whom I have quoted above, says that the only choice lay between an Italian lodging-house and the French boarding-house, 'which is much more expensive.' Since Lowe could not very well take lodgings with a Frenchman, he secured a room at the Italian place, which was kept by a certain Giacomo Neuman de Rizzi, an Austrian subject. This man had a restaurant, which was a gathering-place for all the people of Smyrna who loved gossip, chess, and pastries. Parvy had lived there before finding a house for himself, and most of the boarders were his friends. It was his habit every afternoon after the office closed to stop at Rizzi's restaurant to smoke his pipe and drink a cup of coffee.

On Saturday, the first of April, 1826, the old gentleman dropped in toward six o'clock, as was his habit. Several witnesses who were living at the place noticed that he seemed unusually excited. Hudson Lowe's name chanced to be mentioned. One of those present said that the English gentleman was not at home, but dining on board the *Cambrian*. Then something surprising happened. The gentle, peaceable old 'Father Parvy' asked: 'Where is his room?' When it was pointed out he left his friends, went toward the room, and solemnly opening the door, commenced to address the empty chair where the

occupant usually sat. He delivered the most terrible invective one could imagine. He became fairly lyrical in his wrath, and his utterances were punctuated with violent curses. A report of the incident says: 'It was a furious declamation in which the listeners detected a flood of invectives from tragedies applied to that personage.' All the memories of the Napoleonic epoch poured forth from his lips: 'The Little Corporal,' 'the Man in the Gray Overcoat,' 'the Bridge of Arcola,' 'the Sun of Austerlitz,' 'the forty centuries of Egypt,' and 'the glory of Wagram.' He cursed the English, who had chained and tortured the eagle. The poor consulate clerk brandished his Turkish pipe, which had gone out, as though it were a horse pistol. He had forgotten Charles X, the Bourbons, and his official position. He was only a Frenchman, who had heard the Emperor shout on the eve of battle, 'Soldiers, I am proud of you!' and whose heart had remained loyal in its despair.

This prodigious monologue attracted a crowd, among them Parvy's own son, Victor, who had been drinking a glass of the local *houzo* in the café, with a party of friends. He succeeded in dragging his father away, and shut him up for a time in Rizzi's own room, where he continued his furious declamation. At last they got him home. It was then eight o'clock at night. The incident would have passed without further remark except for an unhappy conjuncture of accidents.

About ten o'clock that evening two strangers, supposed to be Austrians, were noticed in front of the other tavern. Hudson Lowe's presence in Smyrna was a notable event. One of these gentlemen remarked that it would be a miracle if no harm came to him, in view of the existing bitterness against the 'jailer of Saint Helena.' A waiter at the Inn, who was serving refreshments to

the guests in front, overheard this conversation. He did not quite understand it, for he was a Greek with an imperfect knowledge of Italian, which the two Austrians spoke. Believing that he had discovered a conspiracy against Hudson Lowe, he hastened to inform one of the men stopping at the tavern, a Doctor Garriri, who just at the moment chanced to be drinking coffee with an English nobleman who was lodging at the same house. That gentleman, considering the information serious, at once wrote a note to Commodore Hamilton, which he sent by a special harbor boat to the Cambrian. He then went personally to Rizzi's establishment.

It was now about eleven o'clock at night. Everybody was asleep. The English nobleman, dramatic and self-important, awakened Sir Hudson Lowe to tell him that his life was in danger, and then, pistol in hand, interrogated the proprietor. The latter said at once that he knew nothing of any conspiracy. When the English lord, with a tragic frown, cross-examined him regarding every one of his guests, Rizzi replied that they were all peaceable gentlemen whom he personally knew. As the Englishman kept insisting, Rizzi suddenly fancied that he had discovered a key to the riddle, and gave him a complete history of the innocent scandal for which old Mr. Parvy had been responsible a few hours before. Just then a detachment of sailors from the Cambrian, sent by Commodore Hamilton, arrived. Hudson Lowe retired again somewhat disturbed.

The next day, Sunday, April 2, the British consul and Commodore Hamilton presented themselves solemnly at the French consulate, demanding that David should stop the scandalous conduct of his employees, and guarantee the safety of their distinguished British guest. In view of the very delicate relations then existing between England

and France, David felt it his duty to order Parvy arrested, and began an investigation.

Next day there was another development. A little French merchant vessel, the *Louis-Antoine*, anchored in the harbor of Smyrna, not far from the Cambrian. Having luckily escaped from the Corsairs who infested the archipelago, the captain of the vessel ordered the loaded arms, which he carried in case of a possible attack, to be discharged. The sailors carelessly aimed some of their guns in the direction of the British ship, which was struck eight times. A spent bullet swept the battery and cut the ropes. It happened by an unfortunate mischance that Hudson Lowe was aboard when this occurred. This aroused strong suspicions of a conspiracy. The consul succeeded, however, in convincing the angry English that the *Louis-Antoine* had not entered the harbor until three o'clock that morning, and therefore could not be implicated with the incident of two days before.

Hudson Lowe was the first to realize that a mistake had been made, and on Wednesday he sent a consular employee to David, orally requesting that Parvy be pardoned. David stated that he greatly appreciated the act, but asked that it be confirmed in writing, which was not done. He furthermore said that, in any case, his clerk would be kept in confinement, as long as Lowe remained in Smyrna. The Jailer of Napoleon left on the next Friday. On Saturday Parvy was released, after seven days' detention. But he lost his position. So the incident seemed closed. However, a month later, David, who was now at his summer residence at Bour-naba, received a vigorous letter from our *chargé d'affaires* at Constantinople, written in the absence of his chief, saying that the English ambassador had protested against the mild punishment inflicted by the French consul at Smyr-

na upon Parvy, who had been guilty of grave insults to a high British functionary. The ambassador based his complaint upon a report he had received from the British Consul at Smyrna. He considered it a matter of such importance that he felt called upon to notify the British Foreign Office. Since the Foreign Office would not fail to take the matter up with the French State Department, the consulate at Smyrna was asked to forward at once an explanation and justification.

David's first move was to have a vigorous settlement with his British colleague, who, after serving as the agent of Hudson Lowe's clemency, had sent such false reports to his ambassador at Constantinople. Werry excused himself by letter, in which he said that the ambassador certainly misunderstood him. A copy of this letter was at once dispatched to Paris, in order that the government might be in a position to reply at once to any demand made upon it by the British ambassador there.

While all this was going on, the un-

happy Parvy was in desperate straits. He had lost his position, and he had five children to support. As a last resort he attempted to rehabilitate himself by a pitiful abjuration of the Bonaparte sympathies which he cherished in the bottom of his heart, and which had overflowed so violently that spring evening. He swore that he 'had never exhibited any attachment to the memory of the prisoner of Saint Helena,' and dwelt upon the fact that 'on the contrary every year he had written couplets for the celebration of the King's birthday.' David transmitted this appeal and the annexed testimony to Paris, but the following month he himself was suspended from his post and had other things to think about. His successor knew nothing of the incident, and died of fever a few months later. The eldest son, Victor Parvy, was promoted to second clerk of the consulate the following December. From that date onward the family sank back into the obscurity from which it so briefly emerged, and the consular archives are silent upon its later history.

NAPOLEON III AND GERMAN UNITY

[Empress Eugénie stated in her will that she left no memoirs. However, Count Fleury, a trusted confidant of the Tuileries Court, has published a book based upon his personal recollections and memoranda written by Napoleon III, which affords a fairly satisfactory substitute for such memoirs. The following is a chapter from this volume, a German translation of which is about to appear at Leipzig.]

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I FIND in the Emperor's memoranda the following statement: 'It is now generally recognized that diplomacy failed to exorcise the threatened conflict in Central Europe in 1866, and that France adopted a policy of watchful waiting until the situation assumed a positive form, in order to intervene at the proper moment in behalf of justice and moderation. I am speaking here, of course, of the war between Prussia and Austria, which was the outcome of the war which Prussia and Austria fought against Denmark. Prussia knew from the beginning that it would be unsafe to venture into such a perilous struggle as that with Austria without the support or the neutrality of France. . . .

'Prussia's lightning victory astounded the world and made a deep impression in France. No one imagined that Prussia would win so easily. Quite the contrary. Most people thought that Austria would be victorious, and that the neutral powers of Europe would be called upon to restrain its excesses as a conqueror. But it turned out otherwise; we were called upon to keep Prussia within bounds. Our government newspapers were right in asserting that our wise moderation and influence were to be thanked for the fact that the victorious army halted before the gates of Vienna, that the integrity of Austrian territories was preserved, that the inde-

pendence of the smaller South German states was maintained, and that certain concessions were secured for Denmark. Nevertheless, the terms of the Prague Treaty did not satisfy French public opinion. A militarist party had arisen in our country, which went so far as to urge me to declare war on Prussia while her forces were still upon the Danube. . . .

'Meantime, some reply must be made to the opposition deputies and newspapers, who charged the government with weakness and cowardice, and accused it of lacking courage to defend the true interests of France by force of arms. These were serious charges which, in our opinion, must not be allowed to remain unanswered, especially since it was so easy to prove them false. I replied that I supported the restoration of Great European powers, not out of weakness, but in response to my convictions; and declared with pride, that my policies and acts would have been applauded by the great man who had issued such sage counsels to his successors from his lonely island prison on Saint Helena. In private conversation at that time, and later at the opening of Parliament in 1867, I quoted the following words of Napoleon I: "One of my main purposes was to bring together and unite nations of similar character, who were geographically thrown upon each other, and who had been separated