

## NINE

### *Tableaux vivants*

#### **Dizzy and the G.O.M. – The ‘Man of the Moment’ – ‘My Dear General’ – Snapshot Gallery**

#### ~ Dizzy and the G.O.M. ~

Disraeli had not been present at Windsor Castle for the official reception of Marie as duchess of Edinburgh on 9 March 1874 as he was in Brighton preparing the Queen’s Speech for the forthcoming parliament. Gladstone was there, however, although in all probability his introduction to Marie was as perfunctory as his record of it in his diary. ‘Off at 4:45 to Windsor for the fête, admirably given’, he noted. ‘We dined in St George’s Hall. I was presented to the Duchess of E. by the Queen and had a few kind words from H.M.’<sup>1</sup> One week later, on Monday 16, there was a grand banquet in Marie’s honour at Marlborough House, introducing her to ‘London society’, at which this time both Disraeli and Gladstone were present. Gladstone – out of office and, for the time being, technically retired – made no mention of Marie in his diary entry for this banquet, stating only that he had had a civil talk with his opponent. Disraeli, on the other hand, evidently got on rather well with Marie, as he explained in a letter on the following day:

After dinner we had conversation enough ... The Dss. of Edinburgh was lively as a bird. She does not like our habit in England of all standing after dinner, and I must say I find it exhausting ... she asked me who a certain person was ... I replied, ‘That is my rival’. ‘What a strange state Society is in here’, she said. ‘Wherever I go, there is a *double*. Two Prime Ministers, two Secretaries of State, two Lord Chamberlains, and two Lord Chancellors’.<sup>2</sup>

Marie of course knew very well who Gladstone was as she had already met him. If Disraeli’s account of this exchange is accurate, then she must have pretended ignorance in order to make her joke at the expense of two-party democratic politics.

Over the next two years, Marie’s relationship with Disraeli became increasingly friendly and personal, whereas she did not have any close contact with Gladstone. Both Marie and Disraeli were again together at Balmoral on 9 September 1874 where Disraeli was placed beside Marie for dinner: ‘The Duchess was most lively and broke through all the etiquette of courtly conversation’, Disraeli explained to a *confidante*. He then added that Marie had told him that she ‘had been picking mushrooms all the morning’, and this confession had apparently both surprised and amused him.<sup>3</sup> Still not knowing Marie any better, Disraeli perhaps had been expecting her to tell him that she had been trying on endless new dresses.

If so, it was only a few days before such a narrow view of the new duchess of Edinburgh would have been dispelled. On 12 September, Disraeli wrote that Marie ‘is in despair at not seeing me: she is reading Froude, and wanted to talk it over with me’.<sup>4</sup> Marie was indeed reading her way through Froude’s monumental twelve-volume *History of England from the Death of Cardinal Wolsey to the Defeat of the Spanish Armada*, whose final volume had been issued in 1870. However, her motives

for approaching Disraeli about it are unclear. Marie was attempting to learn something of English history now that she would be living in England, and she had been advised (although by whom is again unclear) to read Froude. He was the first significant historian of the Tudor period, although his seminal work was a barely disguised assault on Roman Catholicism, an issue central to ecclesiastical politics of the nineteenth century. Perhaps it was simply that Marie wanted the opinion of a man supposedly not ethnically or denominationally predisposed to partisanship.

Eight months later, when Affie and Marie held their private house-warming dinner at Clarence House on Sunday 9 May 1875, there were just two guests present not of royal blood. One was Frederic Quin, the ageing dandy, founder of homœopathy in England, and also the unofficial homœopathic physician to several royals, including the queen. The other such guest was Disraeli, who described this party as ‘a society of Royals playing at common folks’ at which Marie announced him to all present as “‘the new member of the family’”. Alice and Alix played duets on one of Marie’s pianos, and it seems that a merry time was had by all. ‘We did not disperse till midnight and it was well kept up; the dinner very lively; the examination of the new house in all its parts interesting. We were permitted to enter even the bedchamber of the Duchess of Edinburgh and saw the Oratory with its jewelled saints and perpetual lamp’.<sup>5</sup>

Marie met Disraeli once more, at Sandringham on 4 October 1875, shortly before Bertie’s lengthy tour of India. Thirteen months after this, when the tsar wrote to Marie that he ‘cannot forgive him his speech in the Guildhall’, both father and daughter severed all communication with Disraeli and lost whatever little faith in British toryism they may have had. Marie’s frequent journeys and Disraeli’s busy schedule had prevented any meeting between Sandringham and the Guildhall speech, but the speech and what followed ensured that the two would never again meet.

Disraeli even made sure of this, writing to *aconfidante* on 18 May 1877 how he had had to explain to Queen Victoria why he did not ‘wait to see the Duchess of Edinburgh’ before her departure from London and England during the Russo-Turkish War.<sup>6</sup> The reason he gave – to Queen Victoria – was as follows:

Ld Beaconsfield is honoured by the kind remembrances of HRH the Duchess of Edinburgh; he wd say, touched by them. This renders it more distressing for him to say, that he greatly fears he shall not be able to pay his respects to Her Royal Hss., but he leaves town in an hour’s time, & really fears that he hardly has strength enough to travel up again by Monday. His Physicians scarcely permitted him to remain for the Hs of Lords last night, as he requires change of air, in consequence of a return of his bronchial sufferings, &, otherwise, he has still only half a hand to express to Yr Majesty his duty & devotion.<sup>7</sup>

Disraeli left for Hughenden Manor and returned to London at the beginning of June. Whatever the truth of his statement, the obvious point to be made is that if Disraeli had the strength to travel twenty-five miles to his country estate he might have found the energy to travel the one mile required to visit Marie at Clarence House, or somewhere else in London. It is also clear from Disraeli’s letter that, in spite of everything that had taken place, Marie as a royal duchess still had the courtesy to communicate formally with the principal minister of her mother-in-law’s realm.

Some further light may be shed on Disraeli’s discourteous attitude towards Marie from a remark he made in a letter on 12 December 1878 following Alice’s tragic death in Darmstadt. He believed that Alice had contracted diphtheria through contact with her son, although as the disease – whose onset is gradual – had struck almost the entire ducal family the precise route of the transmission at Darmstadt can never be

accurately determined. But he then proceeded to elaborate on the probable spread of the contagion through what he believed would be Marie's thoughtlessness: 'Travelling home, the Duchess of Edinburgh visited and kissed her [Alice] and, no doubt, the Duchess of Edinburgh has kissed the Princess of Wales, and others, since her arrival. How will it all end?'<sup>8</sup> But this was simply silly. Since the principal symptom of the disease is the formation of repellent false membranes on any mucous surface – particularly inside the mouth – and occasionally on the skin, Alice had been warned not to kiss her ailing daughter and she did not, having acquired the disease in some other way. Ignorance of bacteriology notwithstanding, such good advice was always given out at that time and invariably heeded. Marie and her children certainly would have heeded it. They had no personal physical contact with Alice during their brief meeting, and thus the matter 'ended' where it had begun – in Darmstadt.

When Disraeli was buried at Hughenden Manor on Tuesday 26 March 1881, Marie's disapproval of the colourful, undeniably gifted but severely flawed politician, could not go so far as to prevent William Colville from formally representing her and Affie. In any event, however, there was no question of the Edinburghs attending in person as they were both then in Russia for the tsar's funeral.

Aleksandr II was pleased with the way he could work with Gladstone over the problem of Turkey's non-compliance with some of the Articles agreed to at the Congress of Berlin. In particular, 'Abdul-Hamid refused to cede the Adriatic port of Dulcigno (Ulcinj) to Montenegro agreed under Article XXIX, prompting a final note delivered to the Porte by the powers on 15 September 1880. 'Political affairs are in the same indefinite state thanks to the stubbornness of Turkey', the tsar announced to Marie in August. 'For the moment we are acting in complete accord with England and I hope that this will continue'.<sup>9</sup> 'Turkish matters are still far from being disentangled', he reiterated two months later, 'and I cannot foresee how it will end. For the present we are acting in concert with England, and I hope that the other powers too will not diverge from us'.<sup>10</sup> Thanks mainly due to the presence in the Adriatic Sea of a combined fleet under a British admiral, the Turks conceded on 23 October and surrendered Dulcigno on 26 November. Marie required no further encouragement than her father's confidence in the Gladstone administration for her to cultivate a friendship with the new first lord of the treasury.

Ministerial changes require a diplomatic conscience even in the daughter of a tsar. When Marie married Affie, Britain was being governed by a Liberal administration that celebrated her marriage at Granville's official home (18 Carlton House Terrace) with a great party comprising many influential Liberal politicians, including Gladstone, who had been only too willing to attend. But it would have been grossly impolitic for Marie to have cultivated an open friendship with Gladstone while Disraeli was in office; she could not therefore attend any private functions of his before April 1880, and she had the good sense not to violate this particular protocol.

It was not of course only issues of protocol that prevented this, nor even any political differences over Russia. A simultaneous friendship with Disraeli and Gladstone would have taxed the diplomatic talents of the finest ambassador, since the two men were not merely political rivals but antithesis incarnate who loathed each other. They were the perfect human expressions of the 'Apollonian' and 'Dionysian' irreconcilable psycho-cultural types that Nietzsche was at that moment developing through his radical reinterpretation of Classical Greek tragedy. Disraeli was the archetypal Dionysian – flamboyant, witty, light-hearted (and light-footed) to the point of flippancy, socially facile, spiritually inactive, and an ardent Romantic. Gladstone was the consummate Apollonian – meticulous and analytical to the point of pedantry,

a seriously grim and monumental intellect, an anti-Romantic, and driven by a religio-moral imperative complicated by a strong sense of shame and guilt. Seen in this Nietzschean light, all of Marie's male friendships tended towards the Apollonian-type, and, like Gladstone, had she been a little older she would probably not have got on very well with the greatest Dionysian of the century – Napoleon III. It may be wondered just how close her brief friendship with Disraeli could ever have been even had his politics not intervened.

There was also much besides politics in Gladstone that Marie could admire for having reached the same opinion herself. Gladstone never prostrated himself before monarchy like Disraeli (literally), and nor was he infected with lordolatry. Marie also believed that royalty and nobility must perpetually earn respect and not expect it to be handed to them on a platter solely due to an accident of birth.

They also shared an important opinion on religious matters. By the time Marie first met Gladstone, he had long since published his view that cultural habits and national mentalities should be allowed to shape the style of national religious observance. For Christianity to function in the world, its internal esoteric values depended on universal acceptance, but for the exoteric Church to function in the world, its external values depended on a plurality of form; thus for Gladstone the horrors of aggressive global Catholicism, proselytizing Evangelical fundamentalism, and Anglican apostates looking wistfully towards Rome. At the same time, those who travelled around the world should be permitted to take their style of national religious observance with them, and provision should be made to enable them to profess their style of worship wherever they may be; thus for Gladstone the life-long support of Catholic emancipation and the establishment in 1850 of the Catholic hierarchy in Britain. Marie endorsed this view without reservation, which is why she was happy to accept her marriage treaty that allowed her to be Orthodox in England while insisting that her children be raised as Anglicans. However, she was more pragmatic than Gladstone was when it came to the issue of apostasy, as shall be seen with the religious upbringing of her children after their translation to Germany.

The first personal meeting outside official royal functions between Marie and Gladstone therefore appears not to have taken place before Wednesday 2 February 1881 when she and Affie attended a party at Gladstone's London house at 73 Harley Street. 'Royalty dinner came off', Gladstone noted in his customary laconic and pedestrian style. 'They were all very kind, but with the Duchess of Edinburgh I was simply delighted'.<sup>11</sup> In fact, Marie seems to have delighted everyone at this party, which included an assortment of prominent Liberals. Among these was John Bright, now holding the cabinet post of chancellor of the duchy of Lancaster in Gladstone's second administration. Bright, the most radical of Gladstone's cabinet ministers – more so than even 'Radical Joe' Chamberlain who had entered as president of the board of trade – met Marie here for the first time: 'She seems pleasant and sensible', he noted.<sup>12</sup> No doubt the conversation with Bright hinged on recent unfortunate events, and doubtless also Bright's detested Jingoism from whose attacks he was still smarting. After all, a few months later he would write Gladstone referring to Disraeli's last premiership as 'the reign of the great jingo deity', in addition to confessing that his relations with Queen Victoria were 'worse, and even greatly worse, than I had anticipated'.<sup>13</sup> Common ground indeed.

Marie's second meeting with Gladstone took place a few weeks later at Clarence House, ten days before Disraeli's death, on Wednesday 9 March 1881, described less satisfactorily by Gladstone in his usual manner: 'Dined at the Duke of Edinburgh's.

Conversation with the Duchess (by whom I was irregularly placed): & with the G. Duke Alexis who is very intelligent'.<sup>14</sup>

Some idea of the nature of their relationship may be gleaned from an unsolicited letter Marie received from Gladstone shortly afterwards. On 13 May, he wrote offering her a copy of *Notes on the Churches of Kent* that had been written by his late brother-in-law Sir Stephen Glynne and completed in 1877 by his son. 'As I learned at Windsor, from the highest authority, Your Royal and Imperial Highness' interest in the architecture of churches, I take the liberty, with dutiful respect, of forwarding a copy ... and of praying that it may be accepted'.<sup>15</sup> Eastwell Park was of course in Kent, while her local church was reputedly the final resting-place of Richard Plantagenet – at least according to an entry in the local parish records.

On Thursday 5 April 1883, Gladstone was again at Clarence House, noting afterwards 'I am delighted with the frank & simple character of the Duchess'.<sup>16</sup> One matter Marie mentioned to Gladstone on this occasion was the invitation she and Affie had just received from headmaster Robert M'Dowall for them to open a three-day charity bazaar at Highgate School. Gladstone gave his mock approval and the invitation was gladly accepted. On Thursday 19 April, the Edinburghs travelled to the celebrated grammar school with Missy, Ducky, and dog Sandy. The charity was in aid of two new wards for the local children's convalescent home, founded in 1880 and run by All Saint's Church. Also present was the greatest local celebrity, the renowned philanthropist Baroness Burdett-Coutts. Marie was presented with a bouquet of flowers by a girl who had recently recovered at the home, whereupon, as *The Times* noted (20 April), the Edinburghs 'inspected the various stalls, making liberal purchases at each' before leaving to take tea at Holly Lodge with Burdett-Coutts.<sup>17</sup>

The respect between Marie and Gladstone was by now quite mutual. On Saturday 24 November, Gladstone travelled to Windsor Castle for a two-day visit noting that he 'sat by the Duchess of Edinburgh' who was 'frank, forthcoming, & kind as usual'.<sup>18</sup> The conversation resulted in the following letter to Marie on 13 December:

At Windsor Yr. I. & R. H. was good enough to say I might send these specimens of labour performed in a field which is not now much frequented. Under cover of the permission thus accorded, I take the liberty allowed & add my request that it may not entail the trouble of any acknowledgement.<sup>19</sup>

The 'specimens of labour' comprised Latin and Greek translations of English religious texts, particularly those of the evangelical poet William Cowper. Marie could read both Latin and Modern Greek, and no doubt she admired and appreciated Gladstone's powerful, if somewhat arid, intellect – a rarity indeed in British politics.

The tension between Gladstone and Queen Victoria was often difficult for Marie to understand, or at least appreciate. Towards the end of September 1883, at Copenhagen, Gladstone had entertained Aleksandr III and the tsaritsa aboard a holiday vessel he had taken to steam to Scandinavia. This unofficial meeting annoyed Victoria (most things he did annoyed her), but Gladstone had been very pleased with his impressions. Also on board had been Tennyson who read some of his poetry to the assembled imperial party and was similarly impressed, accepting a peerage from Gladstone on the return journey. The queen's loathing for Gladstone increased throughout the 1880s, and on 2 June 1886, Marie confessed to Lady Randolph Churchill that she found unfathomable the extraordinary political turmoil in England at that time: 'I have completely lost sight of English politics and the G.O.M.'s "wicked" doings', she wrote from Coburg.<sup>20</sup>

Marie also rather 'lost sight' (in a real sense) of Gladstone during the latter part of the 1880s. This was unfortunate but unavoidable. In April 1882, Gladstone sold his

Harley Street home and thereafter maintained no metropolitan address for the rest of his life, staying with friends whenever he was obliged to visit London for any considerable duration. Nor was there any chance of 'dropping in' on Gladstone at his country estate, as Hawarden Castle was north of Wrexham in Flintshire (Clwyd) in North Wales. Gladstone made five journeys abroad between 1874 and 1893 (the years Marie was officially resident in England) with only the last two excursions – Germany in August 1886 and France in February 1889 – occurring while Marie was also not in England. This, coupled with her own frequent journeys abroad, meant that there were few opportunities when the two could meet, and none where the meeting could be considered at all intimate.

Politically, Marie was of course closer to Gladstone than to either Disraeli or Salisbury, but nothing mattered so much to her as Russia, particularly while her more liberal father was alive. And since Gladstone maintained his generally pro-Russian position to the end of his life – Marie had seen his 'England and Russia' published in the *Nineteenth Century* of March 1880 – so she remained faithful to him. Gladstone's interest in foreign affairs was slight (considerably slighter than Salisbury's subtle appreciation of it), and his knowledge slighter still – he was 'wholly ignorant' of it according to the long-standing governor of Egypt, Lord Cromer.<sup>21</sup> Taking a deliberately high-minded liberal position after Disraeli's amoral stance, his attitude was nevertheless morally erratic. He had, for example, made financial capital out of maintaining a position of neutrality during the Franco-Prussian War by purchasing Consols when they fell in July 1870, and of course political capital six years later by publishing his successful but overbearing and condemnatory *Bulgarian Horrors* pamphlet. Gladstonian apologists at the time assured the world that this was not political skittishness but a result of an organic, non-dogmatic, evolutionary attitude to foreign affairs dependant on the political circumstances of the day. But such an attitude could easily mask something much simpler: an incoherent and unimaginative, or even non-existent, foreign policy. But it is unlikely that Marie cared about this so long as Gladstone maintained his friendly position towards Russia.

On 1 March 1894, Gladstone chaired the last of his 556 cabinet meetings, and on 24 May his right eye was operated on for a cataract, whereupon he immediately suffered another in his other eye, which was deemed inoperable. He was therefore unable to appear at a Buckingham Palace garden party on 2 July. Marie, now duchess of Saxe-Coburg Gotha and on a rare visit to England with Affie, had been looking forward to meeting him there. On the following day, Affie instructed his private secretary to write to Catherine Gladstone expressing their disappointment at having missed her husband, wishing him well and hoping that 'at the next opportunity they may have the pleasure of renewing the acquaintance which they much value'.<sup>22</sup> Four days later, Gladstone announced his decision to retire from politics, and four years later he died, with no such opportunity having arisen.

Marie and Affie were unable to attend the magnificent funeral at Westminster Abbey in person (Saturday 28 May 1898) as they were preoccupied in Coburg. They of course sent a representative, but eight days earlier Affie had sent Catherine Gladstone a telegram that was published in *The Times* on Monday 23: 'The Duchess joins me in expressing our deep sympathy with you and your family in the great loss you have sustained'. Marie no doubt felt the loss more keenly than Affie. Although Affie's relations with Gladstone were cordial, he was neither socially nor mentally – or for that matter politically – equipped to encourage the warmth Marie experienced and which under different circumstances might have evolved towards the close avuncular relationship Queen Victoria had known in her youth with Lord Melbourne.

## ~ The 'Man of the Moment' ~

In her memoirs, Lady Randolph Churchill recalled:

I cannot leave the subject of Russia and the Russians without speaking of the one it has been my privilege to know best ... the ... Duchess of Edinburgh. We used to see her very often when she lived in England. A warm-hearted woman of rare intelligence and exceptional education, her early life as the only daughter of the Czar was a most interesting one, as ... it was her duty for two hours daily to read her father's correspondence and the secret news of the world, in itself a liberal education.<sup>23</sup>

Marie's friendship with Lord and Lady Randolph Churchill would be the most important she cultivated in England during the latter stages as duchess of Edinburgh.

Churchill's rapid rise in the Conservative Party had led to his appointment as secretary of state for India in Salisbury's first administration of 24 June 1885 and re-election as member for the borough and town of Woodstock at the age of thirty-six. At this time he was an open Russophobe. On 4 May, following Gladstone's announcement of the possibility of friendly relations with Russia as a result of Aleksandr III's conciliatory attitude after the taking of Penjdeh, Churchill had delivered a virulent speech in the Commons on 'Russian aggression' and the 'perfidy of Russia'. And when East Rumelia united with Bulgaria in September, he was as vociferous an opponent of Russian influence in the Balkans as any other critic. Suddenly (or so it appeared to both his contemporaries and successors), Churchill turned full circle; by the end of December he was opposing Salisbury's pro-Bulgarian position, deploring that it was 'degenerating into an aggressive attitude against Russia',<sup>24</sup> although he would support Sandro for the sake of international peace.

In fact, what had happened is that in the meantime he had met Marie. She explained to Wolseley how she had contrived to effect the meeting:

Tomorrow we have, alas, a big shooting-party, but I am going to console myself with Lord Randolph Churchill, whom I have specially asked for my personal benefit, as I wanted to make nearer acquaintance with this modern curiosity and the greatest "bavard" ['babbler'] of the day (naturally after the Grand Old Man).<sup>25</sup>

The tiresome shooting-party had been arranged by Affie to take place from Wednesday 16 December to the following Sunday. Churchill accepted Marie's mercenary invitation, arriving at Eastwell Park with his wife. Marie described her first encounter with him a few days later to Wolseley while Churchill was still a guest under her roof, also commenting on his wife:

I am beginning to ensnare Lord Randolph Churchill, the great orator, the "enfant terrible" of the good old steady Conservatives. We are fast becoming friends and have long and interesting conversations together. He is a "now-schooler" which is an enormous advantage ... On the whole, I like him ... he has quite good manners and is rather modest ... she is very nice and an excellent musician.<sup>26</sup>

This was fair comment, but Wolseley was a committed Tory, and Marie was more open about her guest in a letter to Tolstaia written after Churchill had left Eastwell Park. In particular, she revealed the nature of the 'long and interesting conversations':

These last few days I made the acquaintance of a 'man of the moment' about whom one is obliged to speak: Lord Randolph Churchill, a strange person without doubt, intelligent in the way of all English statesmen, but on the other hand, very ignorant and remarkably little cultivated. His notions about Russia are extremely vague, and in chatting with him I had to correct the sort of errors that a child of ours would not make. And he fulminates against our country, and applauds himself for his execrable

stupidities! But to elect this person, so young and already a minister, was very strange. On the other hand, he has a charming little wife who delighted me no end – a lively and very jolly American who seems to light up the whole world with her enchanting presence.<sup>27</sup>

While Churchill ruminated in London over the Russian lectures he had received in Kent, his wife sent Marie a thank-you note on a card the day after returning to London on Monday 21 December. On the Wednesday following, Marie wrote her first letter to her, apologizing for the delay in responding and expressing her happiness that she had enjoyed her stay at Eastwell Park. She invited the Churchills to stay with her at Eastwell Park again just as soon as it could be arranged, suggesting that next time they bring their son Winston with them as he was the same age as Prince Alfred and would be a perfect companion for him.

Jeanette ('Jennie') Jerome was, as Marie had immediately observed, one of the great characters of her day.<sup>28</sup> A cosmopolitan educated in Paris where she had flirted with the Prince Imperial, Jennie was possessed of an active political mind and a passion for music finding – as with Marie – practical expression in her great skill at the piano. Jennie had had lessons in Paris from Stephen Heller, who was a better composer than Rubinstein if not quite his equal as a pianist, and who had predicted for her a considerable career as a concert pianist should she wish to take that path. She chose not to pursue this, but she was able to give occasional public and private charity concerts, whereas Marie was of course prevented by protocol from doing so. As a 'commoner', Jennie's experiences with the musical world were perhaps wider than were Marie's. She had met and heard Liszt at the Russian embassy in the spring of 1886, and she had heard and met Rubinstein in London before his re-appointment to the St Petersburg Academy in 1887. Jennie also became influential in the London music scene, arranging Paderewski's debut at the St James's Hall in June 1891, she having befriended him several years earlier, often accompanying him on duets.

Marie's relationship with Churchill was somewhat different. Each had had certain reservations about the other at their first meeting, although these would soon be dispelled completely. In Marie's case, this was effected by Jennie, who had informed her of Churchill's degenerative disease, which frankness naturally altered her opinion of him once the cause of his peculiarities had been explained. On 2 January 1886, Marie gave Jennie a date for the next Eastwell Park visit, which Jennie immediately acknowledged, the date being set for the weekend of Friday 8 to Monday 11, although Jennie was unsure whether Churchill would be able to join her. On Tuesday 5, Marie wrote again expressing her keenest wish that he should come, mentioning that Prince Alfred was looking forward to meeting Winston and playing with him. Jennie and Winston arrived as planned, but Churchill was not with them, pleading government business as Salisbury's administration was, he thought, on the verge of collapse.

Marie wrote Churchill on the following afternoon, expressing her sorrow at his absence. 'I only thought that a quiet Sunday in the country and some cheerful company might do you good in the middle of all your political and government troubles', she explained. She knew they were politically incompatible, but, as usual, regarded such disaccord irrelevant to any sincere human friendship based on deeper issues (just so long as Russia remained unaffected, naturally). Even the fact that Churchill had co-founded the Primrose League – an association meant to attract the working public to Conservative politics of the Disraelian shade – in November 1883, and that Jennie was an active 'dame' of the organization, meant nothing to Marie:

Since I have learnt to know you well I feel real interest in you, though I am a liberal at heart and ... but I will not finish my sentence, as my ideas would carry me too far. I wish you only not to think me any

more the proud Russian Princess you thought me at first, and to realise that my country's people have also many good qualities, one of the first being their true appreciation of clever men! ... Please forget my [illegible] that frightens you, and come to see me at Clarence House like any ordinary mortal.<sup>29</sup>

However, Churchill's domestic political worries had been well founded; Salisbury's administration collapsed on 26 January after a defeat on a Radical amendment to an agrarian bill, and Gladstone formed his third administration on 3 February.

On Tuesday 12 January, the Edinburghs left for Sandringham, returning to Clarence House on the following Saturday. Marie and Affie were invited to Churchill's London residence at 2 Connaught Place facing Hyde Park on Sunday 7 February. 'I am perfectly sure you dislike giving dinner parties', Marie had written him the previous Monday, 'and therefore pity you to have to entertain us ... I will try to make myself as agreeable as I can to our future Prime Minister, to make him forget at least in his own house that the presence of royalty "n'est pas toujours une gêne!"' Marie once again declared her 'great interest' in Churchill's political career, trusting that he would 'never scorn ambition' because 'ambition is everything in life and I preach it to everybody else, except myself, as I am totally [devoid] of that quality or fault, as best you like'. Marie again revealed her political colours, but now she appeared to have leaped from Gladstone to Dilke: 'I always had and still have the feeling that royalty must spoil every entertainment. I am a great radical at heart, you know, so do not try to dispel these ideas'.<sup>30</sup> She reiterated this position to Jennie a few months later:

You know, I am a great radical at heart and find that Princes must do a great deal towards society, to keep in it their proper rank and inspire a due respect. Alas, our [the British] royal family does not always set the best of examples. They think that to be born a royalty is quite sufficient 'pour le commun des mortels'.<sup>31</sup>

Marie was not for the abolition of the monarchy, but she recognized that it was required to earn its respect and did not have a divine right to it.

On 10 February, Marie wrote Jennie that she had enjoyed the dinner tremendously and invited her to come skating at Buckingham Palace on the frozen pond, which she did. Marie enjoyed gently teasing Churchill, and when she wrote Jennie on Friday 26 February to arrange one of their many piano duets, she asked her to tell Churchill not to worry, as she would certainly not be inviting Gladstone to join them. On 2 March, Marie wrote Churchill saying that she had heard he was due to 'have a row in the House this evening. If so, let me know, as I would like to see and hear you in elegant fury!' 'You are fun ... and excellent company when in a good mood', she went on. 'Don't think me impertinent, but I can also be quite "franché" in my opinions'.<sup>32</sup>

Churchill's one undeniable gift was for oratory, and his golden tongue was capable of spitting acid in all directions, sparing no one. Throughout March, in speeches leading up to the great debates over Home Rule for Ireland, Churchill zealously defended the Tory record on Ireland and also attacked Gladstone's India policies. On 2 March, John Morley denounced Churchill in the Commons for the journey he had undertaken to Belfast in February where he had given some passionate unionist speeches to near hysterical Protestants, something that was anathema to the current Home Rule thinking of the Liberals. Marie sat in the Ladies' Gallery that night, perhaps disappointed since Churchill reserved the bulk of his oratorical talents for a major speech in Manchester on the following day. But she listened keenly to Gladstone, Mundella, and O'Connor before retiring.

On 8 April, Gladstone introduced the major bill of his administration for the Government of Ireland ('Home Rule') to which he had gradually converted as political circumstances dictated. Two months later, he lost the division heavily, obtaining permission to dissolve parliament on 27 June to call for an election based on this issue. Churchill was then re-elected to his South Paddington seat by a comfortable majority. 'Please give him my *heartfelt* good wishes on this Parliamentary success', Marie wrote Jennie on 16 June from Stuttgart when she heard the news. 'And so the G.O.M. is done for ... and you all think that you have saved England!'<sup>33</sup>

The Grand Old Man was certainly 'done for'. He had misread the national and political mood on Ireland, having failed to sufficiently inform the public as to what the Liberal conception of 'Home Rule' really meant. Gladstone resigned on 20 July, and six days later Salisbury returned to high office with Churchill moving towards what many (and Marie) thought eventual premiership by accepting the position of chancellor of the exchequer. This occasioned another congratulatory letter from Marie, from Peterhof on 21 July/2 August:

Please offer him my most sincere good wishes for his success in public life, and though I shed a tear or two over the fall of 'my idol', I sincerely hope that the new Ministry will be more successful. I do not believe it, however, and slightly chuckle over the difficulties they will have to face.<sup>34</sup>

In fact, Salisbury's second administration would last for the following six years. However, if Marie had somehow intended her malicious delight to refer to the difficulties concerning Churchill she would have been right, since he very nearly cost Salisbury his newly consolidated political position. From the outset, Churchill's maverick and intransigent opposition to Salisbury and most of his cabinet indicated to his contemporaries that he was already half insane. How many knew, like Marie, or guessed, that he had contracted meningovascular neurosyphilis in his youth cannot be known, but due entirely, albeit inadvertently, to Marie, the fixation his diseased brain had now selected as its mania was Russia.

Throughout 1886, Churchill's behaviour became altogether increasingly erratic. In April, he expressed a desire to escape to Paris for a few days on his own. This worried Marie, who wrote Jennie on Sunday 11 urging her not to let him go alone, as this would be 'most dangerous' for him in his condition.<sup>35</sup> Her advice was taken, and Churchill escaped to Paris with his new best friend – and, ironically, Jennie's new lover – Count Karl Kinsky, imperial chamberlain to the court at Vienna and on the diplomatic staff at the Austro-Hungarian embassy.

In his position as chancellor of the exchequer, Churchill attempted to restrict the budget demanded by the admiralty and war office for the defence of the realm against any foreign aggression. He had become intractably convinced that this was being urged principally as a policy of offence against Russia, about which, of course, he had had a Pauline conversion on the Road to Eastwell Park. Weakening Britain's defences was by tradition the business of Liberal administrations, and few Conservatives supported Churchill. Nevertheless, he persisted, opposing foreign policy to the extent that he undertook a controversial private and ostensibly unofficial journey to Central Europe in October 1886. While at Vienna, he made clear to Count Gustav Kálnoky (minister of foreign affairs since 1881) what he had already been hinting at in unsanctioned despatches – that Britain was prepared to give Constantinople to Russia if Russia took no interest in Britain's new route to India through Egypt.

On 20 December, Churchill wrote Salisbury a resignation threat (the latest in a series he had employed throughout his career) in which he unwisely stated that military expenditure could be reduced if Salisbury's cabinet would only conduct

foreign policy with skill and probity. Before the insulting threat could be discussed at cabinet level, Churchill approached his friend Buckle at *The Times* and had the resignation published in the morning edition of Thursday 23 December. The foolhardy action completely backfired; it was considered conceited, ungracious, and possibly even unparliamentary. Even the edition of *The Times* that carried the resignation had opposed it, and furthermore Buckle had refused on the grounds of indiscretion to publish the Churchill-Salisbury correspondence as Churchill had hoped in order to illustrate and justify his case.

Worse still, Churchill had resigned without telling either his wife or his queen; both learned about it from *The Times*. Jennie somehow survived the slight, but Queen Victoria did not. She was at first perplexed by it, then shocked, and finally infuriated that she should have to read about a ministerial resignation in the morning paper – a resignation, furthermore, that had been written to Salisbury on Windsor Castle notepaper as though it had been sanctioned by her. Both for this and his by now obsessive Russophilia, Churchill became for a few years Victoria's most loathed British politician, temporarily eclipsing even her detestation of Gladstone. If the Liberal Unionist George Goschen had not agreed to join Salisbury's cabinet in Churchill's place, the Conservative administration would almost certainly have folded, allowing Gladstone to return to office.

Marie made one journey from the Isle of Wight to London during the Golden Jubilee in order to dine with the Churchills and guests on Friday 12 August 1887. Victoria had arrived at Osborne House on 19 July, and so Marie made this journey in secret so that her continuing association with Churchill would not become the talk of the royal family across the park. On the following day, she returned to Osborne Cottage, writing Churchill (cheekily addressing the letter to 'M. l'ex-Ministre!') expressing the hope that a particular lady who had been present at Connaught Place 'did not betray my presence in your house at the royal dinner table. But being a royal favourite without any visible reason might turn even a stranger head than hers!'<sup>36</sup> A few days later, Marie received a letter from Jennie recounting some of Churchill's anecdotes about the royal family that he had told her during the dinner. Marie replied:

I am dying to hear some more of Lord Randolph's Windsor stories, but without the accompaniment of several pairs of royal household ears! Fancy if it was all reported to her [Victoria] ... and that I was encouraging a minister 'in disgrace'. But the ex-minister is really too amusing and makes me die with laughter.<sup>37</sup>

There is no doubt that Marie secretly enjoyed being in the presence of the queen knowing that she in fact knew very well that her friendship with Churchill was continuing. Before the Jubilee had begun, Marie wrote Jennie apologizing for not being able to attend a dinner invitation because she had been invited to Windsor Castle. Ordinarily, she explained, she would not have gone, but she found herself unable to refuse on this occasion precisely because Churchill was not 'dans les bonnes graces' with Victoria.<sup>38</sup> It must have given Marie quiet pleasure to see the queen cast her fierce glances at the daughter-in-law who was associating with the political reprobate and recidivist she had recently dismissed as 'so mad and odd'.<sup>39</sup>

The letter Marie wrote to Churchill from Osborne Cottage would be her last. In it, she hoped ardently for a resurrection of his moribund political career, but it was not to be. Early in January 1888, the convert to Russophilia travelled to Russia with Jennie for a month, meeting the equally sympathetic and disgraced Sir Robert Morier, who arranged for the Churchills an audience with Tsar Aleksandr. Churchill returned to London in March much as Stead would do a few months later, bursting with a

flattering report on Anglo-Russian relations that was dismissed by both Salisbury and Victoria. But Churchill failed to re-enter mainstream politics. After a vain attempt to breathe life into his earlier idea of a 'fourth party', he succumbed to general paralysis on Thursday 24 January 1895, after nine years of incipient insanity that on occasion had crossed the threshold of delirium as he rambled incoherently in parliament with members listening in embarrassed but respectful silence. He had never been able to fulfil his extraordinary potential as a result of his illness, but this potential had always been recognized by many of his contemporaries.<sup>40</sup>

Accordingly, Churchill was honoured with a funeral at Westminster Abbey followed by a procession through London to Paddington Station where his body was taken to Bladon in Oxfordshire for the internment four days later, at which time there was a special memorial service in London, also at Westminster Abbey. Marie could not come to London or Oxfordshire from Coburg, but her elaborate wreath was one of countless sent from all over the world. On Tuesday 29, Marie wrote a letter of sympathy to Jennie:

I was going to write to you all these days, but I thought that it might seem indiscreet to trouble you so soon after your great loss ... You know how I appreciated your late husband's great intelligence and power, they often fascinated me, but of late years I hardly ever saw him, to my great regret ... I often remember those pleasant hours we used to spend together many years ago and our musical parties and have always kept such a grateful remembrance of you, as you helped me then to get over many a dreary day in the early London season. I often used to tell you that for us princesses London was not amusing, and how we sat alone in our rooms! Now all is changed and my life very different. Once more, dear Lady Randolph, let me assure you of all my sympathy and my friendship towards you in these moments of grief.<sup>41</sup>

Jennie had become estranged from Churchill during 1886 and 1887, making social gatherings after that date increasingly more difficult as the years passed. Her extramarital affairs then became more public, while Churchill had once confessed to a relative that he liked only 'rough women who dance and sing and drink – the rougher the better – great ladies bore me'.<sup>42</sup> Marie was of course neither one type nor the other, but Churchill's political convictions were as deeply held as were hers, and this was always more of an impediment for him than it ever was for her. Six months after they first met, Marie entreated Jennie to 'give many messages from me to Lord Randolph who obstinately refused to come and see me in London, dreading, I suppose, the treachery of Russian royalty'.<sup>43</sup> It clearly took rather longer for Churchill to appreciate Marie as a person than for him to appreciate her Russian lectures.

Marie's friendship with Jennie continued, although they would see little of each other once their lives took different paths after Marie left for Malta in April 1886. Missy wrote that she never understood what attracted Marie and Jennie to one another 'because they were certainly very different'. They were not, of course, and Missy then went on to describe a scene indicating precisely why they were lifelong friends:

Mamma would play duets with her on the piano in the big Eastwell library. We were often in the room during the time ... the two ladies absorbed in their music quite forgetting our presence ... one day Ducky and I were amusing ourselves with a pair of mechanical frogs ... green tin monsters that when wound up, crouched ... then made sudden, most disconcerting leaps at the moment you least expected ... I cannot recollect which of us hit upon the idea of setting these springing creatures under the chairs of the two music enthusiasts ... Softly we two miscreants stole over the floor ... and set our jumping freaks under the chairs of our betters ... The springing creatures crouched, hesitated and sprang, right upon the heels of the piano players! ... Shrieks, laughter! And of course a scolding. But the scolding was drowned by the laughter and I remember Lady Randolph's white teeth and Mamma's apology for her children's misbehaviour.<sup>44</sup>

~ 'My Dear General' ~

On the whole, Marie did not admire military men, finding most of them to be dullards. She made an exception, however, in the case of Wolseley, who was an exceptional military man in every sense. Marie had first met him in 1874 during her father's state visit, by which time Wolseley had been married to his wife Louisa for seven years.

At first a friendship appeared unlikely, since Wolseley described himself as someone who detested 'Radicals; men of Mr Gladstone's stamp are abhorrent to my instinct, they are vestry-men rather than Englishmen. I am a Jingo in the best acceptation of that sobriquet ... I have long had a great veneration for the genius of old Dizzy'.<sup>45</sup> Once again, however, it was a question of Russia and not Dizzy and the G.O.M., or exhibiting the same healthy patriotism for England that Marie felt for Russia, for Wolseley was certainly no cosmopolitan and even something of a Europhobe.<sup>46</sup> But Wolseley was nonetheless also a cultured and intellectual man who once complained to Louisa that a certain gentleman was anathema to him as he cared 'nothing for the Pyramids and Sphinx ... If, however, you talk to him about shooting a few snipe or quail, he is all excitement ... You and I love old and artistic things and could find interest in any country without the silly amusement of killing little birds'.<sup>47</sup>

This was exactly Marie's stamp of military man, and no doubt the fact that he was not a favoured courtier aided their friendship. Well before the 'mini-conference' at Eastwell Park, in December 1882, Marie had written Wolseley to say how sorry she was that they had been unable to meet more often that year as he had not been 'regarded with favour by the Royal family'. But now that he had returned from Egypt where he had captured the Suez Canal, on 26 August, during the nationalist revolt, routed the main rebel army at Tall al-Kebir on 13 September and entered Cairo two days later, his 'late successes have at last disarmed them'.<sup>48</sup> This was Marie's first letter to Wolseley – he threw none away – whom she would address as 'My Dear General' (his generalship and barony had followed his successful Egyptian campaign) for the rest of his life.

It is clear that Marie saw in Wolseley – twenty years her senior – something of her father at a time when he had just been removed from her life. Although there was some physical similarity between Aleksandr II and Wolseley, the fact that he displayed a genial paternal interest in Marie enabled her to attach herself to him in a manner half-coquettish and half-filial. Ordinarily, such a relationship might not have deserved more than a passing mention, but in Marie's case it proved to be by far the most important and enduring association with any person, male or female, in her life after her father.

Marie revealed herself to Wolseley like to no other correspondent, and she plunged straight into her dark confessional mood – a genuine catharsis – with her second letter. She began by noting that Affie 'seemed rather amused at this sudden friendship and consequent correspondence, but he knows very well, I always try to keep up my friendships with clever men'. Having thereby immediately disarmed any objections respecting her marital status, Marie continued:

Life is so dull ... for a person like me who does not care for life's frivolities like riding or sport of any kind, or toilettes or flirtations ... [I prefer] serious occupations, serious friendships and ... to keep one's good spirits and good temper, which brings with it cheerfulness ... I have very few [friends] in England and that is not my fault ... it seems to be the etiquette for royalty in the female: as much boredom as possible, to begin with the Queen ... [and] to finish with your humble correspondent ... I know you are no more afraid of me or of coming to see me contrary to all English royal etiquette.<sup>49</sup>

Marie explained to Wolseley that he could come to Clarence House any day of the week after ten o'clock in the morning or after five o'clock in the afternoon. The Wolseleys lived at 6 Hill Street off Berkeley Square,<sup>50</sup> so the short distance would not prohibit casual meetings, although this was utterly at variance with social practice at the time when even good friends required to leave visiting cards formally announcing their intention to see them. The Wolseleys paid Marie a visit shortly after the New Year and before she and Affie left for Berlin for her first 1883 journey abroad. However, when Marie returned (with a bad cold and some Russian lampshades for Louisa that she had admired at Clarence House), Marie chided Wolseley for not coming immediately to greet her. The Wolseleys had an eleven-year-old daughter named Frances, and at this early stage Marie once used her genuine friendship for her own children as an excuse to see her father: 'My little ones ... wish so much to see her'.<sup>51</sup> She would not subsequently believe that she required an excuse.

In the early spring of 1883, Marie was again with the duke and duchess of Connaught at Bagshot Park. Accompanied by Affie and with no Marie Erbach to distract her, Marie wrote Wolseley of her boredom and how she would much rather 'take a long walk in the country' with him than go to church on the following Sunday, which she thought 'a very wicked feeling' that was nevertheless irresistible.<sup>52</sup>

Since Marie did not like to be apart from Wolseley, she conceived the idea that he could accompany her to Russia for Sasha's coronation in the capacity of her aide-de-camp, with Lord Clanwilliam – in between naval posts – as Affie's aide and John Clarke as equerry. There was no conceivable justification for such a choice on either social or political grounds; it was entirely personal, and Marie insisted on it. Louisa remained in England with their daughter where she received frequent accounts of the coronation, and of course Wolseley's growing relationship with Marie. Clarke was 'dismal' he wrote (from the express train taking the party to Berlin) and Clanwilliam – who was partly of Russian descent – 'very nice but an invalid [epileptic]', but 'The Duchess is very good humoured and is really sometimes amusing'.<sup>53</sup> Marie thought Clanwilliam 'rather fierce' but also 'rather shy'.<sup>54</sup>

A revealing incident had occurred at the departure from Charing Cross station on 17 May when Wolseley observed how a certain married lady (the middle-aged duchess of Sutherland) had given Affie a silver cigarette case and a pearl brooch with a diamond inscription reading 'Good Luck'. Wolseley noted Marie's reaction: 'The Duchess said she could not be rendered jealous, and I believe she was right, for I could never "*draw*" her, although I did my best ... the Duchess professed to regard her [the duchess of Sutherland] as so very *passé* as to be beyond all suspicion. She said she *had been* very pretty ...'.<sup>55</sup>

Marie too was 'beyond all suspicion' her entire life, in the physical sense, but not all the wives of her particular male friends would find her intellectual intimacy with them as easy to dismiss as Marie had dismissed Affie's ageing admirer. Louisa Wolseley was one of these, having to constantly read how her husband and Marie went sightseeing everywhere together and playing penny whist until past midnight. Partly she had brought this onto herself by encouraging the friendship between Marie's three eldest daughters (particularly Sandra) and Frances, who spent many Sunday afternoons at Clarence House either at the regular children's very Carrollian tea-parties or bicycling with Sandra between Clarence House and Buckingham Palace. Moreover, Louisa wrote Wolseley actually asking him to send her 'descriptive accounts of your Duchess', which of course he only too happily did.<sup>56</sup>

Shortly after arriving in Moscow, Wolseley accompanied Marie to 'the most uninteresting opera I have ever listened to', a production staged on Friday 13/25 May

of Anton Rubinstein's *Demon*, a 'fantastic opera' in three acts after the 1839 poem of the same name by Mikhail Lermontov. A wildly romantic drama set in Georgia, depicting a demon's love for a mortal woman, *Demon* had become Rubinstein's only successful opera – but the success was momentary and based on the passionate romantic content rather than the quality of the music and dramatisation, which were moderate at best. Marie had missed this one before, for although it had been written in 1871 it was not first performed until 1875, in St Petersburg. She clearly believed she had not missed much, however, since this performance witnessed the only recorded occasion when Marie walked out on an opera. 'Of course the Duchess was bored', Wolseley went on, 'and we came home early and played shilling whist until midnight'.<sup>57</sup> Perhaps she simply wished to be with him in a more intimate setting, and if this had ever occurred to Wolseley he was of course far too circumspect and gentlemanly to suggest it to his wife.

The stakes in their game had been raised in every sense. On 31 May, Louisa replied: 'And so your Duchess is bored sometimes even there! I fear the evil lies within and not without. And has she yet found another "intelligent man", and you are eclipsed?'<sup>58</sup> But sarcasm alone could not dampen Wolseley's enthusiasm for Marie. Three days after Louisa's enjoiner, Wolseley described to his wife how:

In going around some curiosity shop the other day Clanwilliam set his affections upon a silver drinking cup that had been presented to Peter the Great ... the man asked £40 for it & would not accept Clanwilliam's offer of £30. I admired a little old box about the size of an orange, which was in really old Russian enamel ... as the villain asked £25 I thought nothing more about it, but we talked of it in the evening. To my surprise the Duchess presented us each with the 'objet' we had admired: very nice of her. So few people would do this & do it as she did without any parade whatsoever ... I should have much preferred Clanwilliam's present, but I was very much gratified with what I got and especially with the manner in which it was given.<sup>59</sup>

Two days later, Wolseley described Marie's clothes to his wife: a blue velvet train embroidered with gold and studded with diamonds, pearls, and sapphires for the morning costume. He then noted that she wore her wedding dress at an evening reception, which, unless it had been modified, at least demonstrated that in 1883 she was still able to get into it. Wolseley found Marie 'charming, so ... kind and unaffected', explaining that like her he loathed court life: 'the more I see of it the more I feel its demoralizing influence: imperceptibly but inevitably it makes one a liar'.<sup>60</sup> Most Russian women he found ugly beyond belief: 'I never saw such an ugly lot of women as one sees here amongst all classes. You never see even a passably good looking woman in the streets, and with one or two exceptions [Olga of Greece], all the women I have seen at Court are extremely plain and common looking: underbred looking creatures, with sallow, pasty, tallow candlelike complexions'.<sup>61</sup> Minny (who was of course not Russian) Wolseley also found plain and uninteresting, drawing a passable and highly amusing caricature of her for his wife, grossly exaggerating her snub nose and sharp chin.

On Sunday 29 May/10 June, the party arrived at Peterhof for what would be the last leg of the Russian journey for Affie and the English members of the party, with the Edinburghs lodging in one imperial cottage and Wolseley and Clanwilliam in another. Wolseley (who had just been shown around Marie's childhood miniature farm) wrote Louisa that 'nothing could be kinder or nicer than the Duchess is to me: indeed everything is done to make our stay here a pleasant one'.<sup>62</sup> There was one further mention of a game of whist before Louisa had to endure her husband's jollity with Marie no more. On Monday, three days before Affie and the English group left

Russia, two whist tables were formed at Peterhof. Wolseley shared his table with Marie, Minny, and her younger brother Prince Waldemar of Denmark (the Danish representative at the coronation) whom Wolseley described as ‘an amiable idiot’.<sup>63</sup>

However, it was not only Marie who was affected by Wolseley, even if her relationship was special. ‘Lord Wolseley was a great success’, she informed Queen Victoria shortly after his departure, ‘every lady liked him immensely and regretted so much his departure yesterday ... [he was] always so gay and cheerful ... very easy to get on with [and] such a pleasant companion’.<sup>64</sup>

With Wolseley back in England, and Marie on the Continent, the correspondence was resumed. At first, Wolseley was embarrassed at Marie’s curious affection. He wrote her as an Englishman, and she found the reserve an irritation: ‘Why don’t you give freedom to all your thoughts and feelings when you write to me, and why do you resist this innocent temptation and call it ... silly?’ She put him at ease by explaining that ‘in this wicked world, few people would consider it an innocent friendship, but with a person like me it is possible’. Nonetheless, Marie had to explain that their intimacy was cause for some concern, as people were constantly asking her whom she was writing to. ‘But I always have the Duke as an excuse’, she explained, although in practice Affie rarely received letters from her. She was also upset that Wolseley addressed her as ‘Your Royal Highness’ in his letters; ‘[please] don’t ... if you can help it: My Dear Madam or My Dear Princess will be just as well, I like that’.<sup>65</sup>

Whenever she did not hear from Wolseley, Marie suffered anguish redolent of any teenage girl’s first and difficult amorous experience, although she was aged nearly thirty. On 18/30 June, she received a letter from Wolseley but then chastised him for not having written ‘for five whole days’, making sure that at the same time she sugared the bitter pill with a compliment: ‘I never had any taste for young officers, I always liked better their generals, and of all generals, the one to whom I am writing just now!!!’<sup>66</sup> The admonition (or the compliment) produced the desired result four days later: ‘At last a letter from my dear general. I was beginning to get quite sad’.<sup>67</sup>

Marie left Peterhof for Coburg on Thursday 30 June/12 July, with a new horse she had purchased so that she could at last exercise and with Minny still imploring her to remain in Russia for a while longer. She arrived on Friday, and on Saturday Affie joined her from Kissingen where she took delivery of two envelopes. ‘Only a day at Coburg and already two letters from you!’ she expostulated in her reply:

My general never speaks about himself and his correspondent never stops talking about herself ... He writes so many compliments ... [that] were I not such a simple-minded person it would make me very vain and turn my head ... I am thirty, and have always been displeased with myself and almost hated that common-place person whom the world calls the Duchess of Edinburgh, and knows very little about.<sup>68</sup>

Two weeks later, Wolseley received the by now familiar general critique of the mores and manners of royalty in England, prompted by his earlier unflattering description of the duke and duchess of Connaught at Bagshot Park:

The couple is not over-lively and she seems always to be in a sad temper ... Royalty in England is never what we call amiable abroad, amongst society: they never forget their own dignity and always are standing on a pedestal of grandeur, as if they were saying to everybody “ne m’approchez pas!” ... we were taught quite different manners and always ordered to circulate ... In England, one looks down on ordinary mortals, and that is a very bad principle in our liberal and democratic days, when people are only too glad to invent every kind of gossip about members of the royal family. And, I must say, they are perfectly right ... But what can I do? ... I have never been to one of those monster garden-parties at the Prince of Wales’s, but I can well imagine how dull they must be.<sup>69</sup>

A few days after this analysis, Marie engineered a defence for herself through the common practice of pre-empting criticism by her correspondent. She reckoned that Wolseley must be sighing and saying to himself “I wish she would not write so often” before launching into a vast confessional letter displaying a rare descent from her head to her heart:

I mistrust myself and everybody else, I seem to dislike everything. I wish I was a beauty and a great flirt! How much more lively and enjoyable everything would seem then! ... I wish someone was madly in love with me ... But alas! I positively cannot flirt ... I mistrust myself too much besides thinking myself hideous, which takes away all my courage and all my pleasure ... And there is an occasion of flirting now, as we have a most charming young diplomat staying in the house, Baron Budberg ... but I could not make up my mind to flirt with him, he seems so virtuous ... that he inspires me with a sort of awe and respect I never felt towards a man before ... How happy a woman must feel who has powers over men and at whose feet everybody seems to be. There is hardly a thing ... I envy more than this ... because I am so totally devoid of it.

Another dreadful bore awaits me. The Queen has sent over her new court-painter [Karl Sohn] ... who must produce a family group ... This is an aggravation of sorrow that fell upon me like a shell. I am simply furious: besides hating the long sittings, I dislike still more having my pug-like face reproduced on canvas and handed over to posterity. When I was a nice, lively, thin and fresh young lady [she was now twenty-nine!], I did not mind it so much, but now! His first sketch of me is monstrous, as he was provided by the Queen with the most atrocious photographs that were ever made of me. I was so horrified, that I could not conceal it and the poor man does not quite know what he is to think about the whole business.<sup>70</sup>

There was a certain degree of emotional over-reaction in this effusion of course. Marie could not have seriously believed that allegedly beautiful women were any happier than she was, nor that she was ‘totally devoid’ of appeal when so many extraordinary men were deeply attracted to her, even if they were pursuing her intellect and natural character and not her ‘pug-like’ face. She did not really want things any other way, and certainly ‘never from my earliest youth, did I wish to be a man, and now that I advance in years, I thank Providence all the more for having created me a woman’. And her reason? She believed that men (and in particular ‘a gentleman’) were constitutionally incapable of being ‘good, honest, and virtuous’, while a man who was not brave ‘is no man at all, but ... worse than a poor, weak and frightened woman’. Such feeble women she ‘pitied with all my heart’, but cowardly men (such as terrorists) she ‘truly detested and despised’, adding that she wished ‘youth could come back once more ... the happy age at which I entered the wide, wide world ... What new things have I still to experience? Nothing pleasant, I should think’.<sup>71</sup> Her youth? Different Victorian attitudes to age notwithstanding, she was still under thirty years of age.

With Affie away in Hungary on one of his frequent hunting trips and Wolseley briefly in Paris, Marie wrote ‘I wish you were still nearer ... in fact, here at Coburg!’ She wrote of her ‘dreams ... of a happier existence, of a totally different mode of life ... of love and devotion ... sincere and everlasting friendship’. She told Wolseley that when she had been a little girl her brothers used to point her out to their friends, laugh and exclaim: “Marie is not of this world”, calling her “La femme sans illusions” and indeed she now had ‘no more illusions in this life ... or [of being] astonished by anything even abnormal ... in this world’.<sup>72</sup>

The slightest remark from Wolseley could result in the most ruthless self-analysis and the most unusual confessions. He replied sympathetically to Marie’s previous letter, explaining that he too was bored in England, as he had no current commission and he was rather looking forward to the next war (whether abroad or even in the

form of a revolution at home) so that he could do what he did best. Marie appreciated his position:

I have no sentimental feelings about wars, I never could work myself into a state of utter despair at the losses of thousands of lives like half of our humanitarian world thinks it their duty to do. During our last murderous war [against Turkey] ... I did not shed tears at the deaths of those poor wretches who sacrificed their lives ... war is war and must be bloody and [I] was condemned like a sort of feelingless monster. I did not rush off to hospitals ... out of mere curiosity like half the people did. I gave plenty of money out of my own purse ... [and] accomplished my duty ... I think we understand one another [on this].

Wolseley had also criticized a friend of his, something that Marie did not approve of at all, and which prompted an even more curious confession:

I don't agree with you speaking ill of ... best friends. I could never do that ... I sigh all my life for perfection, and because I never found it and will never find it ... I condemn [only] myself never to be happy in this world ... that is why I pity ... poor foolish women who centre all their love and devotion on some man ... and yet, I envy them with all my heart ... I have met once in my life a ... man, who even I could have married if I had seen him before the Duke. Never since have I known anybody whom I liked so much, whose nature and whole disposition was so entirely congenial to my own. He was a distinguished Prince ... we met and became intimate friends ... he [was] on the eve of contracting an engagement with one of my cousins ... His parents had wished him to marry me, but as the Duke [Affie] presented himself at the same time, he [withdrew] ... he used to say to me 'Marie, how would it have been if we had married at the time?' 'It was your fault, not mine ...' was my answer ... I often thought, how different my life would have been ... May God forgive me!<sup>73</sup>

Marie returned to Eastwell Park after Sandringham to prepare for the 'mini-conference' still as much in a romantic-poetic mood as she had been in Russia. As another family Christmas approached, and clearly in answer to either a suggestion or a query made by Wolseley, she wrote 'I would not like to be your queen' because 'I could always imagine ... that you were seeking my favours instead of true friendship, and I could not live without friendship'.<sup>74</sup> At Osborne Cottage following the meeting with Leo, she described how she awoke at eight o' clock on Sunday morning and 'hardly opened' her eyes than she 'saw your handwriting on my dressing table', a surprise that dispelled the 'English mists' that always hung 'like a veil thrown over your own future'.<sup>75</sup> On Wednesday, and unusually, she looked forward to returning to Clarence House because she would see Wolseley who was 'really the only person I care to see in London'.<sup>76</sup> Back at Clarence House on Friday, she invited Wolseley immediately, describing him as 'My only real English friend'.<sup>77</sup>

However, although Marie now wrote to Wolseley every day, still he did not show, and on 29 February, she told him that in that case she was going to go to Windsor to see the queen and get bored there instead of at Clarence House. She did not write to him from Windsor (probably in order not to arouse comment), and waited until she returned to London and then Eastwell Park to resume her correspondence. She complained of being too stout to ride a horse in spite of her efforts to lose weight, and also commented dryly on the Kentish landscape in the winter with its 'same endless parks ... and their meagre deer and idiotic sheep and lambs which get ... on my nerves ... with their bleating. Ravens and blackbirds, as stately and prim as the rest of the depressing scenery picking up worms, and stiff beds of flowers'. '[I want] to offend in you the prim and loyal Saxon', she explained, in order to try and provoke some kind of unEnglish response.<sup>78</sup>

This was a common criticism of the English character. When Marie reached Russia in the summer, she complained that Wolseley had written only twice to her that year

up to July. 'If only my general were not an Englishman ... I can never found a firm friendship with one of your race, you are too cold-hearted, too shy, too much afraid of public opinion to show ... feeling'.<sup>79</sup> This was certainly an accurate assessment of the Anglo-Saxon character, but equally certainly a slight against a man who had become a friend and would remain one until his death.

Political circumstances would now intervene briefly in the steady course of the friendship. A potentially serious situation had developed in the Sudan in July 1881 when an obscure *fakir* announced himself as the 'Mahdi' (the 'Guided One' anticipated for the year 1260 [1882] in the Islamic calendar by Sufi Muslims). Declaring a *jihad* to cleanse Islam of what he saw as its many foreign and native impurities, to the shock and consternation of Britain, the Anglo-Egyptian forces of the khedive were routed at the beginning of December 1883. General Gordon, as a former governor-general of the Sudan, was then persuaded to step into the breach by both private and public opinion at a time when he had been on the point of resigning his commission in order to find adventure in the Belgian Congo. Gordon sympathized with the 'Mahdi', but he was nevertheless keen to accept any appointment he should be given. However, he grossly overestimated his own influence in the Sudan, and underestimated that of the 'Mahdi'.

In the following January, Gordon arrived in the Sudan to be re-appointed governor-general by the khedive with the cautious agreement of Evelyn Baring (later Lord Cromer). But while the khedive had planned executive action, Gladstone's cabinet was under the impression that Gordon's mission was purely advisory, and that he had been sent out to report on the feasibility of a general evacuation of the Sudan but not to conduct an interventionist operation. In fact, Gordon had set out from England with a set of commands, expectations, and desires more confused and confusing than it has been the misfortune for any British agent to have possessed before or since. Gordon reached Khartoum on 18 February 1884 and began evacuating the town in the face of the 'Mahdi's' advancing army. On 13 March, Khartoum was placed under siege – but it was not until August that public opinion and the furious expostulations of Queen Victoria finally persuaded Gladstone's cabinet to take direct action.

Marie met Wolseley at Clarence House during her brief stay there before moving up to Birkhall in Scotland, where shortly afterwards he informed her that he had been selected to relieve Gordon at Khartoum. She wrote that she was 'not the least astonished at it ... and wish you the very best of luck'. However, she considered both the Sudan and (by extension) Gordon 'not worthy of you, not worthy of a great nation'.<sup>80</sup> Two days later, she added: 'I have never understood ambition ... but still I wish you every possible luck ... don't let the world know too much ... spare us pompous telegrams ... silent work seems to me worthy of a great man'.<sup>81</sup>

Marie naturally enough did not express any fears for Wolseley's safety to him, but the appointment did worry her. 'A new expedition in Egypt is ready, and my great friend, Lord Wolseley, will command it', she explained to Countess Tolstaia (who had met Wolseley in Moscow where she had cooked for him). 'He should be leaving tomorrow. This will cause me a great deal of worry, since he is always a great help to me and often comes to see me'.<sup>82</sup> As the entire world would soon learn and never be permitted to forget, Wolseley's forces (but not Wolseley himself) reached Khartoum on 28 January 1885 – unharmed to Marie's certain relief, but two days after the 'Mahdi' had finally breached the defences and butchered the heroic Egyptian garrison and its sole officer.

The Bulgarian Crisis worried Wolseley, and for a particular reason. Lord Hartington was still a Russophobe, but he was now also Gladstone's secretary of state

for war, and he had been partly responsible for having sent Gordon to the Sudan under such ill-prepared circumstances. In the New Year, as preliminary aspects of the forthcoming Bulgarian Crisis became manifest, Hartington sent word to Wolseley asking him whether the 5,000-strong force gathered at Suakin could be sent to India directly in preparation for what he saw as the imminent and inevitable war against Russia in defence of India (Hartington had served as Gladstone's secretary of state for India from 1880 to 1882). Louisa wrote him to ask whether Marie had commented on the situation:

You ask me about the Duchess of Edinburgh. She has written me some very nice letters since I left home, but I have not had the heart to write to her lately. I must, however, soon do so. I do believe she is a real friend of mine, and one who fights many a battle for me behind my back. As we seem drifting rapidly into a war with Russia our friendship is, however, likely to be snapped asunder suddenly, for she is national and Russian before all other things.<sup>83</sup>

Wolseley need not have worried, since Marie would never impute to a true friend the attitudes of a nation or its government, and in particular to a friend who was constantly in opposition to the anti-Russian Whig element within Gladstone's administration. Wolseley firmly rejected Hartington's proposition by insisting that all his troops were required in the Sudan. 'I counsel peace – under certain conditions – when personally I have all to gain by war', he explained.<sup>84</sup> And so long as Wolseley himself remained uninfected by the 'national and royal obsession', his relationship with Marie would be quite secure.

Wolseley did not return to England until 13 July 1885, but a month earlier she had written to him in Egypt exclaiming 'Oh! how I should like to see you soon';<sup>85</sup> and she did, when Wolseley visited her for a day and a night at Osborne a few days after returning to a hero's welcome and a viscounty: 'I was really happy to see you again and felt that you experienced the same ... I can trust you through thick and thin'.<sup>86</sup> Nevertheless, she continued her sporadic chastisements when he failed to write to her as often as she expected him to, writing in January 1886 to 'My unfaithful but always dear general'; 'if only I was not always haunted by the idea that no man can ever be faithful, even in his friendships! I have long ago lost every illusion about deeper feelings'.<sup>87</sup> But four months later, while at Coburg, Marie noticed that she would be in Paris for one week and that Paris was closer to London (and him) than Coburg: 'It almost makes me think there is something wrong in our very innocent friendship ... How near I will be to you again!'<sup>88</sup>

Wolseley was never able to persuade Marie to drop that defensive position of 'prudent silence' she perpetually maintained in England, writing Louisa after a dinner at Clarence House in April, shortly before Marie left for Coburg:

Last night I dined at Clarence House ... [Marie], as usual, was very friendly, but I can never find out any Russian political news from her. I believe the Russian officers who went to India for our manœuvres behaved abominably, and were plotting against us all the time; but these are points on which she will never touch. She will descant upon the past history of Russia, which she knows most intimately, and you may talk of the madness of Paul, of his being assassinated in secret, or of the sensuality of Catherine, but on contemporary history she is silent.<sup>89</sup>

Wolseley dined at Clarence House on two further occasions in April 1886, and this was a pattern that would not alter until the Edinburghs were transferred to Malta.

A rare surviving letter from Wolseley to Marie reached her at Malta shortly after the annual carnival at La Valetta. 'I have just written a little article for the March number of Macmillans Magazine, which I shall feel very flattered if you will glance

over. It is about one of the very greatest and most remarkable men I have ever met'.<sup>90</sup> This man was General Robert Edward Lee, commander-in-chief of all the southern armies during the American Civil War. If it is remarkable that Wolseley should have supported the Confederate hero, it is no less so that he should have felt Marie a suitable reader for his military article on him.

On 1 July 1887, Wolseley was again at Clarence House during the Jubilee celebrations. Marie invited him back to Osborne Cottage for a few days at the end of the month, but he did not take up the invitation. In fact, Marie did not hear from Wolseley for another three months, causing her to write him from Italy in November: 'have you quite forgotten me? ... am I no more to be considered as a true friend?'<sup>91</sup> But she was considered so, and could not understand why, writing in December 1888:

I never will see and understand why people get fond of me or find me pleasant ... I don't care a bit about being popular, I think myself rather ugly ... and still I have counted amongst my friends some of the nicest men ... I have never made friends with women, because so few I find really pleasant and interesting, especially in England.<sup>92</sup>

There was no great enmity between Louisa and Marie. In September 1889, with Wolseley in London and Louisa at Marienbad, she even encouraged him to pay 'a little visit' to Marie in Coburg on his way to join her.<sup>93</sup> She clearly never attempted to discourage her husband's association with Marie, not even when it was being conducted entirely without her. On Thursday 7 August 1890, Marie held a special dinner at Clarence House to celebrate Affie's appointment to Devonport at what would be the last family dinner in London with select guests, the privileged invitees on this occasion being Wolseley and Maurice Bourke. Affie left for Kissingen on the following day for a week before returning to Plymouth, and on Saturday, when Marie and her children left for Coburg, it was Wolseley who escorted them to the station.

But Wolseley could also be flippant with his Russian friend. Two years after this last Clarence House dinner, he met King Carlos of Portugal, likening him to Marie: 'If you can picture the Duchess of Edinburgh in boots and breeches, you will have a very good notion of what he looks like. His face is curiously like hers, and the accent with which he speaks English is exactly hers'.<sup>94</sup> Wolseley was right, however, his keen eye seeing what was indeed a most remarkable facial likeness between the king and the duchess.

As Marie entered her middle age and Wolseley old age their correspondence lessened somewhat in quantity but not in sentiment; nor did their friendship cease to be the cause of a certain degree of mockery, as Marie explained to Wolseley during her brief visit for the Diamond Jubilee:

[At Bertie's] they talked about your being ill and all looked at me, telling me I ought to go and pay you a visit and sit by the sick man's bed side. But as they did not in the least disconcert me, they soon gave it up. They find me dull ... for they cannot tease me ... but my kind general never finds me dull, I know.<sup>95</sup>

In July 1900, having not been to England since the Diamond Jubilee, Marie could still write to her old general 'I am longing to see you and have a talk with you after so many years'.<sup>96</sup> She saw Wolseley – now a field marshal, viscount, ex-commander-in-chief of the British army, and laden with honours – at Clarence House, but it would not be for another four years before she was in England again, in July 1904, when she saw him for the last time while staying at Kensington Palace. But at least she was able to see her 'dear general' several times: 'thank you once more for coming so often to see a lonely Princess'.<sup>97</sup>

Lord Wolseley died on 25 March 1913 at Menton in France after a long illness, and he was buried with all honours at St Paul's Cathedral six days later. Marie had been to England in 1912, but by this time Wolseley was living abroad, moving between France and Italy for his health, trying to come to terms with the appalling deterioration in his short-term memory: 'although I cannot remember what I did yesterday I recall all the events of my youth still'.<sup>98</sup>

In 1917, Lady Wolseley found her late husband's entire cache of letters from Marie and donated them to the Royal Archives at Windsor Castle, with the following note that in many ways was a fair assessment of this strange friendship:

I do thoroughly believe that she [Marie] was a true & loyal friend to my husband. No doubt she found much solace in his bright, genial nature – on his side he no doubt valued her as able to put him on his guard against the feeling of dislike which was felt for him ... in Court circles ... I felt inclined to put them [the letters] in the fire ... some inimical person might publish them & make it appear that he had written to her for some selfish motive, or from vanity ... [the letters] would show that all the advances, however harmless, were on her side ... [and] no one could I think feel anything but admiration for his patient & Christian friendship for her.<sup>99</sup>

~ Snapshot Gallery ~

If Marie was not a conventional beauty, she certainly was possessed of a less easily definable quality that made fervent and instant admirers of more unusual men, some of whom she pursued vigorously, as she explained to Churchill:

I am so sorry I have seen so little of you this time, as talking with you is a very great pleasure after being shut up more or less all one's life with dull and highly conventional people. I was so much more accustomed in my native land to talk freely that here I constantly feel a load being imposed on my mental faculties. We Russians are lively people, and a long constraint makes us dull ... A silent admirer of yours, Marie.<sup>100</sup>

Lorne was not as unconventional as Churchill (although more so than Wolseley), but he immediately attracted Marie's attention on her arrival in 1874. As a commoner, Lorne had had some difficulty marrying Loosy, but Queen Victoria had sense enough to judge him by his character rather than his pedigree, and certainly Marie did the same. They saw a good deal of each other prior to his departure for Canada in September 1878, but it was while Lorne held his post as governor-general that Marie began to write to him in a way she soon would do to Wolseley.

Loosy returned to England in the autumn of 1880, not to return to Canada until May 1882, as the Lorne marriage deteriorated to a sham; Lorne returned in December 1880 to return alone on 10 January 1882. On New Year's Day, Marie wrote him:

I am all the more sorry we were not allowed to spend [Christmas] at Osborne. The very dullness of the royal residencies produces on me a contrary effect and I feel a great rise in my spirits. I generally succeed in making Louise laugh and in cheering the rest of the family. When everything else fails I try what I call "the Helena abuse" and not one of them can resist ... I begin to be sick of the old world and all its iniquities ... therefore I am now going to ask you to take me over with you to Canada ... Louise would surely like to come here and live with Alfred ... don't be shocked ... Country life is dull ... and puts every sort of ideas into one's head.<sup>101</sup>

The pattern of their friendship followed the same course as Marie's associations with her other 'clever men'. Although Scottish and not English, Lorne nevertheless displayed the same timidity she would soon detect in Churchill and had already found in Wolseley, writing in the summer of 1885: 'I hope, that when I come back, you will not begin again to be afraid of me – then I will give you up in despair'.<sup>102</sup> But Lorne was not given up since he continued to write, as this reply a year later demonstrates: 'I was so pleased to hear that you miss me a bit and that the sight of Clarence House with its blinds down makes you rather sad'.<sup>103</sup>

At the end of January 1887, Marie travelled to Naples to meet the Lornes and take them both to Syracuse. Marie spent 'some charming days' in Naples with them before leaving,<sup>104</sup> parting from Lorne at Syracuse before bringing Loosy back to Malta for a stay that would last several weeks. The experience for both was one of bare cordiality as Lorne and Loosy were by now married in name only, and this is something Marie would have understood only too well. 'I think it almost better that Louise should be here without him first', Marie wrote Victoria, 'so this arrangement seemed a very good one'. However, Marie soon discovered that Loosy 'spen[ds] most of her time outdoors painting, and all social events tire her'. Marie added tactfully that 'not knowing any of the people makes it rather hard [for her]'.<sup>105</sup> No doubt Marie would have preferred it if the 'very good' arrangement were to be reversed. Victoria wrote Marie after Loosy's departure that she had found her mentally unstable on and after her arrival in England. Marie agreed: 'I was sometimes much concerned about her at

Malta and her peculiar ways of going on ... I am afraid even she was rather jealous of me and my position, though I tried to make her comfortable in every way'.<sup>106</sup>

In 1907, Lorne published his two-volume reminiscences, but they made no mention of Marie, even in passing. He and Loosy had no children, and it seems probable that Lorne was amphierotic if not fully homosexual, and in common with so many men of complex sexual orientation at that time (such as Oscar Wilde), he had married for the sake of social respectability. However, this did not prevent him from maintaining a lifelong friendship with Marie, whose very masculine intellect and robust attitudes perhaps appealed especially to him. Lorne died on 2 May 1914, and Marie wrote Loosy a letter of sympathy. 'You know how fond I was of your dear husband', she began, 'we were always good friends and I cannot think without a pang of real sadness of seeing Kensington Palace without him! We used to talk through the window when I was walking in the garden and I always see his kind face and hear his jokes'.<sup>107</sup>

Marie told Wolseley in 1888 that she had 'never made friends with women'. This was of course far from being exactly true, although women friends were certainly a less turbulent factor in her life. Charly (known as 'Ditta' to her family and 'Charlotte the Brat' to herself, but usually referred to by Marie as 'La gentille Princesse de Meiningen') was a particularly close woman friend. Charly was another happy smoker (although she preferred a long cigarette holder), and she wore her black hair closely cropped in a fashion that would not become a fashion for another two decades. Marie's correspondence is peppered with remarks such as the following from the Rosenau in 1887: '[Charly] leads a quiet, healthy life ... we read together and spend a very pleasant time'.<sup>108</sup> When Fritz died, Charly was naturally inconsolable, but she was able to turn only to Marie, arriving at Coburg on 10 July (with her daughter Theodora) where she stayed until 6 August. 'She is terribly sad and wants a good rest in the country', Marie explained to Queen Victoria. 'We speak so much together about her dear father, whom she adored, and will never get over her loss'.<sup>109</sup>

Missy, predictably, did not like Charly, a resentment apparently based on her having spurned Missy's girlish crush on her. For Missy, Charly was, to begin with, an 'exceedingly fascinating and intelligent woman'. Subsequently, however, she would belong 'to those beings who, with a single word of disdain, could shrivel up your ardent enthusiasm, make your dearest possession appear worthless or rob your closest friend of her charm, and this with a voice, soft and gentle like a caress'.<sup>110</sup> Missy blamed her as one of the architects of her contrived marriage, reckoning that she was a habitual intrigante and a negative influence in the Edinburgh circle. Sadly, Charly was one of the sickest members of European royalty, suffering from variegated porphyria in addition to a host of other terrible ailments, both acute and chronic, all of which affected Charly's mental and physical state, but which she bore with the same stoicism as Leo with his hæmophilia.

Marie would have known how sick Charly was even if her disease was still a mystery to medicine. However, it was with Charly that she undertook most of her European excursions after 1889. A fine example occurred in September 1890 when they accidentally met the duke and duchess of Teck, with their daughter May, in Bavaria, as the duchess of Teck described:

We went to Munich and had a most delightful time ... Francis met us on 21<sup>st</sup>, and the same day who should turn up at the Bellevue Hotel but Marie Edinburgh and Charlotte Meiningen from Coburg, who were joined later by Bernhard. We made an excursion with them to the poor king's wonderful Palace on the Chiem See ... [it] is so vast that we took one hour and three-quarters to go over it.<sup>111</sup>

Schloss Herren-Chiemsee was one of half-a-dozen fantasy palaces Ludwig II had built for himself as king of Bavaria, and Marie may have reflected on how close she may once have come to finding herself permanently lost in it.

Marie took a great interest in the science of photography and the art of taking photographs, and she was always keen to have both herself and her family preserved in this way. The two indefatigable Downey brothers in England, the studio of Uhlenhuth in Germany (Coburg), and that of Bergamasco in Russia (St Petersburg) were her particular favourites. She often personally engaged their services. Curiously, and perhaps influenced by this minor passion, Marie introduced into her letters what can only be described as the punctuation of passages with single rapid images of those she met as though she had been photographing them with words.

These literary snapshots had little or nothing to do with what preceded or followed them, as though Marie had turned on her heels to capture a fleeting image with an early Kodak box camera. Prince Christian was ‘remarkably uninteresting and always grumbling’,<sup>112</sup> while Liko was ‘such a nice cheerful boy’.<sup>113</sup> On Georgie: ‘He does it [the navy] well but seems to me to have absolutely no passion for it’.<sup>114</sup> On two of her nieces: Grand Duchess Ksenia Aleksandrovna was ‘a charming girl, such nice manners and looks quite the young lady’,<sup>115</sup> while Grand Duchess Olga Aleksandrovna was ‘very bright ... but very ugly’.<sup>116</sup>

There is an enormous difference between holding an opinion and being opinionated, of course, but these views were written in ink and not carved in stone. Occasionally, and predictably enough, the strength and intensity of Marie’s droll acidity was entirely dependant on the identity of the recipient. To Queen Victoria, for example, ‘Foxy’ Ferdinand of Coburg was ‘a most original youth, very delicate in health, much spoilt, rather effeminate, but intelligent and very amusing, a real *enfant gâté* and can be only treated as a child, which he looks’.<sup>117</sup> But to Wolseley, the same man was simply ‘The ridiculous lady-like Coburg prince’.<sup>118</sup>

Some of Marie’s comments cast more light on her than they do on her subject. When Sandro married Johanna Loisinger – an opera singer and actress of some merit but of common birth – on 6 February 1889, in secret, at Darmstadt, Marie found the union ‘incomprehensible ... How could he do such a thing ... Marie [Erbach] calls it “her brother’s moral suicide”, and so it is. Really, in this world one ought never to be astonished at anything!’<sup>119</sup> Marie’s objection may have had some political basis, however, for Bismarck was particularly pleased by the marriage as it meant that Sandro was forced to drop his Battenberg status and heritage. He assumed the title of Count Hartenau, taken from a village east of Jugenheim in recognition of his curious birthright, thereby losing whatever political influence he had formerly cultivated in Bulgaria. Nevertheless, considering her own suspect maternal parentage and rather liberal views on so many issues, it was a peculiar position for Marie to adopt.

Marie was easily able to identify marital disharmony in others, having so much of it in her own life. She could be unusually prescient on this topic, as she noted with Princess Louise and Prince Philipp of Saxe-Coburg-Koháry, who had been married to each other for seven years. ‘She is such a cheerful person, rather original and I think rather *frivole*, always beautifully dressed and spending hours at her toilette ... Philipp is perfectly devoted to her, but I fear she does not care very much for him and all his devotion rather bores her ... [he] is thoroughly honest, kind and a great gentleman ... [and] so calm and reasonable about serious matters’.<sup>120</sup> Princess Louise soon found better amusement in the arms of a count from Austria-Hungary, earning for herself an enforced spell in a lunatic asylum at the command of her jealous husband, and from which she was eventually rescued by her lover to be taken away to a new life.

Friends and family were less often remarked on, and true to her statement to Wolseley she never wrote ill of either. However, positive comments were sometimes made, as when she described her favourite brother Pavl as ‘such a very nice and such a steady young man ... always cheerful and happy. He is fond of reading and we spend many happy hours together’.<sup>121</sup> Deaths would always result in a morbid brooding on the lost moments of her past, the transience of youth and life itself, or a desperate yearning for an idealised Wagnerian past. Her great childhood friend Irena Maltzovna died young in July 1883, prompting that remark to Wolseley on her living in the past. Marie added that Maltzovna ‘was the truest friend I ever had. Nobody will ever replace her in my affection!’<sup>122</sup> She would say something similar at every friend’s demise.

It was not only Marie who actively pursued her ‘clever men’ but also certain men (if not always clever ones) who actively pursued her. On Thursday 31 May 1883, during the coronation festivities for Sasha and Minny, there was a general outing to a picnic outside Moscow at which Prince Nikola of Montenegro was present. He was a man who, according to Wolseley, ‘dresses in a sort of bandit costume’ and who ‘devoted himself to the Duchess, and makes what she calls “declarations” to her of the most impassioned nature’.<sup>123</sup> Marie certainly thought that ‘except the Prince of Montenegro they [the guests] were a very dull lot’.<sup>124</sup> The forty-two-year-old prince – who considered himself something of a romantic poet of the Byronic mould – had indeed suddenly acquired a puerile crush on Marie, although he had been married since 1860 and had several children. Marie called him ‘my unlucky would-be-lover July fancy’ whose amusing advances she had consistently rejected, forcing him to go to Paris where, she heard, ‘he intended to drown the grief my cruelty had caused him’, although whether by this she had meant at the bottom of the Seine or in a bottle of absinthe is not clear. In any event, Nikola had passed through Constantinople on his way to France where no doubt ‘he found frequent occasions of amusement’.<sup>125</sup>

The matter might have ended there, except that Marie suddenly received a most peculiar but attractive letter from Nikola while she was at Coburg, as she explained to Wolseley. It was:

a long letter ... [with] allusions to his devotion ... [written] in a most original style ... different from all other modes of letter writing. He says ... that when gliding in a boat along the smooth waters of the Bosphorous, he took the rudder ... and tried to write in the waters the name of “Marie” ... Do you remember how jealous he was of you?<sup>126</sup>

Marie wrote Wolseley saying that she would permit Nikola to keep writing to her as she found his letters so extraordinary and amusing. She later confessed that when she went to Covent Garden to see Tommaso Salvini – whom she had never seen before – as Othello, she burst out laughing when he first appeared on stage because the Italian actor ‘reminded me so much of the Prince of Montenegro’.<sup>127</sup>

There were in fact numerous men who were captivated by Marie’s rare charm, some identifiable others not. To Churchill she wrote of ‘my savage admirer of the Black Mount’,<sup>128</sup> while Saburov told her ‘that his intense wish would be to meet me in a different sphere of life, because then he could not resist paying serious attention to me’.<sup>129</sup> This rather undermines Marie’s despair so often and painfully observable in her letters to Wolseley. Had she been possessed of that (perhaps unattainable) degree of courage required for her to separate herself from one of the dullest men in England, she would have forfeited her position in all respects, but perhaps gained that emotional happiness for which she pined but clearly did not receive from her husband.

## NOTES and REFERENCES to Chapter Nine

<sup>1</sup> *Foot and Matthew* viii 473.

<sup>2</sup> *Monypenny and Buckle* v 303.

<sup>3</sup> *Zetland: Disraeli* i 148. It was after this that a discussion of toadstools took place as recorded by Henry Ponsonby (8 September). According to him, Marie reckoned them to be generally edible and good. Affie made some negative comment, whereupon Disraeli said ‘ “His Royal Highness must with his great knowledge ... gained in all the countries of the world ... know the real state of the case better than anyone.” ’ To this Marie interjected with ‘ “No! he knows nothing at all about it.” ’ Disraeli ‘looked at her with that comic face he puts on when he finds his flattery fails and simply said “Hum!” I couldn’t help laughing at her eagerness’ [*Kuhn* 169]. Ponsonby had intended to mock Disraeli’s sycophancy and not Marie’s brusqueness. She was of course quite right, since few people pick mushrooms with the passion of a Russian. There are over 100 toadstools of the genus *Amanita* of which many (*Amanita Caesaria*, *Amanita rubescens*) are perfectly edible.

<sup>4</sup> *Monypenny and Buckle* v 345.

<sup>5</sup> *Zetland: Disraeli* i 248. This ‘oratory’ was of course a screened off section of Marie’s private bedroom, and Disraeli had not been invited to see her bed sheets but her collection of Russian eikons.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.* ii 120.

<sup>7</sup> RA VIC/A 51/45, Disraeli to Queen Victoria 18 May 1877.

<sup>8</sup> *Zetland: Disraeli* ii 197.

<sup>9</sup> LRA MS 1407, Tsarskoe Selo to Coburg 17/29 Aug. 1880 [copy].

<sup>10</sup> RIG A.I.s. 8°x 4, Livadia to Eastwell Park 26 Sep./8 Oct. 1880.

<sup>11</sup> *Foot and Mathew* x 15.

<sup>12</sup> *Bright* 456.

<sup>13</sup> BL Ms Add. 44113 f.159, Bright to Gladstone 29 Sep. 1881.

<sup>14</sup> *Foot and Mathew* x 31.

<sup>15</sup> BL Add. MS 44475 f.149.

<sup>16</sup> *Foot and Mathew* x 426.

<sup>17</sup> Marie had probably forced herself to smile. On 21 June 1885, she would write Lorne: ‘tomorrow ... I must open a tiresome bazaar, on which occasion I always ruin myself in buying lots of useless things’ [RA VIC/Add. A 17/1757]. The event in question was a three-day ‘Grand Bazaar and Miniature Madame Tussaud’s Exhibition’ held at Brixton Rise in aid of the Girls’ Friendly Society, which Marie opened on Monday afternoon at three o’clock. The price of admission was five shillings.

<sup>18</sup> *Foot and Mathew* xi 64.

<sup>19</sup> BL Add. MS 44484 f.222.

<sup>20</sup> CAC Churchill Papers CHAR 28/46/13-15. Marie naturally never referred to Gladstone in any of her letters to Queen Victoria, and she avoided having to do so by pretending not to know anything about English political life, maintaining her policy of ‘prudent silence’. A few weeks after this letter to Lady Randolph Churchill, Marie wrote Victoria ‘I have so few news from England, that I know nothing of what is going on there’ [RA VIC/Add. A 20/1635, Coburg/Schönberg to Windsor Castle 13 Jul. 1886]. However, as she would demonstrate to Lord and Lady Randolph Churchill, she knew exactly what was going on at this turbulent time, even as far away as Coburg, Russia, and Malta. Whether Queen Victoria ever believed in Marie’s protestations of ignorance is unknown, but it is highly unlikely.

<sup>21</sup> *Zetland: Cromer* 121.

<sup>22</sup> BL Add. MS 46220 ff.92-3.

<sup>23</sup> *Cornwallis-West* 181.

<sup>24</sup> *Foster* 199.

<sup>25</sup> RA VIC/Add. A 20/1113, Eastwell Park to London 15 Dec. 1885.

<sup>26</sup> RA VIC/Add. A 20/1114, Eastwell Park to London 18 Dec. 1885.

<sup>27</sup> RIG unsigned fragment 8°x 4, Clarence House to St Petersburg Dec. 1885. Marie’s surprise at Churchill’s elevation as secretary of state for India was warranted. Salisbury had placed him in the most restrictive ministerial cabinet position to placate but also contain the parliamentary firebrand, as this post was subject to control by the India Council and the governor-general.

<sup>28</sup> Jeanette Jerome married three times; she was Lady Randolph Churchill from April 1874, Mrs Cornwallis-West from July 1900, and Mrs Porch from June 1918, although Marie would always address her as ‘Lady Randolph’. To avoid confusion, she will henceforth be referred to as ‘Jennie’ and Lord Randolph as ‘Churchill’.

<sup>29</sup> CCC MS 1264, Eastwell Park to London 9 Jan. 1886.

<sup>30</sup> CCC MS 1357, Clarence House to Connaught Place 1 Feb. 1886.

<sup>31</sup> CAC Churchill Papers CHAR 28/46/13-15.

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<sup>32</sup> CCC MS 1403, Clarence House to Connaught Place.

<sup>33</sup> *Cornwallis-West* 182.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.* 183.

<sup>35</sup> CAC Churchill Papers CHAR 28/46/11, Eastwell Park to Connaught Place.

<sup>36</sup> CCC MS 2619, Osborne Cottage to London 13 Aug. 1887.

<sup>37</sup> *Leslie* 127.

<sup>38</sup> CAC Churchill Papers CHAR 28/46/38, [summer 1887].

<sup>39</sup> LQV III i 166, *journal* 25 Jul. 1886.

<sup>40</sup> Not least of which was of course Marie. However, her influence on his thoughts and policies respecting Russia has been overlooked. The near exception is R.F.Foster, who in his political biography of Churchill implied that the reversal of his Russophobia was due to his cultivating his own Russian contacts in the Edinburgh circle. But of course there was no Russian 'circle' around Marie in the real sense, apart from the occasional guest or member of the diplomatic body.

<sup>41</sup> CAC Churchill Papers CHAR 28/58/45, Gotha to London.

<sup>42</sup> *Foster* 271.

<sup>43</sup> CAC Churchill Papers CHAR 28/46/13-15, Coburg to London 2 Jun. 1886.

<sup>44</sup> *Marie of Romania* i 81-2.

<sup>45</sup> *Arthur* 47.

<sup>46</sup> The Channel Tunnel Company had been incorporated in London on 15 January 1872 and Paris on 1 February 1875. One of the few areas where Wolseley and the duke of Cambridge were in complete agreement was in their total opposition to a tunnel linking Dover with Calais. Their 'reasoning' was entirely prejudicial – xenophobic, Francophobic, and Europhobic. As a direct result of their opposition, and also that of Queen Victoria, the scheme was abandoned. Ironically, it had been supported by Colonel Sir Andrew Clarke, inspector-general of fortifications in 1882, who rejected the Europhobia of his two military colleagues only to reveal that his support was motivated by the ease with which Britain could use such a tunnel to strike at Russia.

<sup>47</sup> *Arthur* 218.

<sup>48</sup> RA VIC/Add. A 20/1048, Osborne Cottage to London 28 Dec. 1882.

<sup>49</sup> RA VIC/Add. A 20/1049, Eastwell Park to London 1 Jan. 1883.

<sup>50</sup> Curiously, all Marie's letters to Wolseley (when in England) were addressed to him at 52 Davies Street, also off Berkeley Square. *Prima facie* a triviality, this in fact represents an extraordinary arrangement by which Marie could write to him discreetly without her letters constantly passing under Lady Wolseley's gaze. In a life characterized by the sort of moral probity with which her age would subsequently be associated, this is the only example of Marie subverting the intersexual mores of her time in such a secretive manner. The arrangement is worth examining, as it must have been difficult to maintain in view of the residential history of 52 Davies Street: 1883-85: George Hall (private resident); 1886-87: [unoccupied]; 1888-89: Frederick Hafner (lodging house); 1890-92: Hepworth & Young (lodging house); 1893: [unoccupied]; 1894: Henrietta Perry (rubber medical instruments); 1895: Felicia Laborde (dressmaker); 1896: [unoccupied]; 1897-1901: Mary Evans (apartments); 1902-1904: Rev. Edward Noyes (private resident).

Closer examination of the rate books for Brook Ward in the parish of St George's, Hanover Square, reveals that George Ward was the ratepayer during his occupation, vacating the property by 25 March 1885 [Westminster City Archives C 721], while Frederick Hafner paid his first rates on 16 April 1888 [Westminster City Archives C 729]. All subsequent occupiers were also the ratepayers, as this property formed part of the extensive Grosvenor estate and belonged to the duke of Westminster. The duke was of course a confirmed Liberal and was known to Marie. The most likely explanation is that this covert arrangement had been made with the hall porter, a position traditionally associated with the owner of a building rather than with its occupiers, perhaps even with the duke's knowledge or assistance.

<sup>51</sup> RA VIC/Add. A 20/1052, Clarence House to Davies Street 25 Mar. 1883.

<sup>52</sup> RA VIC/Add. A 20/1054, Bagshot Park to Davies Street 5 May 1883.

<sup>53</sup> HCL W/P 12/6, Berlin to Hill Street 18 May 1883.

<sup>54</sup> RA VIC/Add. A 20/1055, Marie to Wolseley 10 May 1883.

<sup>55</sup> *Arthur* 96.

<sup>56</sup> HCL LW/P 9/5, Hill Street to St Petersburg 24 May 1883. Frances Wolseley subsequently appended a note (5) to this letter before depositing it in a local archive: 'The Duchess', she explained, 'wrote often to my father & my mother was laughingly rather jealous of her. The Duchess was a clever woman & took pains to make herself agreeable to any clever man she liked, but rather neglected to pay attention to their wives'.

<sup>57</sup> *Arthur* 98.

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- <sup>58</sup> Ibid. 110. Once again, Frances Wolseley appended a note (7) to the original sarcastic letter: 'My mother here was a little jealous of [Marie's] interest in intelligent men!' [HCL LW/P 9/7/1].
- <sup>59</sup> HCL W/P 12/11, Kremlin to the Isle of Wight 15/27 May 1883. This was £15 more than Marie had been willing to spend on Affie's snuff-box in 1877. Affie's personal expenses during the coronation – it had been agreed that the nation and not the privy purse should finance the journey – were recorded by the Treasury as £1982 18s, of which £1121 6s 6d had been spent on gifts for the numerous Russian court officials.
- <sup>60</sup> HCL W/P 12/12, Kremlin to the Isle of Wight 17/29 May 1883.
- <sup>61</sup> HCL W/P 12/13, Kremlin to the Isle of Wight 17/29 [18/30] May 1883.
- <sup>62</sup> HCL W/P 12/21 Peterhof to the Isle of Wight 29 May/10 Jun. 1883.
- <sup>63</sup> HCL W/P 12/22 Peterhof to the Isle of Wight 31 May/12 Jun. 1883.
- <sup>64</sup> RA VIC/Add. A 20/1618, Peterhof to Balmoral 3/15 Jun. 1883. Marie agreed with Wolseley on Prince Waldemar: 'a good sort of creature, but intensely dull'. But her opinion of Clanwilliam had improved: 'He is a good, quiet sort of man, but would not take much interest in anything and was easily tired: his health is very bad and he is very nervous'.
- <sup>65</sup> RA VIC/Add. A 20/1057, St Petersburg & *Alexandre* to Davies Street 16/28 & 17/29 Jun. 1883. This was not degrees of affectation but a substantive alteration to accepted protocol at a time when even friends addressed each other by their titles.
- <sup>66</sup> RA VIC/Add. A 20/1059, Peterhof to Davies Street 23 Jun./5 Jul. 1883.
- <sup>67</sup> RA VIC/Add. A 20/1060, Peterhof to Davies Street 27 Jun./9 Jul. 1883.
- <sup>68</sup> RA VIC/Add. A 20/1061, Coburg to Davies Street 15 Jul. 1883.
- <sup>69</sup> RA VIC/Add. A 20/1062, Coburg to Davies Street 29 Jul. 1883.
- <sup>70</sup> RA VIC/Add. A 20/1063, Coburg to Davies Street 6 Aug. 1883. Queen Victoria seems to have agreed with Marie about Sohn's portrait: it was 'a fine picture, but Marie's likeness is not good' [RA QVJ: 3 Dec. 1883]. Baron Fëdor Budberg had been appointed 2<sup>nd</sup> Secretary to the Russian embassy earlier that summer. He would be removed from London within two years.
- <sup>71</sup> RA VIC/Add. A 20/1066, Coburg to Davies Street 20 Aug. 1883.
- <sup>72</sup> RA VIC/Add. A 20/1068, Coburg to Davies Street 27 Sep. 1883.
- <sup>73</sup> RA VIC/Add. A 20/1069, Coburg to Davies Street 3 Oct. 1883.
- <sup>74</sup> RA VIC/Add. A 20/1078, Eastwell Park to Davies Street 21 Dec. 1883.
- <sup>75</sup> RA VIC/Add. A 20/1083, Osborne Cottage to Davies Street 3 Feb. 1884.
- <sup>76</sup> RA VIC/Add. A 20/1084, Osborne Cottage to Davies Street 6 Feb. 1884.
- <sup>77</sup> RA VIC/Add. A 20/1085, Clarence House to Davies Street 8 Feb. 1884.
- <sup>78</sup> RA VIC/Add. A 20/1091, Eastwell Park to Davies Street 11 Apr. 1884.
- <sup>79</sup> RA VIC/Add. A 20/1099, Illinskoe to Davies Street 8/20 Jul. 1884.
- <sup>80</sup> RA VIC/Add. A 20/1103, Birkhall to Davies Street 27 Aug. 1884.
- <sup>81</sup> RA VIC/Add. A 20/1104, Birkhall to Davies Street 29 Aug. 1884.
- <sup>82</sup> HL MS 62 MB1/U24, Birkhall to St Petersburg 18 Aug. 1884.
- <sup>83</sup> *Arthur* 204. Korti to London 11 Mar. 1885.
- <sup>84</sup> Ibid. 208. Korti to London 21 Mar. 1885.
- <sup>85</sup> RA VIC/Add. A 20/1105, Clarence House to Cairo 5 Jun. 1885.
- <sup>86</sup> RA VIC/Add. A 20/1106, Osborne Cottage to Davies Street 18 Jul. 1885.
- <sup>87</sup> RA VIC/Add. A 20/1118, Eastwell Park to Davies Street 6 Feb. 1886.
- <sup>88</sup> RA VIC/Add. A 20/1122, Coburg to Davies Street 14 May 1886.
- <sup>89</sup> *Arthur* 236-7, London to Midhurst 21 Apr. 1886.
- <sup>90</sup> *Maurice & Arthur* 37, Wolseley to Marie 26 Feb. 1887. 'General Lee' appeared in vol. LV Nov. 1886-Apr. 1887, 321-31. As a soldier, Lee was 'the greatest of his age' and also 'the most perfect man I ever met'. General Gordon was the only other 'true hero' of the age. It is small wonder that Wolseley so detested Gladstone, publicly accused as the 'Murderer Of Gordon'. Gladstone was of course Marie's 'idol', but this was never permitted to come between them.
- <sup>91</sup> RA VIC/Add. A 20/1138, Rome to Davies Street 2 Nov. 1887.
- <sup>92</sup> RA VIC/Add. A 20/1142, Malta to Davies Street 10 Dec. 1888. 'But then ... I always try to make myself agreeable and win the Queen's best opinion' [RA VIC/Add. A 20/1144, Coburg to Davies Street 27 Aug. 1889].
- <sup>93</sup> *Arthur* 258. Whether Wolseley acted on his wife's suggestion has not been determined.
- <sup>94</sup> Ibid. 302.
- <sup>95</sup> RA VIC/Add. A 20/1145, Clarence House to Davies Street June 1897.
- <sup>96</sup> RA VIC/Add. A 20/1151, Clarence House to Davies Street 12 Jul. 1900.
- <sup>97</sup> RA VIC/Add. A 20/1156, Kensington Palace to Davies Street [July] 1904.

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- <sup>98</sup> *Arthur* 430, Messina to Mentone 19 Feb. 1907.
- <sup>99</sup> RA VIC/Add. A 20/1164, Hampton Court Palace to Windsor Castle 28 Dec. 1917. Lady Louisa Wolseley did not wish for Marie's letters to Lord Wolseley to be published *unless* his correspondence could be published simultaneously to demonstrate the unilateral character of their friendship respecting any feeling on Marie's part transgressing ordinary friendship and mutual respect. However, because Marie destroyed almost all Wolseley's letters along with most of the rest of her papers, to do this is no longer possible. This author therefore trusts that in spite of the imbalance of the material he has shown that Lady Wolseley's conviction was fully justified, and that this section can in no manner impugn the esteem of Lord Wolseley, only raise it.
- <sup>100</sup> CCC MS 2619, Osborne Cottage to London 13 Aug. 1887.
- <sup>101</sup> RA VIC/Add. A 17/1756, Eastwell Park to Kensington Palace 1 Jan. 1882.
- <sup>102</sup> RA VIC/Add. A 17/1757, Zandvoort (Amsterdam) to Kensington Palace 29 Jun. 1885.
- <sup>103</sup> RA VIC/Add. A 17/1761, Coburg to Kensington Palace 1 Jun. 1886.
- <sup>104</sup> CAC Churchill Papers CHAR 28/46/25, Malta to London 24 Feb. 1887.
- <sup>105</sup> RA VIC/Add. A 20/1640, Malta to Osborne 31 Jan. 1887.
- <sup>106</sup> RA VIC/Add. A 20/1642, Malta to Windsor Castle 13 May 1887.
- <sup>107</sup> *Longford: Loosy* 285, Coburg to Buckingham Palace 11 June 1914.
- <sup>108</sup> RA VIC/Add. A 20/1644, Marie to Queen Victoria 2 Sep. 1887. Fritz and Charly were the only Hohenzollerns by blood with whom Marie associated freely. After Fritz's death, she appears to have avoided Wilhelm II's court outside official functions such as her investiture as duchess of Saxe-Coburg Gotha. Missy reckoned that Marie 'was one of the few who really got on with him. He interested her and her own masterfulness kept him at bay. Her all-seeing eye noted the expression on every face and she was ever ready to step in when there was storm in the air' [*Marie of Romania* i 285]. Far from having 'got on' with the kaiser, Marie simply ignored him, although for her to have 'kept him at bay' with her 'masterfulness' on those occasions when they did meet seems not out of character either for her or for him. It was Missy who on several occasions confessed to a cautious admiration for the kaiser and who deplored his eventual abdication.
- <sup>109</sup> RA VIC/ADD A 20/1649, Coburg to Windsor Castle 13 Jul. 1888.
- <sup>110</sup> *Marie of Romania* i 222, 225.
- <sup>111</sup> *Adalbert and Chapman-Huston* 207.
- <sup>112</sup> RA VIC/Add. A 20/1155, Marie to Wolseley [July] 1904.
- <sup>113</sup> RA VIC/Add. A 20/1616, Marie to Queen Victoria 18 Jan. 1883.
- <sup>114</sup> RA VIC/Add. A 20/1663, Marie to Queen Victoria 14/26 Jun. 1889.
- <sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*.
- <sup>116</sup> RA VIC/Add. A 20/1673, Marie to Queen Victoria 19 Feb./3 Mar. 1893.
- <sup>117</sup> RA VIC/Add. A 20/1613, Marie to Queen Victoria 10 Sep. 1882.
- <sup>118</sup> RA VIC/Add. A 20/1068, Marie to Wolseley 27 Sep. 1883.
- <sup>119</sup> RA VIC/Add. A 20/1659, Marie to Queen Victoria 17 Mar. 1889.
- <sup>120</sup> RA VIC/Add. A 20/1613, Marie to Queen Victoria 10 Sep. 1882.
- <sup>121</sup> RA VIC/Add. A 20/1616, Marie to Queen Victoria 21 May 1884.
- <sup>122</sup> RA VIC/Add. A 20/1619, Marie to Queen Victoria 1 Aug. 1883.
- <sup>123</sup> *Arthur* 102.
- <sup>124</sup> RA VIC/Add. A 20/1618, Marie to Queen Victoria 3/15 Jun. 1883.
- <sup>125</sup> RA VIC/Add. A 20/1068, Marie to Wolseley 27 Sep. 1883.
- <sup>126</sup> RA VIC/Add. A 20/1069, Marie to Wolseley 3 Oct. 1883.
- <sup>127</sup> RA VIC/Add. A 20/1088, Marie to Wolseley 29 Feb. 1884. There was in fact rather an astonishing resemblance, even down to the same drooping handlebar moustache.
- <sup>128</sup> CCC MS 2619, Osborne Cottage to Connaught Place 13 Aug. 1887. 'Black Mount' cannot be identified, unless it refers to a man from Black Mount, a range of mountains stretching from Glen Orchy to Glen Coe in the Highlands of Scotland.
- <sup>129</sup> RA VIC/Add. A 20/1069, Marie to Wolseley 3 Oct. 1883.