Chapter Twelve

1871-1873: The Last Visit

NEWS OF THE DEFEAT at Sedan reached Paris in the evening of 2 September 1870. The *Corps Législatif* convened n the following afternoon, in which Jules Favre suggested that the Left would soon be proposing a proclamation that the Bonaparte dynasty had fallen. The Council of Ministers vacillated and called a second meeting for the 4 September. However, they were pre-empted by Eugène Schneider who successfully persuaded the chamber to convene at midnight, and which then informed Parisians of the events at Sedan. In the morning, the Council of Ministers proposed that the *Corps Législatif* elect a five-member *conseil de régence* under Cousin-Montauban. Shortly after midday, a delegation consisting of Louis Buffet, Comte Daru, and Charles Louis Kolb-Bernard, a *centre gauche* Catholic deputy, met Eugénie and urged her to renounce her status as regent. The *Corps Législatif* convened at 1:15 p.m. to put these proposals before a commission, which then elected a compromise proposal by Thiers whereby the *Corps Législatif* would elect a five-member *commission de gouvernment et de défense nationale*.

Meanwhile, numerous Parisians had invaded the Palais Bourbon, preventing the deputies from reconvening while some attempted to break into the Tuileries. In order to avoid the establishment of a *république rouge*, Lèon Gambetta and Favre led a party of citizens and deputies to the Hôtel de Ville to proclaim a moderate republican Government of National Defence. Its composition is important for having comprised old and new enemies of Louis Napoleon: Louis Trochu (president), Favre (vice-president and foreign affairs), Gambetta (interior), Ernest Picard (finance), Jules Simon (education), Victor Rochefort (without portfolio), Emmanuel Arago (mayor of Paris), Adolphe Crémieux (justice), Joseph Magnin (agriculture), Pierre Dorian (public works), Adolphe Le Flô (war), Admiral Martin Fourichon (navy), Émile Kératry (police); also Jules Ferry, Léonce Guyot-Montpayroux, Louis Garnier-Pagès, Dionysius Ordinaire, and Eugène Pelletan. Not one of these had any sympathy for the empire.

Meanwhile, the *Sénat* under Rouher had voted unanimously in favour of the empire, but it dispersed after Baroche opposed his proposal to prorogue. Rouher resigned, and Eugénie was persuaded to stand down as regent. The following day, the *Sénat* was abolished and the *Corps Législatif* dissolved, both without reconvening.

One month after observing the first conflict of the Franco-Prussian War at Saarbrücken on 2 August, the Prince Imperial crossed into Belgium. On 6 September, in a grey coat and deerstalker, he sailed from Ostend to Dover and took rooms in Hastings. Eugénie's more dramatic escape from the Tuileries to the Isle of Wight was effected in its final stage by Sir John Burgoyne, high sheriff of Bedfordshire. After being reminded that he was a gentleman, he reluctantly agreed to take the ex-empress and her small suite across the Channel in his yacht. She landed at Ryde on 8 September in a thin cloak and a black Derby with a heavy veil, making her way to Hastings later that day.

Lionel Dawson Damer, son of Louis Napoleon's host at Came House, was now a captain in the Scots Fusilier Guards and married to the daughter of a Crimean veteran. As a teenager, he had admired the man twenty years his senior and had not forgotten him. Moved by Louis Napoleon's plight, at the end of September he wrote a letter of support to him at Wilhelmshöhe. Louis Napoleon replied on 23 October with a letter published first in the *Dorset County Chronicle* and then (11 November) in *The Times*: 'I am keenly touched with your remembrance … I call up with pleasure the time that I spent at the house of Madame your mother, as well as the friendship which was shown to me by Colonel Dawson Damer … What is passing in France is very sad … Anarchy is making still worse havoc than the needle gun'.

Shortly after 11 o'clock on Sunday 19 March 1871, Louis Napoleon arrived at Wilhelmshöhe station, a free man. There had never been any question of further captivity by Prussia, far less any other kind of punishment. In fact, he arrived at the station to the sound of *Zapfenstreich* (the last post) played by a military band and the cheering of more than 300 supporters filling the platform. He reviewed the troops of the 83rd Regiment guarding the station, and, 'not being able to suppress a tear in his eye',[1] shook hands with Admiral Count von Monts, the sympathetic and chivalrous governor of the castle, who had befriended him during his brief captivity. He then boarded the Hanoverian Railways train for Belgium as a prelude to his ultimate destination: England.

A day later, Eugénie and the Prince Imperial arrived at Dover by special train from Chislehurst. The general manager of the South Eastern Railway Company led them into the Lord Warden Hotel where Eugénie had two hours to prepare, taking a light lunch in the spacious *salle-à-manger* unmolested and practically alone. At 1:40 p.m., the steamer was seen on the horizon, and Eugénie and the Prince Imperial joined the several thousand onlookers who had assembled outside. With them was the respected philologist of the Basque language Louis Bonaparte – Lucien's fifth child by his second marriage to Alexandrine de Bleschamp – as well as Joachim Murat (Achille's nephew) and Plon-Plon. But for the absence of official recognition of Louis Napoleon's arrival from either the Government or the Crown, it was 1855 again.

However, some clumsy piloting spoiled the arrival in a way that would not have happened during the state visit. The steamer should have docked at the pier 'but through the Belgian officials in Dover neglecting to hoist the usual signal flag, [it] steamed into the harbour. There was then a regular stampede on the part of the crowd, which had now assumed vast proportions, and a rush was made for the quay'.[2] As Louis Napoleon stepped off the gangplank accompanied by Fleury and Achille Murat (Joachim's brother), he was approached by a man with hat under his arm who greeted him with a reverential bow. He was, he explained, William Payn, the borough coroner who had met him at the same spot sixteen years earlier as mayor.

The reception the Bonaparte family received once united on English soil was unexpected. At one point, the crowd became so enthusiastic that all three were forcibly raised off the ground and would have been carried on Kentish and French shoulders alike to the hotel but for the timely intervention of the police. Eugénie appeared frightened – her recent experience of crowd psychology in Paris had not been a happy one – but Louis Napoleon smiled and bowed, continually lifting his hat, visibly moved as he walked on Eugénie's arm to the Lord Warden Hotel to cries of 'Vive l'Empereur!' and 'Vive l'Impératrice!' The situation was not unlike 1855, except that when the train left Dover it was going to Chislehurst and not Windsor, to be received by Sir Edward Watkin, chairman of the South Eastern Railway, and not Queen Victoria.

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Eugénie had been renting Camden Place since September 1870 for £300 a year from Nathaniel John Strode, who as the executor of the late Comtesse de Beauregarde had suggested it to her, as he was the owner. The property was located in its own grounds, Camden Park, west of a small common. Beyond lay Camden Wood, a wild area equal in size to the private grounds. Nearby St Mary's Catholic church had been built in the French Decorated style by a local family, with Father Isaac Goddard in the adjoining Priest's House. Central London (Charing Cross) was twenty minutes away by train, with Chislehurst station 500 yards down a straight road. The village green was one hundred paces east across the road, and Chislehurst village no further than St Mary's.

While at Wilhelmshöhe, Louis Napoleon's dreaming had turned increasingly to Bulwer's cottage in Fulham as an English ideal, and he had written Eugénie: 'When I am free I want to come and live with you and Louis in a little cottage with bow-windows and creepers'.[3] Camden Place was an early 1700s two-storey red-bricked house with an imposing clock above the entrance, large wings with open balustrade parapets, twenty rooms, a private chapel, and two kitchens. It was hardly the idyllic English cottage he had been anticipating, but since the permanent residents numbered thirty-nine it was perhaps a fortunate disappointment. The imperial family was joined by Eugénie's nieces, the duchesses of Galistes and Montoro; two physicians, François Corvisart and Henri Conneau with his adolescent son Louis; the Prince Imperial's tutor, Augustin Filon; Eugénie's maid-of-honour, Marie de Larminat; Louis Napoleon's aides-de-camp, Adolphe Clary – a relative of Julie Bonaparte and Desirée Clary – with his wife Angéline, and Charles Davillier; their private secretary, Franceschini Piétri; the household treasurer, Josefa Pollet; Joachim Murat; and seventeen European, and six British, servants.[4] Louis Napoleon's bedroom was a small chamber on the top floor at the back, tucked away in the corner next to one of the semicircular projecting wings.

Louis Napoleon had perhaps never been happier than when he entered the gilt wrought-iron gates of Camden Place. There can be no doubt that after eighteen years in Paris, having justified the marvellous conviction of his youth, he had come home. The marquis of Lorne, who had just married one of Queen Victoria's daughters, described a visit to Camden Place shortly after Louis Napoleon's arrival. He was shown the oak-panelled dining-room and was told 'with a touch of that fatalism for which he was known' that it was part of a large consignment that Louis Napoleon had partially bought in Paris, not knowing who had purchased the remainder: 'He seemed to think it a sign of his curious destiny, the lot of a man to whom strange things were always happening'.[5]

Malmesbury was another early visitor: 'His quiet and calm dignity and absence of all nervousness and irritability were the grandest examples of human moral courage that the severest Stoic could have imagined'. Malmesbury became maudlin:

> I must have shown, for I could not conceal, what I felt, as, again shaking my hand, he said: 'À la guerre, comme à la guerre. C'est bien bon de venir me voir'. In a quiet, natural way he then praised the kindness of the Germans at Wilhelmshöhe; nor did a single complaint escape him during our conversation. He said he had been 'trompé' as to the force and preparation of his army, but without mentioning names; nor did he abuse anyone, until I mentioned General Trochu … 'Ah! Voilà un Drôle'. During half an hour he conversed with me as calmly as in the best days of his life, with a dignity and resignation which might be that of a fatalist; and when I left him that was, not for the first time, my impression.[6]

On Thursday 23 March, the duke of Cambridge visited Louis Napoleon: 'He received me most warmly and kindly, and I found him looking remarkably well, grown stout … He was much more cheerful than one would have expected. He talked much of all that was going on … sadly distressed at the events in Paris'.[7] The duke's remark on how well Louis Napoleon looked was a testament to how a few days at

Camden Place had improved his health, and how easily the imperial head suddenly lay once it had been shorn of its uneasy crown. A descendant of the earl and countess of Cork recalled that when they visited Louis Napoleon they found him overcome with emotion at being a simple man in England once again, confessing to the countess: 'Enfin, je suis bien heureux de me trouver en Angleterre'.[8]

Louis Napoleon was certainly sincere in this, and Camden Place assumed the active life, if not the physical aspect, of the picture-postcard English rose-cottage. There was afternoon tea in the garden, card-playing in the picture-gallery, smoking in the drawing-room, billiards in the games room, piano-playing in the hall, and communal dinners for family and staff alike. Sunday afternoons at 3 o'clock were 'open house' at Camden Place for all visitors, according to Continental custom.

When driving, either Clary or Davillier would accompany Louis Napoleon carrying twelve shillings for distribution to the local poor. When walking alone on the common, Louis Napoleon, having filled his pockets with numerous pennies, would give them out to any local children he might meet. His quiet, subdued benevolence contrasts well with the behaviour of one of his severest critics, now returned to France after his self-imposed exile of eighteen years. Every 24 December, until 1869, Victor Hugo held a 'Christmas Fête' at Hauteville House on Guernsey at which a number of specially invited poor children were filled with rich food and covered with fine clothes in a carefully orchestrated piece of republican spin. Philanthropists had to listen to his annual speeches, all carefully reported to the world, as Hugo detailed the good he had done in figures and percentages. In addition, he used the occasions to make republican political comments that the assembled children could not have understood but nevertheless had to endure.

Circumstances notwithstanding, etiquette required Louis Napoleon and Queen Victoria to meet. On 25 March, the Prince of Wales called to present details of his invitation, and two days later Louis Napoleon made the journey to Windsor with Eugénie and Achille Murat, arriving at the castle at 3 o'clock. Imperial pretensions gone, Victoria saw only a sad, sick old man who had once been her friend. In the happy absence of Albertine rhetoric, she realized that he could be one again. 'I went to the door … and embraced the Emperor "comme de riguer". It was a moving moment … He had tears in his eyes … and said "Il y a bien longtemps que je n'ai vu votre Majesté"'.[9] Victoria led Louis Napoleon up the stairs leading to the Audience Room, where for half an hour the personalities who were England and France incarnate discussed the situation presented by his voluntary exile, reaching an amicable diplomatic arrangement. Shortly after 3:30, Louis Napoleon was on his way back to Chislehurst.

On 3 April, Victoria returned the visit, riding from the station to Camden Place where the Prince Imperial stood to attention at the door: 'The Emperor led me into the Drawing-room, where we sat down. Prince Joachim Murat came in with us … The dreadful state of Paris was talked of, and the Empress was greatly excited at it, the Emperor quieter. He only said 'Je ne vois pas comment ils peuvent payer'. The heat in the room overpowering'.[10]

Victoria left Camden Place impressed by Louis Napoleon's humility and reluctance to attack those who had betrayed him. Eugénie, unrestrained by court etiquette – although this consideration had rarely troubled her in the past – unleashed her legendary Latina fury against the treacherous French in general and General Trochu in particular. Louis Napoleon listened in silence while smoking one of his interminable cigarettes.

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Just as Ham did not became a second St Helena so Camden Place would not witness the spurious justifications of Malmaison after Waterloo.

Instead, Louis Napoleon settled down to the life of the English *bourgeois gentilhomme* that suited him so well, and rather than attack his enemies he remembered his friends. Consequently, they remembered him. On 24 March, three senior officers at the Junior United Service Club motioned that his honourary membership should be resumed. The honour was also extended to the Prince Imperial, who was serving under Earl Darnley in the West Kent (Queen's Own) Yeomanry Cavalry in preparation for his entry into the Royal Military Academy at Woolwich. On 31 March, a letter from Franceschini Piétri – a distant relative of the late prefect of police – was read out 'stating that both the Emperor and the Prince Imperial will be most happy to become Honourary Members of the Club'.[11] The Athenæum then made a similar offer, but Louis Napoleon declined, limiting his membership to one club only, due to reasons of health.

On 4 April, Louis Napoleon opened his doors to photographers from the London Stereoscopic Company who took a series of photographs of the family, individual portraits and combinations, some stiffly posed and others more natural. These would be the last photographs taken of Louis Napoleon while living. Henry Brackenbury, professor of military history at Woolwich, saw Louis Napoleon several times just after these sessions. On one occasion, he found him playing a game of *solitaire*, which his visit caused to be interrupted. Without a murmur of reprobation, Louis Napoleon put down his cards and he and Brackenbury took tea and talked, discussing in particular his book on artillery, which Brackenbury told him he thought 'the best book in existence on the antiquarian side of the subject'.[12] When he left, at his own pleasure, he looked over his shoulder and noticed that Louis Napoleon had gone straight back to his table and continued with his game.

But Louis Napoleon's favourite *passe-temps* during his last two English summers was to walk to the cricketing green and watch as many of the local matches as time and health allowed. Louis Napoleon had seen the game being played in the Bois de Boulogne by the Paris Cricket Club, but he had little understanding of it, although he was keen to learn. In the last week of June 1865, he had watched a game between the Club and the 73rd Regiment of Foot and made his enquiry: 'The Emperor, after a long talk with the captain of the 73rd on the cricket battle-field, declared that he could not understand anything about it'.[13] Nevertheless, he expressed his interest in the game and hoped that the Prince Imperial would learn it. Six years later, he asked the Chislehurst Club secretary to explain the rules to him again. Whether he fully understood them after this second attempt is not known, but when Bickley Park played Beckenham he personally congratulated a long-off fielder who made a spectacular run and catch directly in front of where he was sitting.

The first time Louis Napoleon watched Chislehurst (West Kent) play, however, in 1872, he made a terrible *faux pas*. Approaching Frederick Joseph Edlmann, a local justice of the peace and the captain of the team, during the tea interval in the pavilion, he asked him whether the game was being played for money. Edlmann's sense of shock must have been tangible: 'No, Sire, for honour!'[14] Louis Napoleon may have acquainted himself with the rules, but clearly he did not understand the spirit of the game. Eugénie thought the incident amusing, and she hoped that the Prince Imperial would take enough interest in cricket to be able to play the following year. Shortly afterwards, she was surprised and moved when the Club presented her son with a full cricket outfit, including a bat, balls, and wickets.

To the credit of the local inhabitants, interest in the imperial family at Chislehurst was restrained. Louis Napoleon became everybody's friend, and he was treated as such, without any sycophantic lionising or tiresome incursions of his privacy. On Saturday 17 June 1871, workers employed in the sewage department of the Greenwich District Board of Works assembled at the Black Horse public house in neighbouring Sidcup for their annual dinner, organized by the contractor and manager. They afterwards marched the two miles down Chislehurst Road and Ashfield Lane, accompanied by a brass band, and stopped outside Camden Place to play God Save the Queen and Auld Lang Syne. After playing each tune, they cheered, the quite unexpected ovation eventually bringing the entire imperial family out of the house. The solicitor of the firm was then delegated to read out the address, in which he hoped:

> that the clouds which had hung so long over France might soon be dispelled, and that recent misfortunes might be followed by the restoration of the Empire and the consolidation of the friendship which by his means had existed between France and England. The Emperor, who was visibly affected, said, in reply, he felt much flattered … He felt that he had always been a good friend to England (loud cries from the workmen, 'we know you have – you have', accompanied by three cheers each for the Emperor, the Empress, and the Prince Imperial). The Emperor then shook hands with several of those present, upon which the band struck up 'We May be Happy Yet' [a cheerful song of hope by Balfe], and the Emperor … returned to the house, amid the ringing cheers of all present.[15]

On 20 June, Louis Napoleon visited Woolwich Arsenal where he inspected a battery of Royal Horse Artillery and a field battery of Royal Artillery on Plumstead Common, guided by Crimean veteran Sir David Wood, general commandant of the Woolwich garrison and Royal Artillery. Louis Napoleon had maintained his early interest in artillery and ballistics, and at the Royal Arsenal the chemist to the War Department, Frederick Abel, demonstrated to him a series of experiments with electrical gadgets designed to test the velocity of shells. In addition, he demonstrated the function of the newly designed chronoscope, used to measure the stress on guns and projectiles. Abel, the foremost expert on explosives, was working on the theoretical possibility of cordite, although for reasons of security he could not reveal details to Louis Napoleon.

Gun cotton, on the other hand, he could. This was an explosive the French had not known even though it had been invented in Basel as far back as 1846. For nearly two decades it had been kept within Germany until, in 1862, its secrets were passed to Britain. Following the commission to appoint a production and testing programme, in December 1871, it had reached a sufficient level of development for its power to be safely demonstrated with massive explosions for Louis Napoleon's benefit. Afterwards, he inspected the wheel factory of the Royal Carriage Department, where he was allowed to forget any unpleasant memories that Abel's bombs may have brought back to him.

On Wednesday 28 June, Louis Napoleon travelled on his own to London, at the request of the Army & Navy Club in Pall Mall, to drink and dine with them once again, but as a guest since he again declined membership. His honourary membership of the Junior United Service Club was also respected with a visit, when he took the opportunity to see the first annual International Exhibition at South Kensington, opened on 1 May. As usual, he took a deep interest in the machines and scientific instruments on display, particularly a new device for producing embossed visiting cards without any need for ink. Now in almost constant pain, these journeys must have made a poignant contrast to those he had made thirty-two years previously as Prince-Pretender, but he rarely allowed the symptoms of his illnesses to become noticeable to others. According to the Junior United Service Club, Louis Napoleon 'had the air of a man thoroughly disembarrassed of care and ready to be amused with any new incident that may present itself'.[16]

On 8 July, Louis Napoleon and Eugénie travelled to Frogmore to meet Prince and Princess Christian of Schleswig-Holstein. Victoria took the opportunity to visit them, finding that they both had improved. Louis Napoleon 'spoke with horror of the dreadful events in Paris, and with sorrow of the burning of the Tuileries, where he had lost so many souvenirs. It is very sad and hard. They were both visibly pleased when they heard Vicky and Fritz [empress and emperor of Germany] had enquired after them'.[17] The Franco-Prussian war had ended on 10 May with the signing of the Treaty of Frankfurt-am-Main between Bismarck and Favre, ratified eight days later. The Commune, however, did not surrender to the Versaillaises under Marshal Marie MacMahon until 1 June, having set fire to many parts of Paris on 23 May. The flames reduced the Tuileries and the Hôtel de Ville to black shells, destroying most of the manuscripts and works of art they contained.

After the treaty, Victoria altered her view of Louis Napoleon's personal involvement in France's defeat. That she could have held any other view was as much due to Bismarck as to Albert's prejudicial influence. Bismarck had arranged matters so skillfully that his contemporaries only gradually learned the extent of his involvement in affairs that at first seemed to have nothing to do with him. The degree of Louis Napoleon's personal culpability as reckoned in Victoria's household before the treaty was concisely stated by Henry Ponsonby, her private secretary, in a letter of 9 September:

> I see nothing to pity. He has dragged down his nation to ruin, plunged them into an awful war, when it was his duty to have known they were unfit for it, taken command when he knew he could do nothing and finally in the midst of a starving disorganized army, surrendered himself prisoner before them and drove out in the smartest carriage with splendid footmen, equerries, etc., to live at ease in a beautiful castle, while France is at its last gasp. I can't conceive who can say a word for him. He has shown himself to be an imposter and a coward and the country which he made dependent on his will is in a hopeless state … One thing is evident: the Bonapartes are at an end in France.[18]

Bismarck's involvement in events became clear chiefly as a result of communications from Robert Morier, ambassador in Berlin. For eighteen years, Morier held numerous positions at various German courts gaining an intimacy with Prussian affairs widely recognized to be unrivalled outside Potsdam and Berlin. After the war, he became the first diplomat to publicize Bismarck's ingenious but amoral *Weltpolitik*. Ponsonby, however, did not believe him: 'Colonel Ponsonby with his humble duty begs leave to express his surprise at Mr Morier's statement, which is so confidently made as to lead one to believe Mr Morier has no doubt of the case'.[19] Many in England would soon have 'no doubt of the case', but sadly the conversion would not be accompanied by public or private acknowledgement – far less an apology – to Louis Napoleon at Camden Place.

On 19 February 1866, 'The Cigar-Ship' was launched from Hepworth's shipyard on the Isle of Dogs. Ross Winans of Baltimore, with his son Walter de Kay, both now living in Clarges Street, had designed and funded a 256-foot steam-yacht, the *Ross Winans*, based on a novel principle of screw propulsion in which the hull became two revolving blades. Eighteen feet short of each tapered end was a 22-foot diameter fan of nine blades revolving at right angles to it. The sections of the hull between each fan and its end formed part of the fixed shaft and therefore turned with it, each against the other to compensate for unilateral drag but having their blades so arranged as to give uniform pull in whichever direction.

At 600 tons displacement, the *Ross Winans* was the largest and most powerful of four such vessels the brothers had already designed and built since the 1850s. Since it lay in the water almost to the deck, and was smooth, it had a top speed of twenty knots and was unaffected by turbulence, behaving much like a modern submarine on surface run. Louis Napoleon and Achille Murat were invited for a private trip on 18 July. With a skeleton crew under an officer of the Royal Artillery, they weighed anchor – that is, raised the two steel cylinders that had been driven into the mud beneath into their smooth slots – at 3 o'clock in the afternoon.

For over two hours, the *Ross Winans*, one of the most extraordinary technical innovations of an extraordinary technical age – and now quite forgotten –, steamed up and down the river with an ex-emperor protruding from the squat conical tower, gazing no doubte with melancholy nostalgia as he passed directly under the famous *cottage orné* in Fulham once each way.

On 25 July, Louis Napoleon reacquainted himself with an old friend. Shortly after his escape from Ham, he had met Angela Burdett-Coutts, granddaughter of Thomas Coutts and the wealthiest heiress in England. After the death of the duchess of St Albans, wife of the banker, the enormous Coutts fortune devolved to Angela who then added her mother's maiden name to her own. In order to give his heiress a measure of protection, Thomas Coutts had engineered matters in such a way that she stood to lose most of her fortune if she chose not to marry an Englishman. Republican propaganda later claimed that Louis Napoleon had attempted to exploit her in 1846 but found his advances repulsed by the inheritance clause. This, like most Leftist statements concerning Napoleon III, is quite untrue. Her Christian compassion and selfless philanthropy had immediately struck Louis Napoleon, and back then she was simply inappropriate as an object for satisfying his peculiar taste in women.

In July 1871, Burdett-Coutts's activities earned for her a barony, and Louis Napoleon felt obliged to congratulate her in person.

He quite correctly arrived at Holly Lodge in Highgate not alone but with the Prince Imperial and the Duc de Bassano. It was a happy meeting at a personal level, and Louis Napoleon was given an open invitation to stay at the baroness's house in Torquay, Devon. But it was also a short visit made awkward by the presence of a particular American. William Lehman Bartlett was almost four decades younger than Burdett-Coutts, and, unknown to Louis Napoleon, he was conducting an affair with her to lay his hands on her fortune that would result in a disastrous marriage in contravention of the terms of her inheritance. In other words, Bartlett was actually doing in 1871 precisely what Louis Napoleon had been falsely accused of doing in 1846, except that being an American – and therefore a 'republican' – meant that there was no censure of Bartlett from the Left as there had been respecting an imperial Prince-Pretender.

Since August 1870, Bartlett had been an Old Boy of nearby Highgate School, whose headmaster, John Bradley Dyne, had originally recommended him to Burdett-Coutts in the capacity of personal secretary. Bartlett, knowing the school fixtures and also Louis Napoleon's recent passion for cricket, informed him of a match then underway behind the school boarding house on Bishop's Wood Road. Whether Bartlett mentioned this to encourage the – to him – unwelcome guest to leave is not known, but it certainly had that effect. Perhaps Louis Napoleon had realized that something most peculiar was going on between his hostess and her American guest, and he was as welcoming of the excuse to leave as Bartlett had been in giving it.

At amy rate, Louis Napoleon entered the grounds of the school and sat by the temporary pavilion a few seats away from Archibald Campbell Tait, who, with his thick, curly, longish hair and aquiline nose was one of the most publicly recognisable men of his day. However, eyes were not fixed on the archbishop of Canterbury but on Louis Napoleon, who was immediately recognized, his entirely unexpected presence astonishing everyone. After the match, he was approached by Dyne who asked him to honour the school by planting an oak sapling in the grounds, which he was happy to do. This done, Louis Napoleon suggested that the boys might be given a special holiday to mark the occasion, which suggestion Dyne accepted. Unsurprisingly, the young audience greeted the suggestion and decision with considerable and unrestrained schoolboy cheering.

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Saturday 9 September 1871 saw the first major geographical movement of the Bonapartes since their arrival in England. Louis Napoleon, Eugénie, and the Prince Imperial travelled to Southampton by train where Eugénie took a steamer for Spain, via Lisbon, to visit her mother for two months. Father and son then continued on to Torquay, accompanied by Joachim Murat, Corvisart, Davillier, and Clary. The party took up residence in Burdett-Coutts's neo-Gothic house at Lower Brixham on the south side of Tor Bay – she was in London – and also the new Imperial Hotel on Park Hill with its unrivalled view of Tor Bay. Louis Napoleon admired the cuisine, and on congratulating the chef discovered him to be a fellow exile who had been on the kitchen staff at the Tuileries until 1870.

While they were enrolled as patrons of the Torquay Boating Club and spending most of their time yachting on a craft placed at their disposal, it was rumoured that Louis Napoleon was in fact exploring Devon looking for land to buy in order to settle down. This was untrue, although the previous month he had sent part of his suite to Arenenberg to investigate the possibility of buying up some of the estates around it, but without success.

It is tempting to believe that as Louis Napoleon sailed around Tor Bay he kept his mind fixed on the *Bellerophon*, anchored there fifty-six years earlier; but as usual he kept his thoughts to himself. What is known is that while sailing across the River Dart to Kingswear he accidentally dropped his Malacca cane topped with a solid gold imperial eagle into the water. Hardly an affectation by this stage, he in fact could not be without it, as he often required it for prosthetic reasons. Of all people, it was William Bartlett, also staying locally, who heard about the loss and who sailed to the exact spot, diving in and retrieving it for Louis Napoleon on his sixth attempt, most probably as a means of further ingratiating himself with his aged lover, although doing so with an ex-emperor of the French now resident in England did Bartlett no harm either.

On 18 October, the party left Torquay for Exeter, narrowly missing Bulwer-Lytton who was on his way to Torquay to die and whom Louis Napoleon had not seen since 1839. Sadly, neither man had known of the other's movements, and they did not meet. Close to Exeter, at Haldon House in Kenn, they lunched with Sir Lawrence and Lady Palk, whom they knew from their Torquay seat at Lincombe Hill. Palk was Conservative member for East Devonshire and a great friend of Disraeli. Regrettably, Disraeli was not one of the guests. Instead, Louis Napoleon dined with Bartholomew Gidley, city mayor of Exeter, Baroness Clifford of Chudleigh, and Lady Mary

Duckworth, wife of a former Tory member for Exeter. It was a bright occasion, and Sir Lawrence gave the Prince Imperial an English bulldog as a gift.

Encouraged by Gidley's eulogy on the county capital, Louis Napoleon spent that afternoon in Exeter. The principal attraction was a visit to the medieval cathedral and close in the old eastern quarter where he and his son were given a guided tour by Archdeacon Philip Freeman – a fortunate circumstance, since the erudite Freeman was then writing his *History of Exeter Cathedral*. However, the choir was undergoing extensive restoration, begun the previous year, and it was cordoned off. There was also a solemn atmosphere, officially imposed at the cathedral, due to the martyrdom (20 September) of Bishop Patteson of Melanesia who had been clubbed to death by the natives of the island of Nukapu, and who had been ordained at Exeter in 1853. Nevertheless, Freeman showed Louis Napoleon the library above the cloister with its collection of over 8,000 rare books and manuscripts, including the *Codex Exoniensis* with its Anglo-Saxon poems and riddles.

The party travelled to Bath where a local paper observed the scene at the station:

> He looked in the best of health and spirits, especially for a man of sixty-four … on his way across the platform and down the steps he had to shake hands with many a warm admirer, while, more demonstrative still, more than one of the crowd, not content with this, patted, or rather, thumped, the Emperor's back. Such a greeting we should think he never had in the palmiest days of the Second Empire.[20]

Since Louis Napoleon had been occasionally greeted with bombs and bullets in the 'palmiest days of the Second Empire', to be 'thumped' on the back would certainly not have bothered him.

Father and son stayed at the York House Hotel, a large Georgian building on the south side of George Street in the northwest of the city. It was only one night, but nevertheless more than 2,000 people gathered on the wide, raised pavement opposite. Twice on the following morning Louis Napoleon had to go out onto the balcony to appease them. A journalist managed to get a few words out of the taciturn exile, asking half-jokingly whether he would ever consider becoming a special constable again if the need arose. He was astonished when, in all seriousness, Louis Napoleon explained that even at his age and state of health he would.

On Thursday 19 October, after showing the Prince Imperial the Pulteney Hotel where he had stayed during the fifth visit, Louis Napoleon was in Bath before another crowd of over 2,000 as he left for London. Soon after returning to Camden Place, he wrote Sir Lawrence Palk, sending his wife Maria two photographs of himself as she had requested, thanking them both 'for all the friendly attentions that you have shown me during my stay in Torquay'.[21] Lady Palk had grown particularly fond of him, making the familiar observation – in private, naturally – that he was a perfect gentleman, in contradistinction to his imperial uncle.

At the beginning of July, the Prince of Wales invited Louis Napoleon to dine at the Marlborough-Windham Club at 53 Pall Mall where he met the legal parliamentarian Baron Redesdale. 'His conversation', wrote Redesdale,

> was pointed by a certain dry, sardonic humour accentuated by his rather saturnine appearance. He was looking miserably ill, his face ashen grey and his lack-lustre eyes significant of the pain by which for years he had been tortured. His figure was bowed and aged – obviously a man waging an unequal war with disease. He talked a good deal about the missionary question in China and Korea, upon which he was thoroughly well posted … After half an hour's talk with him I understood the charm which he exercised over men and women when he chose to do so. I also understood that when Kinglake fired all the arrows of bitterness at him, there could be but one cause – a woman.[22]

Redesdale had understood more about Louis Napoleon – and the Crimean War – in this brief meeting than many statesmen and commentators had done in twenty years.

At the end of August, the imperial family went to Sheerness on the Isle of Sheppey to see Brunel's *Great Eastern*, then docked in the naval yard at Blue Town. After laying several notable undersea cables, this vast ship – 692 feet and 32,000 tons displacement – was edging towards its fate as a showboat on the Mersey before being broken up. Louis Napoleon had more than a scientific interest in it. In July 1868, he had approved the twenty-year concession, to run from 1 September 1869 under Paul Reuter and Baron d'Erlanger, to the French Atlantic Telegraph Company for the proposed link from Minou to Brest, then across the Atlantic to the island of St Pierre, and finally on to Duxbury, Massachusetts. The laying of the cable was completed on 23 July by the *Great Eastern,* the only ship capable of carrying the enormous quantity of wire and a drum large enough to accommodate it. The *Chiltern* and the *Hawk* had laid the shore end of the cable, but Louis Napoleon had watched the *Great Eastern* take up the work in the bay before it steamed into the horizon. Subsequently, on Wednesday 28 July, he had sent the first transatlantic message of goodwill to President Grant.

* * *

Lady Cowley had been in Vichy for her health at the time of Sedan. Afterwards, while at Frankfurt-am-Main, she insisted on visiting Louis Napoleon at Wilhelmshöhe, becoming the first person to do so after his capture. The Cowleys became the first English to help Eugénie and Louis Napoleon on their respective arrivals in England, corresponding frequently, and occasionally visiting Camden Place. Lady Cowley sent Eugénie a brace of pheasants on the day she moved in, and one of Louis Napoleon's first letters of 1872 was written to Cowley expressing his gratitude for everything they had done for them after Cowley had written some expressions of hope to the imperial family regarding their future:

> I am always mindful of your memory that reminds me of all the joys we experienced together. I thank you for the prayers that you composed for the Empress, for my son, and for me. I know that they proceed from my heart as well – the news from France is always very sombre and God knows what the future will yet bring to our unfortunate country.[23]

Throughout the winter of 1871, the Prince of Wales suffered a severe attack of typhoid that nearly ended his life. He recovered in the New Year, and on 27 February, Queen Victoria led a procession from Buckingham Palace to St Paul's Cathedral for a specially written anthem and *Te Deum* of deliverance. Louis Napoleon and Eugénie were invited to take the fullest part in the proceedings, but because of ill-health 'poor' Louis Napoleon, 'anxious to see the Procession quietly',[24] remained in the Palace, watching through a window as the procession disappeared down The Mall. This disappointed him, as the event was one of enormous pomp that helped restore Victoria's popularity following her seclusion subsequent to Albert's death, and the crowds, decorations, and attendant festivities with triumphal arches and banners were almost a match for those of the state visit of 1855.

However, on 20 April, Victoria officially returned this visit on the occasion of Louis Napoleon's sixty-fourth birthday. She arrived at Camden Place in an open landau a little after 4 o'clock: 'An immense number of people out … The Emperor, Empress, and Prince Imperial received us at the door, the Emperor leading me into the

Drawing-room. Here we remained with them. They were anxious to hear about my journey and I think the Empress seemed rather pleased when I said I had no wish to see Paris'.[25] The meeting was once again a happy one, but also once again far too hot for Victoria. It was the last time she and Louis Napoleon would meet.

The spring and summer months were spent more or less quietly at Chislehurst. On 12 May, following the decision of the Council of Enquiry in Paris into the capitulation at Sedan, Louis Napoleon wrote an open letter to his former generals. In it he expressed his technical guilt as Head of State, but stressed his innocence as a man who had been led by 'cruel and inexorable necessity', stating that 'My heart was broken, but my conscience was tranquil'.[26] Reports from Paris on the willful destruction of all symbols relating to the empire and the changing of street names annoyed him, particularly when rue 10 Décembre was renamed rue 4 Septembre; the one commemorated a free election, while the other a usurpation. But Louis Napoleon's annoyance did not extend any further than making a note to the effect that he had never changed the names of any Republican, Bourbon or Orleans streets, or monuments, in Paris. This was true enough, although he had, of course, with Haussmann's help necessarily eliminated some of them altogether.

In late August, one of the Camden Place English servant girls, Hannah Wilton, stole seven £20 Bank of England notes from Louis Napoleon's personal cash box, as well as some expensive linen. She was a teenage local girl born in Dublin who had an older sister who also worked at Camden Place as a laundry maid. Hannah had done this at the instigation of her boyfriend, who had persuaded her to elope with him, but they were both caught trying to buy an expensive coat in Cheapside with one of the notes. They were tried at Sidcup Magistrate's Court in September where the boy was acquitted, the sister not implicated, but Hannah indicted for larceny. Louis Napoleon wrote to the magistrate asking him to be lenient, which he was, sentencing her to three months' imprisonment, a term he made clear would have been double that – the maximum he could impose as a magistrate – but for Louis Napoleon's personal intervention.

Music was also a feature of Camden Place life. London suffered a smallpox epidemic from July to September, and a proposed visit to the opera had to be cancelled. Instead, Kristina Nilsson came to give a recital, and the Italian soprano Adelina Patti – since 1868 married to the Marquis de Caux, former equerry to Louis Napoleon – came by to sing *a cappella*.

Arthur Sullivan had gone to Paris with the music scholar and civil engineer George Grove for the International Exposition of 1867 where he befriended Henri Conneau and his wife Joséphine – a talented singer. By this time, Conneau was a member of the *Corps Législatif*, the *Académie de Médecin*, and chief of medical staff at the imperial household. When the Conneaus escaped to England, they made contact with Sullivan, inviting him to Camden Place first with Louis Napoleon's permission then at his request. 'They were exceedingly kind to me', Sullivan remembered of the imperial couple, 'and frequently invited me down to Chislehurst. The Emperor was always sad and somewhat silent, and wore the air of a man who had suffered great pain … and I rarely saw him smile', noting that both he and Louis Napoleon were martyrs to 'the same complaint' – severe kidney troubles. Eugénie, on the contrary, was 'bright and cheerful' and after their meals would ask Sullivan to play the piano while Mme Conneau sang. Sullivan also befriended the Prince Imperial, who had 'the tastes and accomplishments of a young Englishman'.[27]

* * *

On Monday 6 August, Louis Napoleon took the 10 o'clock express to Brighton with Conneau, Piétri, and Davillier to take the sea air, staying in the recently opened Grand Hotel. Eugénie had taken the Prince Imperial on a tour of Scotland, and for almost two weeks Louis Napoleon once again experienced the life of a solitary exile, retinue notwithstanding.

The British Association for the Advancement of Science was the principal organization in England designed to promote understanding of all scientific matters among lay people, as well as providing a forum for inter-disciplinary discussion among scientists. Each year it held a seven-day conference in a different town, under a new president, providing lectures and events to which, uniquely, members of the public had access and with which they had as much involvement as the scientific community. By chance, the 42nd annual meeting was being held at Brighton at the time of Louis Napoleon's visit.

William Carpenter was a professor of forensic medicine and registrar at University College London, but his passion was zoology and botany, and since each annual president stamped the general scientific atmosphere of the meeting with his particular field so the Brighton meeting had a strong bias towards natural history. The event opened on 14 August with Carpenter giving the inaugural lecture, and Louis Napoleon, with his lifelong natural curiosity for all things scientific, attended.

The visit was not widely reported, but within hours an unsympathetic gossip had communicated the fact to Thomas Huxley, who fairly exploded when he heard how the entire event had been indelibly sullied by the exile's noxious presence. Himself a former president in 1870, Huxley was at this time busy as a member of the newly constituted London School Board and so had been unable to attend. He wrote a colleague: 'and then there was that scoundrel Louis Napoleon – to whom no honest man ought to speak – gracing the scene. I am right glad I was out of it'.[28]

According to Holyoake, Wilfrid de Fonvielle, a journalist with *La Liberté*, had attended the same lecture. Wilfrid happened to be the brother of Ulrich de Fonvielle, the republican journalist who had been at 59 rue d'Auteuil when Pierre Bonaparte shot and killed the extreme Left journalist Victor Noir on 10 January 1870, for which murder Louis Napoleon's cousin was acquitted to the disgust of republicans. This supposed coincidence inspired Holyoake to introduce a complex and farcical account – allegedly observed by Fonvielle and later described to him – of how a box of throat lozenges was delivered to an Anglican clergyman in the audience by being hurled through the air in front of Louis Napoleon, who was momentarily startled as he imagined it to be a bomb. When a frightened Louis Napoleon told this story to Eugénie, she became terrified and insisted that they leave Brighton – where they had been looking for a house to buy – at once for fear of a genuine assassination attempt.

Holyoake's 'memoirs' are filled with lies, and this is another example. He was wrong to say that the *Fête Nationale* 'immediately preceded the meeting'[29] because it followed it. Eugénie was not in Brighton but Scotland, and Louis Napoleon had never looked for a house in Brighton, or anywhere else. The eventual reunion there, and the casual and leisurely departure for the Isle of Wight, hardly justified Holyoake's ludicrous title for the story: 'Flight of the Emperor Napoleon from Brighton'.

Holyoake included an interesting letter in his story in a feeble attempt to lend it veracity, although it was in fact entirely favourable to Louis Napoleon – a fact he was obliged to explain away by claiming that its author was being disingenuous. After the Association, in its subsequent reports to the local press, had described Louis Napoleon as 'Emperor of the French', certain prominent Republicans in Paris complained. George Griffith, the assistant-general secretary, was obliged to respond in an open letter that Holyoake later copied out:

> It is to be regretted that you have felt it necessary to give a political significance to a matter which has in no way a political bearing. It is as a foreigner who has always taken a prominent interest in science that the ticket has been given to the late Emperor of the French. By this course the Association has not intended to express any opinion on the position of the late Emperor of the French as either *de facto* or *de juro* ruler of France.[30]

It might be argued more easily, and to the contrary, that Griffith's gratuitous use of the title twice, in combination with the subtle but devastating opening dozen words, had been calculated to state his honest position on the issue, and to further annoy his republican critics in Paris.

The 'ticket' Griffith referred to was a pass enabling Louis Napoleon to visit any of the lectures and shows laid on for the Association's stay in Brighton. After the Prince Imperial and his small suite arrived in Brighton – Eugénie had returned to Camden Place – father and son attended a lecture given by Henry Stanley under the title *How I found Livingstone*, after the book of the same name that had just been published and which the lectures had been contrived to publicize.

The lecture ended with Stanley's arrival at Ujiji and the dramatic recitation of the paragraph from his book that would introduce one of the best-loved quotations into the English language: 'I would have run to him, only I was a coward in the face of such a mob – would have embraced him, but that I did not know how he would receive me; so I did what moral cowardice and false pride suggested was the best thing – walked deliberately to him, took off my hat, and said: "Dr Livingstone, I presume?"' It was reported that after every one of these lectures the audience gasped and cheered, many of them jumping to their feet and shouting, although it is unlikely that Louis Napoleon followed their example.

The Brighton Aquarium had been inaugurated on 30 March and formally opened on 10 August to coincide with the theme of the British Association's meeting. On Saturday 17, Louis Napoleon took the Prince Imperial to see it. George Somes, the chairman of the board of directors, flanked by the engineer, manager, and vice-chairman of the project, received them at the door. Henry Lee, the celebrated naturalist, had been appointed advisor to the aquarium and was instructed to guide Louis Napoleon and the Prince Imperial around the establishment, lecturing as he went on 'the peculiarities and habits of the fish, &c., in the various tanks', to which the guests 'listened with interest'.[31]

After Brighton, Louis Napoleon and the Prince Imperial did not return to Chislehurst. Accompanied by Eugénie, who had now also joined them, they left for Cowes on the Isle of Wight at the beginning of September, staying first at the Marine Hotel. When the countess of Cardigan heard this, she offered them her own villa for the duration. Unfortunately, by the time Louis Napoleon was presented with the offer, two properties had been already rented by them at the end of the Parade: Beaulieu House and Paou-Shun Villa. Louis Napoleon and Eugénie occupied the first with their suite, while the second – decorated in the style of a ship by an eccentric admiral – became the home of the Prince Imperial and his suite.

One of Louis Napoleon's reasons for choosing Cowes out of season – after Cowes week at the beginning of August – was privacy. But in or out of season what could not be avoided was yachting, something for which Louis Napoleon had more than a passing interest, having become a member of the Royal Yacht Squadron on 6 August 1857 when he had visited Victoria at Osborne. He had then inaugurated 'The

Napoleon Cup' as a one-off event between St Helens and Cherbourg on Friday 6 August 1858 to commemorate the first anniversary of his admission to the exclusive club. Baron Londesborough, president of the London and Middlesex Archæological Society, won and accepted the prize from Louis Napoleon in person, a silver tankard crowned by a group of sculpted lion hunters surrounded by an embossed garland bearing the imperial crown, insignia, and details of the race. It had been crafted by the royal jeweller and goldsmith Charles Hancock, who the previous October had modelled Louis Napoleon on horseback as the unique prize for the Doncaster races.

There was a further association with Cowes. Louis Napoleon had named the steam-yacht *Eugénie* for Rear-Admiral Edward Frankland, and in 1859 he had bought it from him and donated it to the club.

The Royal Yacht Squadron had its home by the marina in West Cowes, and it was there that the Wall Street millionaire Leonard Jerome had lodged his yacht for that year's race while the family rented Rosetta Cottage, facing the sea near the lighthouse at Egypt Point. The 'King of Wall Street' made his fortune during the panic of 1857, and the following year moved with his family to Paris where he was introduced to Louis Napoleon at the Tuileries. Although they stayed on the avenue des Champs-Élysées for only a year, it was enough for Louis Napoleon and Jerome to form a lasting friendship. In 1867, Clara Jerome separated from her husband and took their three daughters back to Paris where she was pursued by Persigny and became friends with Eugénie, while her daughter Jennie speedily acquired a modest crush on the Prince Imperial.

After Sedan, Jerome returned to the fold, taking his family first to London then the Isle of Wight to present Jennie at the Squadron Ball. All that over, Louis Napoleon sent him an invitation to sail around the island in the name of 'Le Comte de Pierrefonds' since Eugénie's brother-in-law the Duque de Alba had also arrived at Cowes with his daughters Montoro and Galistes.

This pseudonym, which Louis Napoleon sometimes used for practical joking, was taken from the ruined castle of Pierrefonds northeast of Paris, close to Compiègne, originally built in about 1400. In 1857, Louis Napoleon engaged Eugène Viollet-le-Duc to restore it as a gothic fantasy for his private use, a task that was largely completed by 1866. This sober and scholarly self-indulgence was known to few at the time. Indeed, although Louis Napoleon and Eugénie were officially living in England as the earl and countess of Pierrefonds, and not as the emperor and empress of the French, virtually nobody had heard of the title, least of all Jerome. He paced around for days in an attitude of increasing exasperation as the hour of the trip approached and he still had no idea whom to see about it before Piétri confessed, just in time, that it was Louis Napoleon. By this time, the weather was unfavourable, but the trip nevertheless went ahead. Jennie:

> The expedition was rather a failure, owing to the roughness of the sea … The Mesdemoiselles d'Albe were desperately ill, and lay on the deck in a state of coma … The Prince Imperial, full of life and spirits, chaffed everyone, some of his jokes falling rather flat on the Spaniards, who were feeling anything but bright … I can see now the Emperor leaning against the mast, looking old, ill, and sad. His thoughts could not have been other than sorrowful, and even in my young eyes he seemed to have nothing to live for.[32]

Queen Victoria had as usual been at Osborne for Cowes week but had left for Balmoral by the time Louis Napoleon arrived. Since he was not well, this was a blessing, and he did not accompany his wife and son when they went sailing with Sir John Burgoyne on his yacht *Iolanthe*. Eugénie's former unwilling saviour was now content to take her on a cruise during which they passed his other yacht, the *Gazelle*, whose crew was the same as on that night and who cheered her as she passed. There was also a cruise with Baroness Louise de Rothschild, wife and cousin of Mayer Karl of Frankfurt, and a farewell dinner on 27 aboard the *Diadem*, the yacht owned by the earl of Harrington, grandnephew of Louis Napoleon's friend from his fourth visit.

The following day, Lord Harrington ferried Louis Napoleon's family and suite to Portsmouth where they took the afternoon train to Croydon. It was an ordinary passenger service, but one in which they had been given an entire saloon carriage decorated with flowers and exotic fruits at the expense of the London, Brighton, & South Coast railway company. On their arrival at Chislehurst, they were received by the duke and duchess of Argyll as lord privy seal and mistress of the robes, accompanied by Victoria's youngest daughter, Princess Beatrice.

* * *

In 1836, Thornton Leigh Hunt became director of the political department of the *Constitutional* until it folded two years later before going on edit the *North Cheshire Reformer* and the Radical Glasgow *Argus*. In 1850, with George Henry Lewes, he helped Edward Pigott found the *Leader*, the weekly satirical periodical on the radical side of centre, then five years later joined the staff of the new *Daily Telegraph* as consulting editor. His political views coincided with Palmerston's aristocratic Liberalism, and in 1859 Palmerston sent Hunt to Holyoake – then on his staff at the *Leader* – to ask him if he would accept nomination as a Radical in the Commons, but Holyoake (if this story is true) declined.

Louis Napoleon's idea for an International Arbitration Congress, which could sit in council whenever the need arose at some permanent neutral or movable location, had its origins in a scheme that had been mooted by Clarendon in April 1856 after the signing of the Treaty of Paris. After the various treaties had been signed, Clarendon, himself inspired by Louis Napoleon's desire to see the conference extended until all current European problems had been resolved and not just those resulting from the Crimean War, made 'an impassioned appeal to the Powers to bring their disputes to the conference table before having recourse to arms'.[33] For Clarendon, the 'Powers' meant those seven signatories of the peace treaty and no others; but Louis Napoleon began to think of a wider organization whereby an International Council would meet at regular intervals, or emergency sessions, and to which all European nations would have automatic right to submit their grievances for arbitration to a representative council selected from all the participating nations.

On 4 November 1863, prompted by further Russian intervention in Poland and the consequent revolt in Warsaw, Louis Napoleon wrote Earl Russell, then out of office, explaining that the immediate objective of the Congress would be to settle the Polish and Italian Questions once and for all. Russell showed the letter to Queen Victoria who showed it to her private secretary, Charles Grey. On 6 November, Grey replied to Russell: 'The Emperor will probably endeavour to throw the responsibility of future events on those who reject his pacific proposals, yet he must be aware that his proposals are such as it is impossible to accept, at all events in their present shape'.[34] Four days later, Russell informed Victoria that it would be advisable to find out, through Cowley, 'what are the questions to be raised in the Congress, and what are to be the powers exercised by them?'[35] But there was no time to even write to the ambassador in Paris. Changing her mind completely, Victoria wrote: 'This Congress is in fact an impertinence. I hope no Sovereigns will listen to his call, and lower themselves by going there'.[36]

The problem as most European leaders saw it was that such a congress might attempt to alter territorial boundaries set at Vienna after the Napoleonic Wars, or at Paris after the Crimean War. This was not necessarily because Louis Napoleon would want it but because every affected nation would be able to insist that the conditions set constituted a perpetual grievance irrespective of any statute of limitations that might be worked into the scheme. Louis Napoleon argued that the Congress of Vienna had 'ceased to exist' except on paper, and it was high time to move on. Britain found the argument churlish, but it was not alone in opposing the idea. Austria refused to even discuss it on account of the clause insisting on a European reduction in what Louis Napoleon called 'exaggerated armaments'. Multilateral disarmament was a novelty, and pure heresy, in 1863.

The idea of an International Congress, vetoed principally by Britain, was dropped, to its author's intense disappointment; Europe was unable to exorcise the last vestiges of Napoleon's spectre. Whereas treaties, alliances, and congresses were the fundaments of Louis Napoleon's foreign policy, for Britain they were not – at least not before the crises manifested themselves, by which time it was more often than not too late to accomplish anything positive. Cowley wrote to Russell to say that the loss belonged to Europe:

> Should Europe respond to the call to her, the Emperor will be the demigod of the times. Should Europe, on the contrary, refuse, the Emperor becomes a free agent, free to take up or to leave each question that may present itself according as his interests may suit him … but should … some accept and some refuse the Congress, the Emperor would know who were his friends and he would seek alliances according to the exigencies of the moment (as if he had ever done anything else).[37]

Yet again Cowley proved true the contention held by many that it is talented diplomats who ought to run international political affairs, and that when allowed to do so the best of them have done so with wisdom and restraint. Snubbed by a Europe unable to let go of the past, Louis Napoleon did as Cowley predicted and went his own way with the Conferences on Schleswig-Holstein (1864), Danubian Principalities (1866), Austro-Prussian War (1866), Luxembourg (1867), and half a dozen others that did not reach a satisfactory conclusion, from Poland (1863) to the Triple Alliance (1868-69). If Europe decided that it was not ready for such a scheme, it would only exclude itself from participation.

That might have been the end of the matter. However, in March 1864, Hunt was in Paris for the *Daily Telegraph* where he obtained an audience with Louis Napoleon during which he raised the matter again. Hunt, who had quietly admired the idea as soon as he had heard of it, was happy to learn that Louis Napoleon was still thinking about it: 'He even dreamed of an eventual international parliament, charged with the formation of general laws for the government of the relations of States'.[38] On his return to London, Hunt met Palmerston and urged him to discuss the matter in Parliament. But the octogenarian prime minister, six months short of death, was tired of new ideas and still sceptical of Louis Napoleon. He made no promises, and in fact did not raise the question in the House.

After Louis Napoleon's arrival in England, Hunt saw another opportunity to raise the matter, only this time without the participation of prominent politicians. Unfortunately, the first man he attempted to seduce was Holyoake, writing to him on what he called 'The Emperor Napoleon's best "Idée"' as someone still allegedly influential among middle-aged English Radicals. At any rate, Hunt thought that if he could convert Holyoake, the idea could be spread in *The Leader*, which had often taken an allegedly pacifist position:

> It is gaining very remarkable converts. As Napoleon said to me in 1864, the periodical assembling would cause many a question to be discussed and settled that now begets a congress only through quarrel, and perhaps actual war; and, as I said to him, the records of that congress would be the very commencement of that international law which now has no existence, except in the library, and there only as a doctrine which may, or may not, suit the practice of nations. Internationally we still have neither more nor less than anarchy, modified by a very limited sense of decency.[39]

'I have long wished that your mind turned itself to that problem' was Hunt's concluding exhortation. But Holyoake, who wished to preserve anarchy in Europe not eradicate it, and was himself possessed of only 'a very limited sense of decency', would not aid any cause associated with his *bête noir*, however worthy, and, even if Holyoake had been only superficially involved, as seems likely, he at any rate ignored the request.

But Hunt did not waiver. After obtaining support from influential friends, businessmen, and others outside the mainstream of politics – the existing Gladstonian Cabinet – he gained a personal interview with Louis Napoleon at Camden Place in November 1872. His idea this time was to get him to write a fully reasoned booklet on the subject along the ideological lines of *Les Idées napoléoniennes* combined with the brilliant technical analysis of the work on the sugar-beet question: 'I was struck with the change in him. He was grave and more reserved, but he listened to me with attention, appearing to weigh each word that I uttered, and following the details as I unfolded them. I concluded from our interview that the Emperor would write the book if he found it possible, which he appeared to doubt'.[40]

Louis Napoleon raised all the objections with Hunt that had already become standard fare by then, but unknown to Hunt the true reason for his reluctance to grasp an opportunity he would have relished even just a year earlier was his ill-health. However, whether or not anything would come of it, Hunt was certain of one thing. The day would come when 'the world will rejoice in the inauguration of this institution, which is wanting to our civilization – "the International Council" – and then, if gratitude still exists in men, humanity will remember that the exile of Chislehurst, Napoleon III, was the founder of this court of legislation and of legal appeal of the nations'.[41] But Hunt was mistaken, and Louis Napoleon would never be properly accredited with an idea that was decades in advance of the League of Nations, the United Nations, and the courts of the European Union. Regrettably, Hunt would not be able to take the matter further with anyone else as he would die five months after Louis Napoleon.

Louis Napoleon had never been anything other than cordial and respectful to Gladstone. On 4 March 1865, Gladstone was elected an honourary member of the *Académie des Sciences, Morales, et Politiques,* of the *Institut Impèriale de France,* proposed by the historian and liberal François Mignet on the personal recommendation of Louis Napoleon. One place had become available due to the death of the statistician and political economist John McCulloch the previous year, and twenty-seven of the twenty-nine members voted for Gladstone, the other two voting for John Stuart Mill. It was made clear to Gladstone by Walewski, in a letter accompanying the result and certificate, that he owed his election to the initial support of the emperor of the French.[42]

A few months after Louis Napoleon's arrival in England, Gladstone wrote him: 'I have the honour to transmit, with my humble duty, a copy of the Ballot Bill, now under discussion in the H of L, according to the desire which Y.I.M. was pleased to express'. Evidently Gladstone, who could be so terse with his queen, was not averse to correct etiquette, and the letter had been addressed to 'H.M. the Emperor Napoleon III' and had ended '& I remain Y.I.M's most dutiful & humble servant'.[43]

Louis Napoleon's interest in the Ballot Bill is revealing. Secret voting by the electorate had been employed in France since 1851. The Commons rejected it in England on 30 June 1851 by 257 votes to 189. In March 1870, Edward Leatham and the marquis of Hartington reintroduced it after several more failures, but Gladstone was forced to withdraw it on 27 July after a defeat of 324 votes to 230. It was then put into the Queen's Speech on 9 February 1871, and passed by the Commons before being rejected by the Lords with 97 votes to 48 on 10 August.

Gladstone was a late convert to this democratic principal, and it is clear that Louis Napoleon was keen to follow England's belated attempt to – for once – catch up with his system. At any rate, he replied: 'Monsieur le Ministre, j'ai reçu la copie du nouveau Ballot Bill que votre Excellence a bien voulu m'envoye, et je profite de cette occasion pour vous dire combien je suis touché des marques d'attention que j'ai reçois en Angleterre'.[44] But in spite of these rather formal pleasantries, this 'attention' was not forthcoming from the prime minister.

Unfortunately for Louis Napoleon, he did not outlive Gladstone's first Liberal administration – December 1868 to February 1874. This included a number of severe ideological opponents apart from the prime minister: William Wood, lord chancellor until October 1872, who as a young 'advanced Whig' had helped accumulate the evidence against Queen Caroline; William Forster, member for Bradford, who entered the Cabinet in July 1870 as vice-president of the committee of the privy council for education, married to a daughter of Dr Arnold of Rugby and thought by the family to be 'gruff and ill-mannered'; Robert Lowe – a distant relative of Sir Hudson – member for London University and chancellor of the exchequer, who became a leader-writer for *The Times* in 1850 where he spent several years writing some of the invectives against Louis Napoleon; Chichester Fortescue, member for Louth and president of the board of trade; and Henry Bruce, member for Renfrewshire and home secretary.

But the most interesting case concerns James Stansfeld, a middle-class Radical and Liberal member for Halifax since 1859. In January 1864, four Italians were arrested in Paris for plotting to assassinate Louis Napoleon with eight bombs based on those designed by Giuseppe Pieri in 1857. Salvatore Greco dei Chaira Monte and Raffaele Trabucco were sentenced to life in Cayenne, Natale Imperatori and Salvatore Scaglioni to twenty years imprisonment. It transpired in court that Greco, the leader, had received his instructions from Mazzini in London, and he implicated Stansfeld indirectly by revealing his address. Stansfeld admitted having known Mazzini since 1848, but he denied active collusion in the conspiracy. Although Palmerston accepted the denial, Stansfeld was obliged to resign as junior lord of the admiralty. Gladstone brought him into his Cabinet in February 1869 as third lord of the treasury. Whether or not Stansfeld was more deeply involved in the attempt to assasinate Napoleon III, these were not conditions in the Cabinet likely to encourage political intercourse with the imperoal exile at Chislehurst.

Louis Napoleon's post-imperial position was complicated by the fact that he had no friends in Paris and few in London. It is claimed that Gladstone visited him in the Autumn of 1871 with Lord Frederick Cavendish, son of his ducal friend and Liberal member for West Riding of Yorkshire, but this is not so. The story originated in a farcical nonsense invented by Auguste Filon involving Louis Bonaparte, then a British national who had been living in Westbourne Grove, Bayswater, since 1854, and Empress Eugénie for the purpose of introducing a slice of barbed humour respecting the anomalous conjunction of a 'gentleman' and a 'liberal'. But Gladstone stated quite clearly, after Louis Napoleon's death, that 'It may be right to mention that various members of the Cabinet [including himself] have not at any time had personal relations with the Emperor Napoleon III'.[45]

Irrespective of such titular etiquette, however, Gladstone would have known that there were other imperial pretenders. Plon-Plon had been widely mentioned as the new 'Napoleon IV' as a result of Bismarck's ingenious deceptions. He had to publicly state that he was not interested in the throne – which of course he was – and on 8 July 1871, a month-long quarrel between the two cousins was mended. Since 1870, Plon-Plon had lived either in London at Claridge's Hotel as the Conte di Moncalieri – a title granted to him by Victor Emmanuel after his marriage to Clothilde – or at his estate, Prangins, in the Canton de Vaud, Switzerland. Until he desisted, he had been agitating for a Bonaparte Republican Party in France under an emperor or president in which he could play a significant – or the principal – role.

The first *Fête Nationale* celebrated in England after Sedan might have been a solemn event, but it was not. Anglo/French reaction demonstrated the *kudos* the birthday of Napoleon still had, as well as the extent of the support reserved for Louis Napoleon. Bonapartists and others who had occupied positions of importance in the Second Empire attended a special mass at the church of Saint-Augustin at the southern end of boulevard Malesherbes, completed in the last year of the empire. Among those who paid their respects in person at Camden Place were the duchess of Hamilton; the Duque de Sotomayor, a London-born Spanish diplomat; Ion Ghica, prime minister of Romania; the Duc de Padoue, son of a Napoleonic general, former senator and, briefly, minister of the interior; Józef Poniatowski, a composer and former senator; and the Vicomte de Aguado, nephew of a Spanish financier who had been naturalized French in 1828.

A Talleyrand also visited him in 1872. In May 1864, Louis Napoleon had incautiously recreated the title of duc de Montmorency and bestowed it on Talleyrand's great-nephew Adalbert. There were howls of protest from the Montmorency family and its collateral branches the Rochefoucaulds, Bouffremonts, and Rohan-Chabots. In August 1865, the court ruled in favour of the titular concession, since it had excluded the patronymic.

In addition to these visits, Louis Napoleon received 68 bouquets and 74 telegrams of congratulations, including ones from Queen Victoria, the Prince of Wales, Aleksandr II of Russia, Luís I of Portugal, Carl XV of Sweden, Queen Sophia of the Netherlands, and Franz Josef of Austria-Hungary. Mass at St Mary's, celebrated by Father Isaac, was followed by a luncheon party at Camden Place to which many locals were invited. Although an obvious effort had been made to ensure the occasion would be cheerful, since the Prince Imperial's sombre fifteenth birthday party had fallen while his father had been in captivity, the favourable Bonapartist reaction was nonetheless genuine.

In February 1871, Thiers had been elected to 26 *départments* and then, by a huge majority, Chief of the Executive Power of the French Republic by the National Assembly of the Government of National Defense at Bordeaux on 17 February. Within hours, the ambassadors of England, Austria, and Italy recognized the new administration, and the following day Thiers formed his Cabinet. This retained such bitter opponents of Bonapartism as Favre (foreign affairs), Picard (interior), and Simon (education). A few days later, Russia, Switzerland, Portugal, Belgium, and Turkey also recognized the legitimacy of the new republic, practically tripping up over their own feet in the scramble to do so. On 1 March, Louis Napoleon's deposition was confirmed at Bordeaux. Had it been otherwise, Louis Napoleon's course of action would have been clear. As it was, he would have to struggle against an administration that was now officially sanctioned throughout Europe as a deposed monarch. Legally and morally, any attempt to regain his former position could be equated by them with conspiracy.

On 22 October, during one of the Sunday 'open house' afternoons, a man described by *The Times* (23 October) as 'our informant', managed to interview Louis Napoleon. That two reporters were able to get the most taciturn former head of state in European history to say anything personal during his final exile was unusual; that they should also have got him to say something interesting was remarkable:

> It is pretended that the Bonapartists are conspiring. I do not believe it. It is only parties who feel themselves in a minority in the country who have recourse to occult practices. It is only those who wish to impose their views upon the larger number who conspire. When a man has been, as I have been, during 23 years at the head of a great nation, and when he has been animated by a single thought – the welfare of the country – he preserves the sentiment of his dignity, the conviction of his rights, and casts away from him the low intrigues which degrade those who have recourse to them … when one has fallen from such a height, the first sentiment one experiences is not the desire to again mount upon the pinnacle, but to seek the causes of the fall in order to explain one's conduct and combat calumny, while still recognizing one's faults.[46]

While Louis Napoleon was saying this, many observers on both sides of the Channel were hoping for a free plebiscite on the future of France, and once again Louis Napoleon insisted that he would return to Paris if freely elected, but not before. 'The present Government is merely provisional', he argued, 'and does not in the future exclude any form of Government. To attempt to overthrow it would be a bad action; though my rights remain still intact, and so long as the people shall not have been regularly consulted, no decision of the Chamber can prevent me from being the legitimate Sovereign of France'. It appeared to him, then, that *coup d'états* were done in youth, and old men did not conspire but preserved their dignity, for soldiers did not follow sick leaders in carriages. But it was also clear that non-intervention was itself a provisional arrangement, and there was all the difference between conspiring against a legitimate system and an illegitimate one. In spite of what he had said to the reporter, Louis Napoleon was in fact waiting to see what course France would take before making his move.

In the meantime, he had to endure more criticism in *The Times*, in a manner whose superficial analysis entirely betrays the mechanics by which it made its convoluted and distorted way before the reading public. A private letter that Louis Napoleon had written Burgoyne – who, as chief engineer under Lord Raglan, had been much criticized for sending the allied troops to the south of Sevastapol after the battle of Alma instead of directly towards it – somehow found its way into the offices of that paper. Burgoyne had died on 7 October, while Louis Napoleon had been in Torquay, and the public criticisms the general had suffered inspired empathy with him in Louis Napoleon's mind.

He had written Burgoyne from Wilhelmshöhe (29 October 1870) likening him to Helmuth von Moltke, the Prussian military architect of France's defeat, explaining how he had suspected all along that Prussia had had the better army. *The Times* published the letter in full in early October, whereupon it was seen by the Orleanist *Journal des débats*, whose circulation in 1870 had fallen to around 7,500. Gleefully misinterpreting natural familic paternalism for cowardice, it claimed that Louis Napoleon had been more concerned with the safety of his dynasty than with the future of France. This criticism in the *Journal des débats* was then translated into English and added by *The Times* (16 October 1871) to the commentary. The paper reckoned that Louis Napoleon's 'absence of moral sense' was as evident as his 'weakening of the brain'. 'There are, too, many other things which cannot otherwise be explained, for instance, those incessant recriminations against men who, notwithstanding the official oath, have deserted the Bonapartist cause; recriminations singularly out of place in the mouth of the author of the *coup d'état* of December'.

These were old chestnuts even by 1871. What 'incessant recriminations' were intended is unclear. When, on 8 February, Louis Napoleon had condemned the Government of 4 September, and then on 6 March his deposition, he referred only to the illegality of an unelected body having acted against one installed by four plebiscites. Why *The Times* should have seen fit to publish these comments from Paris without defense or qualification is perhaps clear: having been anti-French during the Franco-Prussian war, it was a way of continuing the attack through vicarious reportage, thus avoiding attacking the English exile and his supporters, with all the attendant embarrassment such a course of action would have involved.

The anticipated French plebiscite never came, of course, but the Provisional Government announced a series of elections after the fall of the Commune. On 2 July, 132 members were elected to the Assembly at Versailles, but neither Legitimists nor Bonapartists did well, the last fielding just six successful candidates. Louis Napoleon required a plan: 'I have commissioned R[ouher] to prepare … candidates for the forthcoming elections, and he has promised to gather round him devoted and energetic men'.[47]

The plan worked, and the October elections for more than 2,000 general councillors returned a number of Bonapartists, including Plon-Plon for Ajaccio in Corsica where 1726 of the 1776 electors voted for him. On 16 July, Plon-Plon obtained a passport for Corsica from Prangins where he attempted, unsuccessfully, to be elected president of the Council-General of the island. France, however, was another matter. On 15 July, Plon-Plon had been deported from Le Havre, and when he returned on 11 October to Millemont as an elected deputy, he put the Government in an awkward position. It chose to physically expel him again. 'Our right', Thiers later tried to explain, 'was founded on the law of forfeiture, twice passed by the Assembly; if we allowed this law to fall into abeyance with regard to Prince Napoleon, we could not invoke it against Napoleon III, who was being urged to land in France'.[48]

However, Aumale and Joinville had been elected at Bordeaux on 8 February, and the law proscribing them had been abrogated by 484 votes to 103 on 8 June when their seats were declared valid. On 19 December, with the consummate hypocrisy that had distinguished his career, Thiers, president of the French Republic since 31 August, approved of the elections, and both Aumale and Joinville were permitted to take their seats in the National Assembly. Once again, this cowardly action can be interpreted in one way only: Thiers had nothing to fear from the Orleanists, and he knew it; he had everything to fear from Louis Napoleon, and he knew it.

Plon-Plon, who had in any case resigned his seat on 28 October as a protest, appealed against the illegality of his exclusion from Corsica and France, while Thiers continued to promote anti-Bonapartist propaganda throughout the republic. The appeal was laid before the Assembly at the next session and thrown out, but with a narrower than expected majority of just fifty-six. Naturally enough, Louis Napoleon was being urged to land in France under such circumstances, as it was by then quite clear that little more than personal vengeance was uppermost in the minds of the republican elite, not least with President Thiers. Even so, Louis Napoleon had some reservations concerning Plon-Plon's potential presidency in Corsica after all this republican chicanery. 'To accept or to canvass for votes at this moment would be to recognise a Government which I hold to be unlawful, and I should regret that anyone bearing my name should have the appearance of recognising all the illegal things that are being done today'.[49]

Thiers, on the other hand, was quite certain to whom the term 'illegal' should be applied. He had travelled Europe in 1870 after Sedan looking in vain for a mediator during the war with Prussia, playing down Louis Napoleon's role in France's future. In an absurd piece of historical revisionism, he blamed Louis Napoleon for 'not having been willing to accept the strictly constitutional system of England.'[50] He regarded the potential *coup d'état* of 1872, widely rumoured even at the time, as a 'seditious enterprise.'[51] However, Thiers did not believe Louis Napoleon could undertake it 'as much on account of his health as through lack of means'.[52] Nevertheless, as a precaution, he strengthened civil, maritime, and military coastal defenses, ironically thus introducing the old policies of Palmerston he had once criticized. 'This precaution was unnecessary', however, 'thanks to the prudence or rather the impotence of the Court of Chislehurst'.[53]

Louis Napoleon's writing was still incisive. In May, he published an extended letter, *Les Forces Militaires de la France en 1870*, as a direct response to some of the false allegations being spread by Thiers. He did so not under his own name, however, but as Le Comte de la Chapelle in order for it to receive fair reviews in Hippolyte de Villemessant's eclectic *Le Figaro*, a Second Empire paper now with a high circulation of around 65,000. The ploy worked, and it received an excellent review.

In February, Rouher was elected to the National Assembly on the agreed voluntary resignation of Paul Abbatucci, whose father Jacques had been selected to replace Rouher on his resignation following the Orleans disseisin in 1852. Rouher then became the leader of the Bonapartist Party, which for the first time could be properly so labelled, as it never could have been during the empire.

At Chislehurst, Louis Napoleon dispensed favours, controlled opinion, ejudicated on Bonapartist issues in Paris, vetted potential candidates, and made his own proposals either by post or through special audiences granted to visitors from France:

> I am receiving several letters from Paris … and that I must decide between the Duke of Padua, Piétri, etc. In any other circumstances I should have made no reply before having your opinion, but after what passed several months ago, I did not hesitate to say that justice demanded that they should nominate … Abbattucci in order to recompense him for his act of self-abnegation … There would really be a sovereign injustice in not taking his disinterestedness into account.[54]

In August 1871,*Le Gaulois* announced its conversion to Bonapartism. Clèment Duvernois, the man who had ousted Emille Ollivier, founded the overtly Bonapartist journal *L'Ordre*, which rapidly became the official party organ, although at around 3,500 its circulation was relatively small. By the time of Louis Napoleon's death, there were almost seventy Bonapartist newspapers in Paris alone, many of them dailies. Of course nobody had ever expected every Bonapartist to melt away simply because of a change of government in Paris. France was still full of soldiers, civil servants, and plain voters who remained faithful to the Second Empire, but for obvious reasons they were never given the chance to express their views until several years after Louis Napoleon's death.

The plan to effect another *coup d'état* was undertaken in the summer of 1872. 'By letting people know beforehand the plans one has formed, one raises a host of opposition and obstacles',[55] and this advice, given to Plon-Plon on his further attempts to get elected to Corsica, might well stand as the guiding principle of Louis Napoleon's own life. Unlike with Strasbourg and Boulogne, however, the truth was out, and the whisper was that Louis Napoleon planned to meet Plon-Plon at Prangins in March 1873 and join up with two Bonapartist generals to whom Thiers had obligingly given important positions in his reorganized army. Charles Denis Bourbaki, commander of the Imperial Guard at Nancy during the Franco-Prussian war, was stationed at Lyons, while Félix Charles Douay, commander of the 7th Corps at Belfort and a former aide-de-camp to Louis Napoleon, was given the 4th Corps at the Bois de Boulogne. A third and successful penetration into France, aged sixty-five, to take over the government and give the people the right to freely elect their political representatives, would have been unprecedented in European history, and perhaps the most remarkable achievement in a remarkable life.

But of all the objections to such action that Louis Napoleon had raised in his conversations at Chislehurst, the one that had to be resolved, no matter what, was his ill health.

* * *

Hortense noted that when Louis Napoleon was born he was so delicate that he had to be bathed in a basin of warm wine and wrapped in cotton to keep him alive. His condition did not improve, and after several months the official nursemaid was dismissed. Hortense herself found a replacement, Colette Bure, a young widow with a baby son of her own from a nearby village. It was only after this change of nursemaid – and therefore of system – that Louis Napoleon's condition improved. But his future health would never be robust.

His first serious and prolonged illness began in June 1855 when the surgeon Antoine Jobert de Lamballe – quondam surgeon-in-ordinary to Louis Philippe and the first Parisian to use chloroform – was called in to deal with what was described as a 'bladder spasm'. By this time, Louis Napoleon was already occasionally walking with difficulty and sleeping badly. Dickens saw him at this time: 'I suppose mortal man out of bed never looked so ill and worn … I never saw so haggard a face'.[56] Conneau then called in Robert Ferguson, an obstetrician and *accoucheur* to Queen Victoria. On 6 May 1856, he declared that Louis Napoleon was suffering from 'nervous exhaustion', ordering him to take the summer waters at Plombières or, after 1861, Vichy. Louis Napoleon did not do this on just three occasions. However, by 1863 his symptoms included painful micturition and occasionally such trouble walking that he had to lean heavily on his cane.

From January to March 1865, Louis Napoleon was almost prostrate. He suffered another attack in August at Châlons where, for the first time, the calcification in his bladder was diagnosed by Félix Larrey, son of the principal surgeon of *La Grande Armée* and probably a better Bonapartist than physician. Nevertheless, Larrey's specific diagnosis was correct, although Louis Napoleon refused treatment and enjoined his entire imperial medical staff – some twenty-five persons, regular and otherwise – to secrecy.

In July and August 1866, he was prostrated with hematuria for two weeks while approving the vain attempt to gain compensation from Prussia at Vichy. Throughout May and June 1868, he was again severely distressed, then again in August as Cowley accurately reported. For almost four months at the end of 1869 he was so seriously ill that it was believed he might die. On this occasion, he was examined by Philippe Ricord, the urologist and 'expert' on venereal disease, who diagnosed rheumatism and who famously remarked: ‘If the emperor wishes to continue the Life of Cæsar, he must cease being Pompey’.[57] Ricord was a better wit than physician. But this reference to the plebeian Roman who rose to great power and married four times before ending his life in sickness prior to assassination was more than just an attempt at humour – it reflected Ricord’s futile preoccupation with the alleged links between sexual promiscuity, warfare, and disease.

Incredibly, in spite of the severity of this illness, Louis Napoleon was not properly examined until 1 July 1870. A team of surgeons and urologists – Germain Sée, Auguste Nélaton, Sulpice Fauvel, Corvisart, and Ricord – examined him at Conneau’s house. They agreed that there was a stone (or stones) in the imperial bladder, but that there was no immediate cause for concern and that no operation was required. Sée wrote the report, and only his signature was appended to it. When asked, Conneau failed to obtain sanction of the report by the other physicians. Marshal Niel had died the previous August after Nélaton’s operation for a similar condition, and Ricord believed that Nélaton’s indifference to sign had resulted from his fear of having to operate on Louis Napoleon should Sée’s diagnosis be accepted.

Sée’s diagnosis of *calculus pyelocystisis* – inflamed condition of the kidney, pelvis, and bladder – differed insignificantly from that given after Louis Napoleon’s death. A more serious flaw rests in the clinical indifference to his peripheral conditions. That he suffered from hæmorrhoids was known by the 1860s, but whether these were internal or external was not properly recorded until Chislehurst, although dilated veins proximal to the anorectal line – effectively within the alimentary canal – are more painful, difficult to treat, and potentially serious than those distal to it. Lifelong metabolic abnormalities resulted in Louis Napoleon’s hyperuricæmia (chronic gout) and acute arthritis, yet nobody recommended elevation of the limbs, hot fermentation, and massage to alleviate these problems. Nor did physicians recommend abstention from certain purine-rich substances such as coffee and alcohol, known to worsen gouty symptoms.

Early in July 1872, Victoria sent Sir William Gull to Chislehurst after hearing of a recent attack of severe discomfort. Gull, professor of physiology at Guy’s Hospital, suggested bilateral lithotomy, the removal of the stone/s by an incision across the perineum. This prospect horrified Louis Napoleon, who feared physicians and operations more than enemy cannons. Conneau and Corvisart asked for a second opinion, calling in Sir Henry Thompson, professor of clinical surgery at University College Hospital.

Thompson had made genito-urinary problems his specialty, studying the lithotritic (crushing) system of the French pioneer in the field, Jean Civiale, improving and using them to great success in 1863 on a similar operation on Leopold of the Belgians. On 19 July, he examined Louis Napoleon by digital insertion and noted the extent of the hæmorrhoids and that they were internal. He found no enlargement of the prostate or any other complications, but when he suggested a bladder examination with a soft catheter, Louis Napoleon refused. Nevertheless, Thompson recommended lithotrity in sessions rather than lithotomy, even though he had not yet examined the extent of the calculus.

Thomas Evans, the former imperial dentist, arrived at Camden Place to do some routine dental work on Louis Napoleon in October, and so much had his condition deteriorated by then that a shocked Evans was asked to find yet another English medical opinion. He brought in Sir James Paget, professor of anatomy and serjeant-surgeon extraordinary to Victoria. Paget arrived at Chislehurst on 31 October where Gull was also waiting for him, and he proceeded with his examination. Vesical calculus was again diagnosed, but Paget advised against an operation altogether, recommending – according to Evans who was present – a change of diet and rest.

By December, Louis Napoleon was experiencing chronic symptoms involving pain in the perineum and micturition resulting in hematinic urine after the slightest physical activity. He was also suffering cutaneous and muscular hyperæsthæsia of anæmic origin, displaying itself with the typical symptom of surface pain in the skin of the thighs, aggravated by slight pressure but relieved by extreme pressure.

Gull, Thompson, and Paget were recalled, arriving on 24 December with the anæsthatist Joseph Clover. They at last agreed that above all they should carry out a proper examination of the bladder under chloroform. Louis Napoleon, who up until then had opposed this, was so exhausted and weary of the ministrations, and in such physical distress, that he finally consented, telling Clover 'Now you'll do what you think fit, I know nothing about it'.[58]

The first sounding was taken two days later, after Christmas, and the single stone was found to be about the size of a large fresh date. Louis Napoleon appeared to take the chloroform well, so it was decided to press ahead with the series of crushing operations. On the morning of Thursday 2 January 1873, a second sound was taken to ensure that nothing had changed, and that afternoon the first operation took place. Thompson, using a wide lithotrite he had developed, managed to crush part of the stone easily, removing the debris by suction after four insertions of the pump. Louis Napoleon recovered well, appearing only slightly affected by the infection subsequent to using unsterilized instruments, a danger then imperfectly appreciated outside certain specialist circles. *The Times* (6 January) reassuringly announced that Louis Napoleon had 'at his command a degree of surgical experience and manipulative skill which no other country in the world could furnish'.

Thompson, Gull, Clover, Corvisart, and a surgical assistant remained in attendance at Camden Place day and night. After four days rest – the standard accepted procedure – a second operation was performed at midday on Monday, which had to be postponed for two hours on account of Louis Napoleon's severe shivering, which was not recognized as a symptom of a possible severe infection. That afternoon, the *Lancet* issued a special bulletin, circulated among the papers and the medical profession: 'The difficulties of the operation were greater than usual, but the results obtained were considerable. There is much suffering, together with some degree of constitutional disturbance; but the general strength remains good'.

A third operation – to remove obstructive fragments in the bladder and urethra that had fallen away from the stone – was undertaken the following day. Although it went reasonably well, Thompson was now worried, and he expressed his fear to the Prince of Wales: 'I regard the case as a very grave one. In the strictest confidence I tell you this: the stone is so large; the Emperor is VERY SENSITIVE and is difficult to manage. I shall want all my force, all my resources to get him through, and I may fail. I am very anxious'.[59] Louis Napoleon's urine was now found to be turbid, alkaline, and viscose, and it was also bloodier than it had been at any time before. A third crushing operation was scheduled for 9 January, three days after the second crushing and just two days after the clearing operations. By this time, Louis Napoleon was incoherent, prostrated, and experiencing polyuria, which may have been due to nervous stress but more likely to an already advanced kidney disorder, which again was not recognized.

Throughout Wednesday, the group of physicians debated whether or not to proceed with the operations to their conclusion. At 6 a.m. on the 9 January, Louis Napoleon appeared to improve and it was therefore unanimously agreed to conclude the crushing as planned. The operation was to have taken place at midday, but when Thompson, Conneau, and Corvisart paid Louis Napoleon a routine visit at 10:25 they found him ashen, breathing heavily, and with a decreasing and irregular pulse. Twenty minutes later, he was dead.

It was clear to all the physicians that something had gone wrong. In an unusual step, they asked Eugénie for permission to have an autopsy performed in order to try and understand why their patient had died with no apparent immediate cause. Eugénie gave her consent, and Thompson called in his colleague from University College Hospital, John Burdon-Sanderson, a pioneer in pathology soon to be appointed Jodrell professor of physiology there. The post-mortem took place the following afternoon, with Thompson, Gull, Conneau, and Corvisart witnessing. The official result was published in *The Times* on Saturday 11 January, and in the *Lancet* the following week:

> The kidneys were found to be involved in the inflammatory effects produced by the irritation of the vesical calculus (which must have been in the bladder several years) to a degree which was not suspected; and if it had been suspected could not have been ascertained. The disease of the kidneys was of two kinds: There was on the one hand dilation of both ureters and of the pelves of the kidneys. On the left side the dilation was excessive, and had given rise to atrophy of the glandular substance of the organ. On the other, there was subacute inflammation of the uriniferous tubes which was of more recent origin. The parts in the neighbourhood of the bladder were in a healthy state. The mucous membrane of the bladder and prostatic urethra exhibited signs of subacute inflammation, but not the slightest indication of injury. In the interior of the bladder was found a part of the calculus, the form of which indicated that half had been removed. Besides this there were two or three extremely small fragments, none of them larger than a hemp seed. This half calculus weighed about three-quarters of an ounce, and measured one and a quarter inches by one and five-sixteenths of an inch.
>
> There was no disease of the heart, nor of any other organ excepting the kidneys. The brain and its membranes were in perfectly natural state. The blood was generally liquid containing only a few small clots. No trace of obstruction by coagula could be found either in the venous system, in the heart, or in the pulmonary artery. Death took place by failure of the circulation, and was attributable to the general constitutional state of the patient. The disease of the kidneys, of which this state was the expression, was of such a nature and so advanced that would in any case have shortly determined a fatal result.

According to the official report, then, Louis Napoleon died from *calculous pyelitis* – inflammation of the kidney, pelvis and its calices as a result of the bladder stone – and *uræmia* – toxicity in the blood associated with kidney disease.

But this was not thought to be satisfactory. Gull, known in the profession to be arrogant, was not content to be a mere witness to a great event and did not stay for the subsequent discussion; nor did he sign the official report, which the others did at 6:30. This was not because he differed greatly from Burdon-Sanderson, but because he wished to publish his own statement under his own name, which he subsequently did, and it appeared below the official report in *The Times*. Gull differed from it only to the extent that he thought the calculus 'was the result of prior cystitis … and not the cause of it'. The paper observed that Louis Napoleon's death was due to 'shock' and 'not … to any miscarriage of the operation itself, which [was] … conducted with perfect skill'.

The apparent anomaly raised serious questions about the physicians, and it could not be seen as anything other than dissent, reducing still further what little respect they commanded. Victoria noted: 'It is too horrible to be tortured as he has been, only to die! The disgusting and horrible publicity of his illness which went on every day after the operations … make me furious and I would like to punish those surgeons who always seem little better than butchers to me!'[60]

Although novel in 1873, antiseptic surgery had already been used by Joseph Lister in Edinburgh where phenol (carbolic acid) had succeeded in keeping tables and instruments clean. Carbolic spray – a 5% aqueous solution of phenol – had also been used to some effect during surgery, although bacteriology was still not properly understood. Nevertheless, Louis Napoleon was treated where he slept, on an iron bedstead covered in boards, with no cleaning of either them or the instruments used – nor probably the hands of his surgeons. That *cryptogenic septicœmia* also contributed to his death is certain, although whether as a result of his bladder complaint or through being introduced by his physicians (or both) could not have been ascertained at the time and cannot now be determined. On 7 January, according to Thompson, Gull had attributed Louis Napoleon's drowsiness to pain and loss of rest. When he put together his recollections, he stated that he had disagreed with Gull and had reckoned the cause to be 'uræmic somnolence.'[61] This is a toxic condition associated with renal failure and the retention in the blood of nitrogenous substances excreted by the kidneys. If this confession was true, then Thompson ought never to have gone ahead with the final crushing, at least not until his patient had fully recovered.

Doctors argued the case in the*Lancet* and other medical journals in the form of an open post mortem. In spite of Thompson's future revelation, it was wondered why kidney disease had not been 'suspected' if the urine had been properly examined as they had claimed. The turbidity ought to have suggested the presence of pus, indicating inflammation of the urinary tract; a pathological symptom. Urine is normally slightly acidic, so its alkalinity ought to have suggested the presence of putrefying bacteria. Even though bacteriology was in its infancy, this should have led to a further pathological diagnosis, while the viscosity ought to have indicated fatty degeneration of the kidneys.

However, it was argued that no proper chemical examination of the urine had taken place at all, and the physicians had simply looked at it, swirled it around in a glass tube and tasted it. Even *The Times* (11 January) noted with surprise their inability to diagnose renal disorder: 'With advanced disease of the kidneys, treatment by lithotrity is very hazardous, and nearly sure to hasten what is an already certainly fatal issue'. Thompson denied this in a letter to Evans (13 January), published in the *Manchester Guardian* (18 January): 'In such conditions I have long ago given it as my deliberate opinion that lithotomy offers no better chance than lithotrity'.

There was also criticism of Clover, the foremost anæsthetist of his day, who had laid down the rules of administering anæsthæsia since the first use of it under his direction in November 1847, by chloroform, for a dactylectomy. He was anæthetist to Westminster Hospital and the Dental Hospital, having successfully treated the Prince of Wales, Sir Robert Peel, and Florence Nightingale.

Nevertheless, critics pointed out that chloroform had not been his only choice. Ethyl oxide (diethyl ether) had been used as an anæsthetic since 1846, Amylene – amylin (potato starch) combined with zinc chloride – since 1856, and Kerosolene (a colourless, volatile liquid derived from the manufacture of kerosene oil from coal) since 1861. Ether would be contraindicated in the case of kidney disease, but this was not then known – and of course kidney disease was allegedly not suspected – and it had a far greater safety margin than chloroform, which was more potent and toxic. Clover might have used a less powerful anæsthetic altogether, such as an opiate (although Louis Napoleon was known to dislike it), and the multiple use of chloroform for an elderly man was thought by some a fatal mistake. Thompson denied this too, stating in the letter to Evans [*ante cit.*]: 'I rarely use chloroform. Often no expression of pain is heard. The sitting never exceeds two minutes'. But two well known Parisian physicians, Constantin James and Edmond Barré, issued a statement condemning its use, implying that Louis Napoleon's death had resulted from chemical toxicity as a result.

Jean Lapeyrère was a naval doctor from Toulouse who also entered the debate a few days before emigrating to Martinique. He suggested that lithotrity ought not to have been undertaken at all considering the patient's age, state of health, and the size of the stone. One operation to remove it by incision, he believed, would have solved the problem, although there would have been a far greater risk of infection and of course a heavier dose of some anæsthetic would have been required. Lapeyrère also criticized Thompson for contravening Civiale's methodology by not allowing the standard four-day rest between the last two operations, thereby not allowing Louis Napoleon time to recover between treatments, or time to develop symptoms clear enough to cancel the operations. Such symptoms were in any case manifest.

The crushings were also thought to have been too lengthy. François Guillon, former consultant to Louis Philippe, stated that a maximum of five minutes ought to be allocated for each, not the twenty that Thompson had employed, which fact also underscored Thompson's blatant contradiction in his letter to Evans.

Lady Nevill knew Thompson well. She noted that shortly after Louis Napoleon's death, he received a congratulatory letter from 'a Red Republican … "in return for his services to humanity in having so ably made away with a tyrant"'.[62]

How justified this letter of congratulation was may be determined from the evolution of Thompson's attitude to lithotomy and lithotrity. He stated in his own pioneering work on the subject (1863) that for a healthy male with 'a large and friable stone Lithotrity may be successful, but such an one offering between twenty-five and forty years of age would probably be as well dealt with also by Lateral Lithotomy'.[63] But for elderly or feeble patients displaying marked symptoms of some other disease, 'Lithotomy is preferable to Lithotrity in all cases but those of the smallest calculi'.[64] He then stated that stones of four ounces and upwards should never be crushed, but adds that stones of such weight were rarely encountered.

In the subsequent edition (1871), Thompson made the case for lithotomy with lighter stones even clearer, stating that between 1867 and 1870 he had performed 120 lithotrity cases, 204 since about 1865. The mean age of his patients was 61, with the youngest 22 and the eldest 84, while 126 were over 60. 'I have … applied Lithotrity to every case of stone under my care which has been obviously beneath an ounce in weight. At one ounce and upwards I have preferred Lithotomy.'[65] Nonetheless, in 1865 he crushed a stone 'rather beyond the ordinary size for Lithotrity', in nine sessions.[66] The patient, although aged 70, was otherwise healthy and physically strong. Thompson also stated 'I have never … found it necessary or desirable to complete by the knife a case of stone in which I have commenced the operation by crushing.'[67] But he gave one 'exception' to this rule in which a patient developed severe cystisis and further difficulties between the appearance of two calculi, the first being crushed and the second cut out. Thompson claimed that he had lost just thirteen patients out of his 204 – or, as he put it, a 7% death rate, or 12·88 patients.

By the time of the third and final edition (1880), he had operated on 422 cases of lithotrity and reported 32 deaths. In a table of 500 patients – including 78 by lithotomy – Louis Napoleon's case was listed simply as 'No. 311':

> Prosphatic; rather large; on small uric acid nuclei … Had suffered symptoms severely some years, and when urged to submit to examination had declined. I had advised sounding six months before, with some result. His health having become very feeble, and being now confined to the house, examination of the bladder was for the first time permitted … It was agreed to operate by lithotrity. Two sittings

> under chloroform, given by Mr Clover, were successful in removing half the stone. The day after he became drowsy, evidently from impaired renal function, which condition gradually became more marked, and he died very suddenly the third day after the second sitting.[68]

Thompson gave the cause of death specifically as 'diseased kidneys and dilated ureters'.[69] He again described his earlier cases favouring lithotomy for stones over one to two ounces, and reiterated that 'At one ounce and upwards I have preferred Lithotomy'.[70]

Thompson was experienced enough to be able to judge the weight of all forms of calculi. He admitted at the time that Louis Napoleon's stone was the size of a large date, and in 1880 as 'rather large'. Burdon-Sanderson registered the *remains* of the calculus as weighing three-quarters of an ounce. The original stone therefore must have weighed at least one-and-a-half ounces – exactly the mean weight Thompson never wavered from placing in the category of those to be removed by lithotomy, irrespective of all the other considerations such as age, infirmity, and state of health. Thompson could not have been unaware of the size of the calculus, as he had always made a point of being sure of this to begin with: '*I repeat ... that it is probably safer, uniformly to practice Lithotomy in every instance, if the surgeon does not arrive at an accurate diagnosis of the nature of the stone*'.[71] Both before and after Louis Napoleon's treatment, Thompson was well aware of the dangers his type of case represented. 'The rate of mortality will correspond with augmentation in the size of the stone, and with the amount of existing disease, and age, on the part of the patient. Given a small stone, in a fairly healthy person, and success is certain'.[72]

There can be no medical justification for what Thompson chose to do, and it seems likely that he wished to emulate his success with Leopold of the Belgians, who had also suffered from a large prosphatic calculus. Leopold was examined by Thompson on 1 June 1863 and treated five days later with two insertions separated by an interval of fifteen minutes. A second operation took place – within the rules – four days later. Thompson performed the operations without anæsthæsia – supporting that portion of the letter to Evans – but the exact size of the stone was never mentioned, although Thompson noted that the first operation supplied 'a good quantity of phosphatic débris' and the second also 'a good quantity'.[73] This operation had required two sittings and three crushings, and in the last edition of his work – having learned something from Louis Napoleon's death – Thompson argued *against* multiple lithotrity, particularly for those with renal diseases. When describing patients with such symptoms in 1871 and 1880, he wrote 'The main object … will be in the long run accomplished as well, or better, by a single complete sitting than by repeated small ones'.[74]

The operation on Leopold had been extremely high profile, and as a result Thompson was created surgeon extraordinary to the kings of the Belgians. For this reason, he omitted detailing it in his books, although it was listed as case 'No. 20'. The first edition was published on the success of this operation, but it included no cases beyond January 1863. The second edition discussed cases *after* the autumn of that year. It was clear that Thompson had taken a calculated risk even with Leopold in order to become celebrated. Among his colleagues he was known as 'Jupiter Thompson' for his fine features and strutting manner, and this was reflected in his own high opinion of his talents: 'As to the extent to which I have pushed the capabilities of the operation, the preservation of the débris … enabled the observer to judge'.[75]

For Thompson, case 'No. 311' would become the new yardstick by which to measure his success in the face of established orthodox practice; but only, of course, if the operation – for which he was paid £2,000 – was successful. When unsuccessful, he took his fee and inserted the result in a table of statistics. Thompson’s thinking on lithotomy and lithotrity was deeply unsystematic and wildly contradictory, while the wide discrepancy between theory and practice was never justified. He did not tell the truth to Evans, and he attempted to direct blame onto Clover by distancing himself from the use of anæsthæsia, although he did not then explain why any form of it had been used at all.

French doctors blamed the physicians at Camden Place with everything from incompetence to deliberate malpractice, while they in turn defended their decisions and blamed the physicians at the Tuileries for not having properly treated Louis Napoleon in the 1860s.

The fairest judgement, which will stop just short of accusing Thompson of murder, is one that accepts the ignorance and arrogance of scientific medicine, the imperfection of all physicians, the unbearable conceit of many surgeons, and the obstructive nature of some patients. Had Thompson performed a lithotomy, as his own thinking should have compelled him to do, Louis Napoleon may have lived a little longer. It is unlikely, however, that he would have lived much beyond seventy – but he would then have been able to put into practice his proposed *coup* in 1873, which might have altered the course of French history. Had Louis Napoleon been treated earlier, he might have been spared becoming the plaything of a surgical *prima donna* altogether.

*   *   *

The picture-gallery in the hall of Camden Place opposite the principal entrance was transformed into a *chapelle ardente*. Louis Napoleon’s deathbed was made presentable before being carried downstairs to the private chapel where it became a catafalque. While he still lay in his little bedroom, William and Daniel Downey, photographers to the queen, were invited to capture the serene face of the dead man. Two sisters of the Tuscan Order of St Joseph, the *Regulares pauperes Matris Dei scholarum piarum*, sat by the iron bedstead and chanted prayers in rota day and night.

A number of visitors came the following morning to give their condolences, including Archbishop Tait, Admiral Sir Alexander Milne, and George Goschen, first lord of the admiralty. Also there were the two most prominent Bonapartist journalists in Paris – father and son – Adolphe and Paul Granier de Cassagnac. For four hours on Tuesday 14 January, Louis Napoleon lay in ‘state’ in the ‘chapel’, and more than 17,000 people came to pay their last respects. English visitors included the Prince of Wales, Prince Alfred, and Prince Christian, who were the first three to enter, followed by their suite, Francis Knollys, Arthur Ellis, and William Colville. At 7 o’clock, the last person was led out of Camden Place, and for a further two hours Louis Napoleon lay exposed to his family and suite. At nine o’clock, they left the chapel, and half an hour later the three coffins were closed and sealed.

When Archbishop Tait saw Eugénie on 10 January, he discussed the possibility – already agreed to by the Dean and Chapter of Canterbury Cathedral – that Louis Napoleon’s funeral and interment could take place in the Crypt until such time as he might be returned to France, or indeed remain at Canterbury Cathedral for all time if necessary. The Crypt, ceded as a church to Huguenot refugees in the sixteenth century, was thought by Tait to be an ideal location, but, unsurprisingly, Home Secretary Henry Bruce would not hear of it, and the idea was dropped.

Instead, small black-edged cards with a funerary seal on the envelope were sent out to select guests inviting them to St Mary's for the funeral. Queen Victoria was among them, but in a triumph of diplomacy over decency she considered it politic to stay away rather than cause offense to republican France. Gladstone and Granville also urged the Prince of Wales to stay away, and Victoria, after initially giving her son permission to attend, concurred, and he most reluctantly obeyed. There was a good deal of sympathy for him in the *Manchester Guardian* (15 January): 'Earl Granville, for reasons which he has not, we believe, explained, and which he will not … attempt to qualify, had protested against this payment of the last pious offices to a Sovereign who was the first friend of the English Royal Family and the most cordial ally of England'. However, the Prince of Wales would later deliberately annoy Gladstone by inviting many leading Bonapartists to Sandringham for a special wake.

At 10 o'clock in the morning of Wednesday 15 January, Louis Napoleon's body in its triple-lined coffin was carried out of Camden Place by Piétri, Clary, Davillier, and other officers dressed in evening wear and the *Legion d'honneur*. An hour later, the coffin moved to St Mary's to the funereal tolling of the church's bells, supported by the other local Anglican campaniles of the Annunciation, Christ Church, and St Nicholas. Almost a thousand people formed the *cortège* behind the eight black horses dressed in plumes and black velvet palls, embossed with the insignia of the Second Empire, pulling the hearse with its imperial crests and golden bees.

A deputation of twenty-five French workers, voluntarily absconding from their paradise republic, led the procession dressed in blouses, flying the tricolour from branches of birchwood. They were followed by the Catholic bishop of Southwark, James Danell, and Monsignor Bernard Bauer, Eugénie's private confessor, leading representatives from the Catholic Churches as well as the boys' choir of his cathedral, chanting the Office of the Dead. Then came the hearse, with the Prince Imperial immediately behind it dressed in plain mourning clothes and the *Légion d'honneur,* walking alone as Eugénie was too distressed to participate. Other members of the Bonaparte and Murat families followed him, including Plon-Plon and Louis Lucien. Then came Lord Sydney, lord chamberlain, representing Victoria, and Lord Suffield, representing the Prince of Wales. Next came Louis Napoleon's household accompanied, it must be said, by Gull and Thompson, followed by former ministers of the empire and a party of Italian mourners sent by Victor Emmanuel. Their splash of green and gold was the only colour in the procession apart from the flag. Behind these came the lesser servants of the empire, twenty councillors of state, thirty-one deputies, and forty prefects. At the rear were a most tearful Lord and Lady Cowley, and Lord Buckhurst, one of Victoria's chaplains, leading the *corps diplomatique*, nobility, select friends, acquaintances, and general supporters.

Twenty thousand more people lined the half-mile route from the house to Hawkwood Lane. In London, many shops, clubs, and institutions closed for the day while numerous private houses closed their shutters. Thousands of French sympathizers had crossed the Channel on special ships and trains, each wearing Napoleonic violets – penny bunches were selling for sixpence or even a shilling – and carrying yellow *immortelles*.

Many important Frenchmen also attended: Rouher; Haussmann; Palikao; General Rolin; Girardin; La Valette; Bourbaki; Forcade la Roquette; Adolphe and Paul Granier de Cassagnac; Schneider; Marshal Leboeuf, minister of war after Niel; Marshal Canrobert, replacement commander of the French forces in the Crimea who was so ill that he had been advised not to attend; Admiral Rigault de Genouilly; Liberal Empire politician Maurice Richard; Baron David, last vice-president of the

Corps Législatif, leader of the Conservative faction at the *Club de la rue de l'Arcade*, and Jérôme's illegitimate son; and General Charles Frossard, commander of II Corps during the war. Marshal MacMahon and Ollivier did not attend, fearing to compromise their new and tenuous positions in the republic.

Although 800 constables had been brought in, there was no trouble of any kind. *The Times* (16 January) noted that 'the funeral was not one of those in which the people in the first mourning coach are weeping while those in the last one are laughing'. In fact, it was one where the grief and sense of loss were evident in everybody present, even in those locals whose heads hung from their windows.

Inside St Mary's there was space for 184 mourners. The women were admitted first and placed on the left, including the countesses Walewska and Malakov, Lelia Canrobert, the marshal's Scottish wife, and Clothilde and Mathilde Bonaparte. Six tall silver candlesticks surrounded the catafalque, which was draped in black, as was the church. At 11 o'clock, they were lit, and half an hour later Father Isaac interrupted his funerary oration, leaving the church at the head of a small procession of deacons and altar boys to meet the coffin at the lychgate. As it re-entered with Mgr Bauer at the head, the organ played Psalm 130 *De profundis clamavi ad te Domine* and the male members of the family took their seats in the chancel, including Plon-Plon, Louis Lucien – Jérôme's American grandson – and the Murats. Admiral Sir Hope Grant was also present, as well as General Richard Airey, who had been quartermaster-general to the Crimean army. Representing the Corporation of London was Sir Sidney Waterlow, the philanthropist and lord mayor. Sala was there too.

Many people from France and England remained outside in the winter sun as the Requiem mass got underway, sung to the restored Solemses system in strict plainsong. Inside, a highly decorated octogenarian *ancien militaire*, officially representing the First Empire from Les Invalides, wept as he saw its successor laid to rest. Marshal Leboeuf, one of several men meant to stand to attention around the flower-laden coffin, spent most of the funeral with his head in his hands, weeping and crying out 'Adieu, mon Empereur':

> The music of the Mass, monotonously sweet, goes on till by and by the service comes to the consecration of the holy water. The little bell sounds, all kneel or bend low, and the coffin and pall, hitherto only just seen with its wreaths above the heads of the people, are suddenly exposed half-way down the folds of purple velvet and golden bees. The Host is elevated, the mist of incense steals throughout the church, and the priests move round the bier sprinkling the holy water. The absolution is pronounced, there is more chanting, and then the wreaths are taken off the coffin, and the great Imperial crown worked in gold disappears in the velvet as the pall is turned over the lid. Slowly the music plays while they carry the coffin through an archway in the chapel wall and place it on a low pedestal in a temporary structure built over the vault into which it will be lowered. The beautiful flowers are again heaped on the lid, and the grated gate is closed. The Prince Imperial and the other Princes kneel before it in succession for a moment, sprinkling the holy water and signing the cross … The organ plays the *De Profundis* as the mourners leave the chapel, most of them first passing before the grating … looking into the gloomy recess in which the coffin of the Emperor, once so great and feared, so busy and unfathomable, is hidden by beautiful flowers.

It was one o'clock by the time the mourners left to make their way back to Camden Place for the levée held by the Prince Imperial. 'The funeral was the most touching scene I ever witnessed', confessed Lady Cowley: 'There was not a dry eye in the Church, and the gentlemen who walked with, and stood by, the coffin, were all sobbing. All the pomps and obsequies at Notre Dame could never equal the scene in little St Mary's'.[76]

* * *

Queen Victoria was the first person outside Camden Place to hear of Louis Napoleon's death. Immediately it had been announced inside, Piétri telegraphed Osborne House and informed her lady-in-waiting. 'Was quite upset', Victoria wrote in her journal, 'Had a great regard for the Emperor, who was so amiable and kind, and had borne his terrible misfortunes with such meekness, dignity, and patience'.[77]

The Times (10 January) was, for once, dignified but verbose as two pages of six columns each were set aside for the main obituary. These owned up at last to 'our silly invasion panics', and ended with the remark that it was 'unfortunate' that he had not died sooner as 'it can hardly be doubted that his contemporaries will do him injustice, and that his memory will be, in a measure, rehabilitated by posterity'. Elsewhere it stated 'we trust for the honour of human nature that there are many who mourn him sincerely in common gratitude'. The following day the paper continued:

> An enormous name has passed out of the living world into history … We all of us feel older in having survived the man who represented … the busy middle age of this wonderful century … this strange, meditative, inscrutable man, dark to others, often, doubtless, to himself, was learning everywhere, everything. In long captivity … and in our Metropolis, he had nothing to do but that which Princes often cannot do – to read, observe, think, and learn, and watch the star of his destiny … Napoleon III had his crusades everywhere – for liberty, for order, for religion, for civilization, for commerce, for national unity, for every purpose that can engage the heart or imagination of man … Received on these shores with the sympathy due to misfortune, and followed everywhere with the respect due to a dignified bearing and an affectionate nature [he] acquires a new claim to consideration in the agonies of his deathbed … and the deep affliction of those he leaves behind him.

The *Illustrated London News* (11 January) ran two editorials expressing a more reserved attitude:

> We are speaking the general sentiment of this nation … when we say that the death of our illustrious guest is an occasion to us of sincere regret; and that we are disposed to entertain, on the whole, a fair degree of respect for his memory, notwithstanding those grave errors in his public conduct which were sufficiently punished by his fall from the throne he had won.

The *Manchester Guardian* (10 January) ran an obituary filling a page: 'England, at least, has nothing to reproach him with … it may unquestionably be said of him that he was for a time one of the most enlightened rulers France ever had, and France is sorely in want of an acceptable ruler'. However, it accepted Louis Napoleon's 'nominal responsibility' in 'provoking war with Germany', which, along with military ineptitude, it saw as just cause for his overthrow. A few days later (15 January), the paper declared that 'Bonapartism, in short, is dead'. But when taking an apolitical position, after the funeral, it was more generous (15 January): 'with the single exception of the lying in state of the Duke of Wellington, it may be safely asserted that no similar spectacle has been seen in England'.

Princess Alice, who in 1862 had married Grand Duke Ludwig of Hesse and the Rhine, wrote a letter to Victoria from Darmstadt as soon as she heard the news:

> … much shocked … and I must say grieved; personally he was so amiable … That he should die an exile in England … is most striking … How proud you must ever be, in feeling that your country is the one always able to offer a home and hospitality for those driven away from their own countries! England is before all others in that; and its warm sympathy for those who are in misfortune is such a generous feeling.[78]

The marchioness of Lorne also wrote to Victoria immediately: 'How dreadfully sad about the poor Emperor. What agonies he must have suffered. I must confess that I did hope he would live to return to France if only for a short time. What a distressing end. And the 'Times' wrote such heartless articles on him, all these days'.[79]

The duke of Cambridge was 'very much shocked … The event is a most painful one, and I grieve over it much, as he was ever most kind and frank with me, and I entertained for him a real and cordial regard and esteem. With all his faults, he was a very great man, and Europe has lost with him one of its greatest Statesmen'.[80] Malmesbury's diary ended on 23 September 1869 with the death of Derby, but he subsequently added a brief resumé of events up to Louis Napoleon's death, which he saw as a release 'from the storms of a fitful existence' that had spared him 'from knowing the loss of his only son'.[81] In what was probably his very last letter, the moribund Bulwer-Lytton, still in Torquay, wrote three days before his own demise that 'The poor Emperor's death has affected me more than I could have imagined'.[82]

Two men summed up the day in their journals with the detached but perceptive air of young men who had never even seen Louis Napoleon. Reginald Brett, heir to the viscounty of Esher: 'At Chislehurst died Napoleon the Third, one of the most famous men of our time, regretted more by his hereditary foes than by his own countrymen'.[83] Francis Kilvert, curate of Langley Burrell in Wiltshire: 'The earthly troubles of the exiled Emperor are over … It has been a life of marvellous vicissitudes and the most wonderful romance since that of Charles Edward'.[84]

Disraeli was then out of office and living at Hughenden Manor near High Wycombe, where portraits of those who had played a part in his life – his 'Gallery of Friendship' – included one of Louis Napoleon. In 1880, Disraeli recreated his early life with *Endymion*, whose eponymous political hero rises to become prime minister.

Louis Napoleon moves through the pages as Prince Florestan. Exiled from his unnamed Mediterranean kingdom, he arrives in London in 1839 to conspire himself back onto his throne. He settles in Carlton House Terrace with the duke of St Angelo, his friend and mentor (Persigny), and prepares for his inevitable restoration in an atmosphere of semi-secrecy:

> The Tories did not love revolutionary dynasties, and the Whigs being in office could not sanction a pretender, and one who … was not a very scrupulous one. The prince himself … was not much chagrined by this. The world thought that he had fitted up his fine house, and bought his fine horses, merely for the enjoyment of life. His purposes were very different. (Vol.ii ch.xix).

Florestan leaves Southampton on a steam yacht with a force remarkably similar to that at Boulogne, achieving his *coup d'état* to become King Florestan I, evading the chicanery of Ferroll (Bismarck). There was certainly no University of Ham. Instead:

> [He] slept in the purple bed which had witnessed his princely birth … His fine countenance, his capital horsemanship, his graceful bow that always won a heart, his youth, and love of sport, his English education, and the belief that he was sincere in his regard for the country where he had been so long a guest, were elements of popularity that … were unmistakable. (Vol.iii ch.xviii).

Endymion is Disraeli himself, while Endymion's twin sister Myra is Disraeli's own sister Sarah, the most important woman in Disraeli's life after his wife, someone with whom he enjoyed 'a sister's mystical affection', and when she died he was devastated. In the novel, Myra was first married to Lord Roehampton (Palmerston), but on his death she falls in love with and marries King Florestan, leaving her brother in England in order to go and live with him in her fabulous new kingdom.

More than any professional obituary, it was the most touching literary tribute by Disraeli to the man who might have drowned him in the Thames.

NOTES and REFERENCES to Chapter Twelve

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[1] *The Times* Thursday 23 Mar. 1871.
[2] *The Times* Tuesday 21 Mar. 1871.
[3] *Kurtz* 255.
[4] PRO RG 10/876 f.14 (pp.20-1/82).
[5] *Argyll* ii 389.
[6] Ibid. 417-18.
[7] *Cambridge* i 295.
[8] *Guest Ms* private communication from Patrick Hodgson (grandson of the earl and countess) to Guest.
[9] QVL II ii 24.
[10] *Guest* 176-7. Victoria had suffered in the room, kept to at least 22° Celsius that Louis Napoleon had required since Ham; but then he had always suffered at Windsor Castle, where Victoria thrived on Ham-like conditions and where even the guest quarters had little or no heating, and whose windows were kept open throughout the year.
[11] *Guest Ms* private communication from the Junior United Service Club to Guest 14 Nov. 1946.
[12] *Brackenbury* 206.
[13] *Court Journal* Saturday 24 Jun. 1865.
[14] *Guest* 183.
[15] *The Times* Monday 19 Jun. 1871.
[16] *Guest* 184.
[17] Ibid. 183.
[18] *Ponsonby: Life* 43.
[19] QVL II ii 75, Ponsonby to Victoria 12 Oct. 1870.
[20] *Guest* 186.
[21] *Guest Ms* Louis Napoleon to Palk 21 Oct. 1871. Mark Gambier-Parry (grandson of Lady Palk) to Guest.
[22] *Guest* 188-9.
[23] PRO FO 519/301, Louis Napoleon to Lord Cowley 7 Jan. 1872.
[24] QVL II ii 194, *Journal* 27 Feb. 1872.
[25] *Guest* 188.
[26] *Jerrold* iv 521.
[27] *Lawrence* 80-1.
[28] *Huxley I* i 382, Huxley to Henry Roscoe 17 Sep. 1872.
[29] *Holyoake* ii 210.
[30] Ibid. 215.
[31] *The Times* Monday 19 Aug. 1872.
[32] *Cornwallis-West* 30-1. Jennie claimed that this took place in 1871, and that her first Squadron Ball took place in 1873, but both occurred in 1872 when she turned eighteen. Her memoirs were written 35 years after the event.
[33] *Villiers* 280.
[34] QVL II i 112.
[35] Ibid. 113.
[36] *Ibid*. 114, Victoria to Leopold 12 Nov. 1863.
[37] *Wellesley/Sencourt* 223-4, Cowley to Russell 13 Nov. 1863.
[38] *Jerrold* iv 529.
[39] *Holyoake* i 231, Hunt to Holyoake 12 Feb. 1871.
[40] *Jerrold* iv 529.
[41] Ibid. 530.
[42] *BL Ms* Add. 44.405 f.207, Walewski to Gladstone 4 Mar. 1865.
[43] *BL Ms* Add. 44.431 f.90, Gladstone to Louis Napoleon 3 Jul. 1871.
[44] *BL Ms* Add. 44.431 f.99, Louis Napoleon to Gladstone 5 Jul. 1871.
[45] PRO CAB 41/5 (3), Gladstone to Victoria 24 Jan. 1873.
[46] *The Times* Monday 23 Oct. 1871.
[47] *D'Hauterieve* 245, Louis Napoleon to Plon-Plon 21 Jul. 1871.
[48] *Thiers* 278.
[49] *D'Hauterieve* 246, Louis Napoleon to Plon-Plon 21 Aug. 1871.
[50] *Thiers* 117.
[51] Ibid. 177.
[52] Ibid. 178.

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[53] Ibid. loc. cit..
[54] *D'Hauterieve* 248, Louis Napoleon to Plon-Plon 16 Feb. 1872.
[55] Ibid. 254, Louis Napoleon to Plon-Plon 13 Oct. 1872.
[56] *Dickens* viii 57, Dickens to Forster 17 Feb. 1856.
[57] *Williams: Mortal* 69.
[58] *Allingham and Radford* 259-60, December 1877.
[59] *Guest* 194.
[60] *Fulford IV* 74, Victoria to Vicky 11 Jan. 1873.
[61] *Cope* 60.
[62] *Nevill* 259.
[63] *Thompson (A)* 236.
[64] Ibid. 237.
[65] *Thompson (B)* 251.
[66] Ibid. 250n.
[67] Ibid. 252.
[68] *Thompson (C)* 283.
[69] Ibid. 209.
[70] Ibid. 206.
[71] *Thompson (B)* 268 and *(C)* 219. The text was italicized for emphasis in both editions.
[72] Ibid. 243/216.
[73] *Cope* 41.
[74] *Thompson (C)* 199.

[75] *Thompson (B)* 243 and *(C)* 216.
[76] *Guest* 198.
[77] QVL II 136, 9 Jan. 1873.
[78] *Alice* 296-7.
[79] *Longford* 172.
[80] *Cambridge* ii 8.
[81] *Malmesbury* ii 419.
[82] *Lytton* ii 486.
[83] *Esher* i 8.
[84] *Plomer* 206-7.