

# ‘Diplomacy and Journalism in the Victorian era: Charles Dickens, the Roving Englishman and the “white gloved cousinocracy”’\*

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Until diplomacy began to be properly professionalized and better paid during the course of the nineteenth century, British diplomatists as well as consuls were not above moon-lighting. Some – especially at posts in the Orient – traded on their own account in jewels, currencies and letters of protection, while others obtained ‘marbles’ and other ancient artefacts, sometimes in return for the favour of rich patrons at home. More common was the activity of the scholar-diplomat, who wrote books and occasional articles for money, typically on the languages, history, and contemporary features of interest of the countries with which he had become professionally acquainted. Sir Ernest Satow is the classic example. But the journalist-diplomat – a person engaged in both of these professions *simultaneously* – seems always to have been a comparative rarity, although well known individuals in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries such as Valentine Chirol, Harold Nicolson and Robert Bruce Lockhart in Britain and, in the United States, John Moncure Daniel, the incendiary pro-slavery editor of the *Richmond Examiner*, have alternated between them.

The ‘Roving Englishman’ was a British journalist-diplomat. Who was the man behind the pen name and what was his connection to the famous novelist Charles Dickens? What were the themes of his journalism? How did he manage to juggle both professions for over 17 years, which on the face of it is a mystery since he specialised in satire and ridicule directed chiefly at his own employers? How did the Foreign Office finally manage to get rid of him? In offering answers to these questions, I hope

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· This article is a fleshed out version of a lecture delivered at the Annual Conference of the British International History Group at De Montfort University in Leicester on Thursday, 6 September 2012, hence the absence of any citation of sources in footnotes. The lecture was based on the draft manuscript of the biography of E. C. Grenville-Murray which I have almost completed. Nevertheless, since it will probably be some time before this appears, I have compiled a short list of the chief sources on which it is based and attach it as Appendix A at the end of this article. I include in another appendix a separate list of Grenville-Murray’s own chief works, excluding his hundreds of articles. I am most grateful to the following for assistance with particular aspects of this research: Troy Bassett, Penny Hatfield, Thomas Otte, and Mary L. Robertson.

to revive interest in the career and writings of a gifted and courageous writer and one of the most controversial British diplomatists of the Victorian era, suggest the need for a more careful and balanced appraisal of his character and his record than these have hitherto received (to the shame of British historians he has been generally regarded as a scoundrel, even a ‘pornographer’), and provide a footnote to the celebrations of the bicentenary of the birth of Charles Dickens by drawing attention to his own interest in the reform of diplomacy.

### **Who was ‘the Roving Englishman’?**

The ‘Roving Englishman’ was Eustace Clare Grenville-Murray. Born in 1823, he was the illegitimate son of the rich and dissolute first Duke of Buckingham and Chandos and the actress and courtesan of the London political class Emma Murray. Hence he was also the natural half-brother of the spendthrift second duke, who died virtually penniless in 1861, and ‘relative’ of the third duke, who partially restored the family’s fortunes and was colonial secretary in the late 1860s. At his birth Eustace was registered with the surname ‘Clare’, the fictional name provided by his parents to conceal their identities. However, he subsequently acquired his mother’s surname and was known during his youth as ‘Eustace Clare Murray’. At some point in the late 1840s he then added to his surname ‘Grenville’ – the family name of his ducal father – in order to advertise his noble pedigree.

Still in his mid-twenties but hard up and uncertain as to a career, in 1850 Grenville-Murray arrived in Vienna. His thought was to obtain a commission in the Austrian army while fulfilling a commitment recently secured to serve as the Vienna correspondent of the *Morning Post*. Persuaded by the British Embassy that these occupations were incompatible (not least because the *Morning Post* was the most anti-Austrian of British newspapers), he stuck to the second plan but abandoned the first. Instead, in the following year, he entered the embassy as an unpaid attaché.

Meanwhile, in addition to his work for the *Morning Post*, he had accepted the offer to contribute articles on foreign travel and manners to a new weekly periodical launched by Charles Dickens in March 1850 as a vehicle for his own voice. This was *Household Words* (later *All the Year Round*), which was soon extremely popular with the public and turned a handsome profit for its owners. No subject matter was ruled

out for inclusion but it was to have in its gun-sights all social evils and abuses of power and privilege. Dickens wanted his radical weekly to appeal to all social classes, to young and old, and to women as well as men. He was to write many articles for the new periodical himself and edit it brutally – for consistency of content between articles as well as for style and grammar.

One of the evils Dickens readily agreed should be attacked in *Household Words* was the stranglehold of the hereditary aristocracy on British diplomacy. Replying to a letter from his deputy editor William Wills, who had been responsible for recruiting Grenville-Murray and had evidently suggested the subject, he wrote in September 1850: ‘The diplomacy, splendid. I should like to begin that with a Sketch of an aristocratic attaché and so forth. I know the reality very well . . . .’ Indeed he did, for he had encountered numerous British diplomatists during travels abroad in the mid-1840s, especially in France and Italy, which were top destinations for well connected entrants to the career. (Whether he met any on his visit to Washington during his American tour in 1842 is not clear but seems unlikely. His stay in the capital was brief, the British minister was reclusive, and the novelist may not have proved popular with the legation; for he was annoying the Americans by complaining that US publishers were re-printing his novels without so much as a ‘by your leave’ let alone any payment and declined a presidential invitation to dinner at the White House on the grounds that his schedule was too tight.) With his contact with British diplomatists abroad and Grenville-Murray already lined up for travel writing, Dickens must have seen him as a potential contributor on diplomacy as well once he had entered the diplomatic service. But this was still for the future and when the young man began to write for *Household Words* in August 1850, at first with strict anonymity but by November 1851 pseudonymously as the ‘Roving Englishman’, his elegant and witty articles were confined to practical questions of foreign travel.

Despite the inoffensive nature of Grenville-Murray’s first ventures in journalism, things did not go well for him in Vienna. Suspecting that the embassy would dislike his moonlighting, although he was employed in it without pay, he tried to conceal it – but was found out. He thereupon promised the new ambassador, the plodding, stiff-necked Earl of Westmorland, that he would throw up his journalism – but he did not and, as a result of an unfortunate mishap with returned letters, was found out again. This infuriated the noble ambassador and put Dickens’s protégé under a cloud which darkened the rest of his diplomatic career: next at Hanover, and

subsequently at Constantinople, Tehran, and finally Odessa, where he remained from September 1858 until November 1866.

Throughout his diplomatic career Grenville-Murray wrote continually, although it was the first half of the 1850s which saw his most feverish output. By 1856 he had not only contributed about eighty articles to *Household Words* and supplied copy to the *Morning Post* and later the *Daily News*, but also written eight books. These included three collections of re-worked articles (with new material) from *Household Words*, an account of a visit to the theatre of the Crimean War (*Pictures from the Battlefields*), a learned if somewhat eccentric manual of diplomacy (*Embassies and Foreign Courts*), a collection of *The National Songs and Legends of Roumania*, a three-volume novel called *Walter Evelyn; or, The Long Minority*, and finally, in 1857, a lengthy and passionate defence of the right of civil servants (including diplomatists) to blow the whistle on abuses within their own departments without fear of dismissal, *The Press and the Public Service*. The last book, which has been completely overlooked, not least in the essay on him published in the *Dictionary of National Biography* in 1894 and the revised version which appeared recently in the *ODNB*, was his political testament.

### **What were the targets of the Roving Englishman's pen?**

When he had acquired sufficient experience of diplomacy to ponder and publish his thoughts on its current failings, Grenville-Murray attacked two chief abuses and three personalities. They received the treatment chiefly in an article published in *Household Words* in June 1853 called simply 'Diplomacy', in two longer ones which appeared in the first half of 1854 ('On Her Majesty's Service', the lead item in January, and 'Her Majesty's Consular Service' in July), and in his two books *Pictures from the Battlefields* and *Embassies and Foreign Courts*, both published in the course of the following year. In even the last of these works – ostensibly a manual of the diplomatic craft – he employed satire, which he believed was the proper weapon against vice, and ridicule, which he considered the proper weapon against folly, for while, he maintained, fools could not be out-argued they were quick to abandon their prejudices when they themselves were reduced to objects of universal derision. But Grenville-

Murray was not merely destructive: his attacks on the diplomacy of his day were followed by detailed and thoughtful proposals for its reform.

The most important and enduring of his general targets was the patronage and favouritism exercised by the hereditary aristocracy in appointments and promotions in the diplomatic service. All the ‘snuggest berths’, he alleged, went to the kinsmen of the noblemen who already held the top positions. Even their most distant cousins, he claimed, received preferment before social inferiors. Furthermore, this ‘white-gloved cousinocracy’ not only ruled the diplomatic roost by means of patronage and favouritism but also on account of the low salaries paid to diplomatists – if they were paid salaries at all; for this made it even more difficult for men of ability with limited financial means to break in.

What was the result? Taken ‘*en masse*’, he argued, Britain’s diplomats were a body of men of unparalleled uselessness. Diplomatic missions were led by donkeys and stuffed with youthful aristocratic dilettantes, their incapacity ‘glaring and laughable’. The latter in particular were stupid, ignorant of everything that happened before 1830, and so hopeless at foreign languages that the embassy at Constantinople required the aid of a huge body of dragomans, the contemplation of which, he wrote with heavy sarcasm, suffused him with a feeling of ‘serene joy’. Diplomatists to a man were also excessively secretive, which was a point on which he laid great emphasis. This served to conceal their own incompetence, cut them off from the advice of outside experts, hinder the education of the public in foreign affairs, and inspire the mutual suspicion between states which fostered conflict and war. The incompetence of these men in embassies abroad also placed an insupportable burden on the foreign secretary.

Grenville-Murray admitted that thick-headed noblemen had some representational value as heads of mission because of ‘the present state of cringing and lord-reverence abroad’, even in America, but urged a whole series of reforms to neutralise the harm they were doing and produce a meritocratic diplomatic service. These included:

- ministerial recommendations for appointments to be confirmed by at least the tacit consent of parliament (he later said they should be justified in the same organ in which they were announced, namely the *London Gazette*)
- the duties of every position in an embassy to be clearly defined, especially that of secretary of embassy, who was to be the real driving force of the mission and not, as

was still too often the case, just an understudy left twiddling his thumbs until his chief fell sick or went home on leave

- except in specialized branches, diplomatic postings to be limited to three years in any one place in order to discourage parochialism
- senior staff to be treated by heads of mission as an advisory council – many heads, he insisted, are better than one
- important diplomatic missions to include attachés from many different professions; such ‘practical embassies’ to include

draughtsmen, surveyors, engineers, physicians, soldiers, lawyers, sound men thoroughly accustomed to observe, and scholars!’ [By this means, he said, Britain’s embassies might] help to advance the progress of science and civilization all over the world ... and bring us back numberless practical benefits in return.

- heads of mission to be well paid in order to attract persons of real distinction, with houses bought for their residences rather than rented, and with large staffs – but only where there was a real British interest
- economies to be made by closing missions that were a ‘farce’, for example those at Hanover, Stuttgart and Dresden, petty kingdoms ruled by such figures as the ‘All-Highest His Royal Majesty the King of the Towering Taxes’ and ‘His Effulgency the Margrave of Schwarz-Wurst-Schinkens-Hausen’
- permanent missions headed by an ambassador dressed like a harlequin and demanding sovereign honours to be abolished on the grounds that the spread of knowledge about the relative power of states had made such expensive showmanship obsolete
- diplomatists to be appointed with the rank of ambassador only for certain special missions
- diplomats to give more attention to commerce but the diplomatic and consular services to remain separate by virtue of the difference in emphasis of their priorities, which would be bound to remain marked

It will be readily noticed that, in one way or another, most if not all of these proposed reforms were subsequently adopted, although, of course, Grenville-Murray was not the only one pushing for them.

The second general target of his vigorous and unflinching pen, which was closely related to the first, was the agency system in the Foreign Office. This was the scheme under which a Foreign Office clerk acted as a private agent or ‘friend at court’

of an individual diplomat or consul, most importantly by ensuring that his quarterly salary payments were safely banked, forwarding his private correspondence and favourite cigars, arranging exchanges with colleagues, and alerting him to vacancies at attractive posts. In return, the agent was paid annually 1 per cent of the salary and outfit allowances of his diplomatic clients (excepting unpaid attachés, who were not charged) and a flat rate of usually about 10 guineas by his poorer ones in the consular service. There was no obligation to hire an FO agent, although in practice most diplomats and consuls – including Grenville-Murray – had little alternative but to do so. Any clerk could become a private agent in the Foreign Office but in the mid-nineteenth century the whole business was in the hands of only six, with the joint agency of Francis Alston and John Bidwell predominant among them.

The agency system had its waffling defenders among traditionalists as well as among those with a vested interest in it. It was said to be convenient to all concerned, increase understanding between officers at home and officers abroad, assist security in the Foreign Office building by keeping ‘out-of-door’ agents to a minimum, and provide a valuable supplement to the salaries of those clerks who selflessly took on the work. However, it had long been controversial because there was a strong belief that an influential clerk could successfully lobby for the promotion of a generous client, that it placed pressure on less well-off diplomats and consuls to pay for services that should either have been provided gratis or could readily have been supplied by their families together with a London bank, and that it encouraged clerks to devote time to private business at the expense of their official duties.

A relatively poor man, as well as a reformer, Grenville-Murray endorsed all of the latter arguments and attacked the agency system with ferocious sarcasm. The private agents, he maintained, were nothing but ‘bankers and monopolists’, magnificent, light-hearted hypocrites with ‘richly embroidered purses’, who – their pretended contempt for ‘trade’ notwithstanding – had reduced the Foreign Office itself to the status of ‘one of the oldest established shops in London ... the job-shop of several of the most prudent, accomplished and thriving traders in this kingdom.’ In the House of Commons one of the system’s strongest critics was his friend and admirer, Henry Labouchere. In 1870 it was scrapped.

The Roving Englishman would certainly have had a more comfortable diplomatic career if he had confined his attacks to ‘measures not men’ but he could not resist lampooning readily identifiable individuals and felt this justified in the

public interest. All men, above all public men, were responsible for their actions and any personal failings were fair game if they impaired their ability to do their jobs properly, he maintained. Hence his chief in Vienna the Earl of Westmorland, known in London as incompetent in everything but music, was lampooned as ‘Lord Fiddlededee’; and Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, his haughty, bullying, and notoriously short-tempered ambassador at Constantinople, on whose maladroit diplomacy he laid a heavy responsibility for the Crimean War, was lampooned first as ‘Lord Loggerhead’ and later as ‘Sir Hector Stubble’. As for John Bidwell senior, who represented the third generation of his family to serve as a clerk in the Foreign Office, he was described in *Pictures from the Battlefields* in terms which earned the Roving Englishman the lasting enmity of his son John Bidwell junior (‘Young John’), also an FO clerk and inheritor of the family agency business:

It is not without the most poignant regret that I have learned from too competent authority that the highly-connected gentleman in the Foreign Office, who for a long time carried on the largest agency and banking job-shop, retired recently from the trade, with all the respect that is due to a large realized fortune. It is melancholy to relate that he is since dead; because Death, though extensively employed by the Foreign Office, is not precisely a British diplomatist in a subordinate situation, and therefore required his due of the great agent with an exactitude wholly apart from the established usage of the office.

### **How did he survive for so long?**

Lords Westmorland and Stratford de Redcliffe, together with John Bidwell junior, were just the most prominent of the furious enemies made by Grenville-Murray as a consequence of attacks of this sort, and yet he survived in his chosen profession for over 17 years. He managed this chiefly because he published either anonymously or pseudonymously and enjoyed a powerful patron but there were also other reasons. One is that he by no means got off scot free: he was repeatedly exiled in different ways and this gave his enemies some satisfaction, thereby reducing their pressure for his dismissal. Another is that he kept a low profile after 1856 and a final reason is that – although it appears to have crossed no-one’s mind even to consider the idea – he was actually good at his job.

With the exception of his signed, innocuous *National Songs and Legends of Roumania*, all of Grenville-Murray’s published work while he was a diplomat – whether in newspapers, periodicals, or books – was either strictly anonymous or



pseudonymous (see Appendix B). In *Household Words* anonymity had been laid down as a principle of authorship by Dickens and this was not unusual. Indeed, although there was a great argument over the pros and cons of anonymous writing in the mid-Victorian era and it was beginning to give way to signed work, it remained the norm when Grenville-Murray was writing. The corollary of this, as the Foreign Office was informed in 1855 when it had received strong hearsay evidence that Grenville-Murray was the Roving Englishman (this was common knowledge in London literary circles), was that it was ‘the etiquette of the press’ that a man did not forfeit his honour by positively denying the authorship of an anonymous piece. After all, there would be no point in such writing if an individual was obliged to answer truthfully whenever challenged.

In 1856 none of this prevented the foreign secretary Lord Clarendon from threatening Grenville-Murray with dismissal if he were indeed the Roving Englishman, and he challenged him to answer the charge. In reply, the Roving Englishman, properly wishing to avoid mendacity, at first resorted to evasion, but when pressed further was forced emphatically to deny that he was the Roving Englishman:

I have the honour [he wrote] most respectfully to assure your Lordship at once, upon my word of honour as a gentleman and an officer in Her Majesty’s Service, I am not in any way connected with those publications either as the author or one of the authors, or as having furnished materials for them to any other person or in any other manner whatsoever.

With only hearsay evidence to support his suspicion and aware that there was at the least an argument about the ethics of anonymous writing, Clarendon let the matter drop.

But he had another reason for failing to press it further. Grenville-Murray had powerful patrons. The least of these was Charles Dickens, who by this time had influential friends in political circles, among them Lord John Russell, who was either prime minister or foreign secretary for a good part of Grenville-Murray’s diplomatic career. By far the most important, however, was Henry John Temple, third Viscount Palmerston, the very titan of British politics in the mid-Victorian era. For the extraordinary fact is that Emma Murray, Grenville-Murray’s mother, had been a favourite lover of Palmerston as well as the first Duke of Buckingham and Chandos, and had also born him a son, somewhat indiscreetly named ‘Henry John Temple

Murray'. Palmerston appears to have assisted with the education of all – or at least most – of Emma's children and is reported to have been particularly impressed by the early talent shown by Eustace, whom as a result he employed on occasional diplomatic errands throughout the 1840s. (In 1841 he installed his own son, who appears in the *FO List* as 'Henry John Murray', in the consular service.) It had been with a letter of introduction from Lord Palmerston that Grenville-Murray had first arrived in Vienna and at each subsequent crisis in his career it is believed that the great man's influence prevented his dismissal, although no direct evidence in support of this has ever been produced. Nevertheless, no-one who has touched on the subject has doubted it and it was stated with confidence by Thomas Seccombe in his essay on Grenville-Murray in the late nineteenth century *Dictionary of National Biography*.

Even Palmerston, however, could by no means offer his protégé complete protection from the revenge of his enemies and as a result Grenville-Murray was repeatedly exiled and punished in other petty ways. But at least the satisfaction this gave them relieved the pressure for his complete dismissal from the diplomatic service. Hanover after the splendours of Vienna, where Westmorland would no longer tolerate him, was a form of exile, although it is probably right to regard Mytilene (Lesbos) as Grenville-Murray's first real destination of this sort. He was banished to this predominantly Greek island in the north Aegean by Lord Stratford from October 1853 until July 1854, although the posting was not quite as humiliating for a diplomatist at that time as might be supposed because – contrary to the *ODNB* – he was made acting (not substantive) vice-consul and therefore retained the rank given to him on his appointment to the embassy at Constantinople, 5th paid attaché. Refusing to have him back after this, Stratford next condemned the enfant terrible of the diplomatic service to a wandering exile between the Ottoman capital, London, the Danubian Principalities, and the Crimea, until January 1857. At this point he was appointed 3rd paid attaché at Tehran, which was another nicely calculated insult because there had been no mission there since November 1855, when relations between Britain and Persia were severed and war followed. The British legation had been withdrawn to Baghdad, sidelined in just about all matters bearing on Persia by the embassy in Constantinople, and did not meander back to Tehran until July 1857. To add injury to insult, Grenville-Murray was refused payment of the greater part of the large bill for expenses he ran up in trying to find the peripatetic Tehran legation in the early summer of that year. His final exile was to Odessa, where he was appointed

consul-general in July and arrived in September 1858. Odessa might have been one of the top positions in the consular service and, following the Crimean War, had become the chief post of observation on military developments in south Russia but it was demotion from the diplomatic service nevertheless. Conditions in the town were also fairly primitive when he arrived, his able paid vice-consul was removed shortly afterwards and he was refused another, and – apart from being allowed to attend the funeral of the second Duke of Buckingham and Chandos in 1861 – he was in practice refused leave until November 1866.

Grenville-Murray had been badly bruised by his treatment by Lord Stratford and his interrogation and threat of dismissal by the Foreign Office and in 1856 (when he wrote *The Press and the Public Service*) he was angry, bitter, and depressed. He had no low estimate of his own abilities, possessed a strong belief in the importance of diplomacy, and was passionate to see it reformed. But he also had a growing family (two boys about to go to Eton) and not a great deal of money: writing provided only an erratic income. The Odessa post gave him a much higher annual salary than he had ever earned before (£900, plus a £300 office allowance), so he determined henceforward to keep a relatively low profile. Nothing more was ever heard of the Roving Englishman. *The Press and the Public Service* was authored by ‘A Distinguished Writer’ and seems to have gone unnoticed by the Foreign Office when it appeared in 1857; at least there is no mention of it in the ministry’s ten volumes of papers dealing with ‘Mr G. Murray’s Case’. Articles appeared on Russia in Dickens’s successor journal *All the Year Round* in the 1860s and we know from Dickens’s letters that some of them were written by Grenville-Murray – but they contained not even oblique attacks on the Foreign Office and were in any case completely anonymous. This particularly low profile after 1856 also helped him to survive.

Finally, at Odessa he survived because, while he had problems with some ships’ masters (what consul did not?), he was actually very good at his job, especially of course in reporting. Among other things, he introduced a scheme for the monthly reporting of military, commercial and miscellaneous intelligence from the consular posts in his extensive district. Most of the detailed reports containing military news were his own (ten in his first two years), and their chief thrust was that the Russians were ‘silently reforming’ their Black Sea Fleet in violation of the humiliating neutralization clauses of the Treaty of Paris signed at the end of the Crimean War. As well as routine trade and shipping returns, he also provided numerous special reports

on other subjects, for example on the suspected causes and treatment of cattle plague in Russia, which he sent to London at the time of the terrible outbreak of the disease in Britain in late 1865 and early 1866. Two of his despatches on this subject were printed in *The Times*, several were cited as authoritative in both houses of parliament, and five were reprinted in a report of the official commission appointed to investigate the British outbreak.

### **How did the Foreign Office finally get rid of him?**

The good work done by Grenville-Murray at Odessa, however, did next to nothing to retrieve his reputation in the Foreign Office. Even the permanent under-secretary Edmund Hammond regarded the lie he had been compelled to tell about his identity as the Roving Englishman as fatal to the trust needed between the Foreign Office and its employees – and he was the one senior official whose minutes occasionally hint at a sneaking belief that the consul-general had saving graces, and had supported him (without success) in his determined and eloquent appeal for some small financial assistance to the struggling hospital at Odessa which treated distressed British subjects. John Bidwell junior remained determined to avenge the insult to his father, and influential colleagues lent their active support to the campaign to get rid of him which began to gather real force in 1865. Chief among these were Thomas Sanderson (a future permanent under-secretary) and above all the head of the Consular Department James Murray (no relation), who was at the best of times – as Lord Clarendon warned Lord Stanley when the latter took over from him as foreign secretary in July 1866 – ‘hard in his decisions, and offensive in style.’ For personal reasons one of Grenville-Murray’s own vice-consuls, George Stevens at Kherson, also entered the lists against him and was in a position from which he was able to do him great harm when appointed acting consul-general in his place on his chief’s fateful departure on leave in November 1866. If this was not enough, in 1865 the governor of Southern Russia, the highly influential General Paul Demetrius von Kotzebue, began to press for his recall, ostensibly because of his behaviour in an alleged fracas with a British woman in a dysfunctional expatriate family in Odessa he had tried to help but in reality almost certainly because Kotzebue knew how active he was in gathering intelligence which confirmed Russia’s violations of the Black Sea clauses of the

Treaty of Paris. Against the background of the continuing difficulties with the Poles, it is also unlikely that Kotzebue could have looked kindly on Grenville-Murray's friendship with the pro-Polish Count Bariatinsky.

When Palmerston died in 1865 the game was up for Grenville-Murray. A list of various complaints made against him at Odessa since 1858 – failure to charge for passports issued, alleged irregularities in the conduct of marriages, and so on – was tendentiously compiled by James Murray in 1866 and added to in early 1867 with the eager assistance of George Stevens. These were put to the consul-general on his return to London in November but failed to elicit explanations which satisfied the foreign secretary Lord Stanley. Accordingly, in April 1867 the 'light-fingered lunatic', as Grenville-Murray later described Stanley in reference to his reputation for kleptomania, suspended him from duty pending the results of an investigation into his conduct at Odessa. This, on James Murray's recommendation, was carried out by the Canadian J. Edward Wilkins, a former businessman with some legal knowledge who was consul at Chicago at the time but happened to be in London and was probably known to be facing an uncertain future. (His consulate had been slated for closure for some time and was actually closed in 1869. This was another far-sighted move of the Foreign Office at the time: the post was re-opened in 1882.) After an unconscionable delay, which exasperated Lord Stanley, Wilkins – who knew nothing of Russia, could not even speak French (the language of official circles), and lodged throughout his time in Odessa with Stevens, 'chief witness for the prosecution' – eventually produced his report at the end of 1867. A clumsy and padded out piece of work, it nevertheless gave the Foreign Office sufficient for its purposes: the appearance of a vindication of an 'on-the-spot-inquiry' into its own list of complaints against the consul-general. Accordingly, in early 1868 Grenville-Murray was dismissed by Lord Stanley from the employment of the Foreign Office for 'habitual disregard of duty.' He was also denied a pension, and the circumstances of his dismissal made it impossible for him to secure employment in any other government department – including, despite his appeals, the Colonial Office, where his 'relative' the third Duke of Buckingham and Chandos also gave him the cold shoulder.

The dismissal of Grenville-Murray from the Foreign Office was as perfect a stitch-up as you could wish to see. Stanley, moreover, was told as much by his fellow 'staunch Tory' Sir Patrick Colquhoun, the learned, eloquent and courageous barrister of the Inner Temple and former Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the Ionian

Islands, who had taken on the executive branch before. In a brilliant document, which was *not* included in the massive Blue Book subsequently published on the Grenville-Murray affair, Colquhoun not only tore to shreds the case against the consul-general but also exposed the obvious partiality of the procedures adopted by the Foreign Office to exact its revenge on the whistle-blower, and argued that – even if all the charges against his client were proved – the punishment of official death without a pension was disproportionate to the offence. He also offered to mediate between them but was turned down.

Grenville-Murray was no saint but neither was he Flashman. It was his ultimate tragedy that his two great patrons, Dickens and Palmerston, tugged him in opposite directions: the former to the literary exposure of social evils, the latter to the important work of diplomacy. It is to his enormous credit that, despite the tension between them and the strain this also put on his family, he made such a valuable contribution to both over such a long period. What happened to him after 1868, which begins with his decision to launch the deliciously entitled satirical paper *Queen's Messenger* – the *Private Eye* of its day – is a story which is just as intriguing, although more challenging to understand.

## Appendix A Chief sources, primary and secondary

Acronyms used in the following list: HCPP (House of Commons Parliamentary Papers), DNB (*Dictionary of National Biography*), ODNB (*Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*)

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## Appendix B Grenville-Murray's chief works, by style of authorship

Abbreviated works cited in the footnotes are spelled out in Appendix A.

[anon.] *From Mayfair to Marathon* (Bentley: London, 1853)<sup>1</sup>

[anon.] *Walter Evelyn; or, The Long Minority* (Bentley: London, 1853)<sup>2</sup>

[anon.] *The Roving Englishman* (Routledge: London, 1854)

Grenville-Murray, E. C., *Doïne; or, The National Songs and Legends of Roumania* (Smith, Elder: London, 1854)<sup>3</sup>

The Roving Englishman [pseudonym], *Pictures from the Battle Fields* (Routledge: London, 1855)

*The Roving Englishman in Turkey* [pseudonym]. *Sketches from Life* (Routledge: London, 1855)<sup>4</sup>

The Roving Englishman [pseudonym], *Embassies and Foreign Courts: A history of diplomacy* (Routledge: London, 1855)

A Distinguished Writer [pseudonym], *The Press and the Public Service* (Routledge: London, 1857)<sup>5</sup>

[anon.] *The Oyster; where, how, and when to find, breed, cook, and eat it* (Trübner: London, 1861)<sup>6</sup>

Trois-Étoiles [pseudonym], *The Member for Paris* (Smith, Elder: London, 1871)<sup>7</sup>

[anon.] *Men of the Second Empire* (Smith, Elder: London, 1872)<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Attributed to G-M by the British Library and Halkett and Laing, vol. 2; internal evidence (numerous chapters were revised versions of articles previously published under the pseudonym of the Roving Englishman in *Household Words*).

<sup>2</sup> G-M identified as author by the Bentley Private Catalogue (Wolff); attributed to G-M by the British Library; internal evidence. Published 1 November 1853.

<sup>3</sup> The Introduction is dated 12 September 1853, Prince's Island [Sea of Marmora]. The book was reprinted in 1859.

<sup>4</sup> Revised in 1877 under the slightly adjusted title *Turkey, Being Sketches from Life*, by The Roving Englishman.

<sup>5</sup> No attribution by British Library or any other source (including the *DNB* and the *ODNB*) for that matter, except for Halkett and Laing, who only suspected him (vol. 4: 'Eustace Clare Grenville Murray?'). However, it contains unmistakable internal evidence in abundance of G-M's authorship; my copy, obtained from a London second-hand and antiquarian book dealer, also has the following inscribed in pencil on the title page: 'a bookseller's catalogue attributes it to Eustace C G Murray.' An advertisement in *The Times*, 13 March 1857, announced that it was to be published on 19 March 1857.

<sup>6</sup> Attributed to G-M by Seecombe in his *DNB* article 'Murray'; but to Herbert Byng-Hall by the British Library and, relying on this, Halkett and Laing, vol. 4. It was probably a joint work. It appeared in a second edition in 1963 with a new chapter, 'The Oyster-Seeker in London.'

<sup>7</sup> Attributed to G-M by Halkett and Laing (vol. 4), Wolff and the British Library.

<sup>8</sup> 'By the author of *The Member for Paris*'; attributed to G-M by Halkett and Laing (vol. 4) and the British Library.

- [anon.] *Men of the Third Republic* (Strahan & Co.: London, 1873)<sup>1</sup>
- [anon.] *Young Brown, or The Law of Inheritance* (Smith, Elder: London, 1874)<sup>2</sup>
- [anon.] *The Boudoir Cabal* (Smith, Elder: London, 1875)<sup>3</sup>
- [anon.] *French Pictures in English Chalk* (Vizetelly: London, 1876)<sup>4</sup>
- [anon.] *The Russians of To-day* (Smith, Elder: London, 1878)<sup>5</sup>
- Grenville-Murray, E. C., *Round About France* (Macmillan: London, 1878)
- Grenville-Murray, E. C., *Strange Tales* (Tauchnitz: Leipzig, 1878)
- [anon.] *That Artful Vicar* (Smith, Elder: London, 1879)<sup>6</sup>
- Mark Hope [pseudonym], *Dark and Light Stories* (Chapman and Hall: London, 1879)<sup>7</sup>
- Mark Hope [pseudonym], *The Prodigal Daughter* (Routledge: London, 1880)<sup>8</sup>
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- [anon.] *Six Months in the Ranks* (Smith, Elder: London, 1881)<sup>9</sup>
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<sup>1</sup> ‘Reprinted, with large additions, from “The Daily News”’; attributed to G-M by the British Library.

<sup>2</sup> First published serially in *The Cornhill Magazine* from July 1873 to February 1874 and attributed to G-M by the *Wellesley Index* p. 1024; the Tauchnitz edition (Collection of British Authors, vol. 1444), also published in 1874, appeared under the pseudonym ‘Trois-Étoiles’; attribution to G-M by Wolff.

<sup>3</sup> ‘By the Author of “The Member for Paris”, “Young Brown”, etc. In some editions sub-titled *A Novel of Society*. Issued in the same year by Tauchnitz under the pseudonym ‘Trois-Étoiles’; attributed to G-M by Wolff and the British Library.

<sup>4</sup> Attributed to G-M by the British Library.

<sup>5</sup> ‘By the Author of “The Member for Paris,” etc.’; attributed to G-M by the British Library; published by Tauchnitz in the same year under G-M’s own name.

<sup>6</sup> ‘By the Author of “The Member for Paris”, “French Pictures in English Chalk”, etc.’; attributed to G-M by Halkett and Laing (vol. 6) and Wolff; dedicated to his friend Henry Labouchere.

<sup>7</sup> Attributed to G-M by Halkett and Laing, vol. 2.

<sup>8</sup> Attributed to G-M by Halkett and Laing, vol. 4, and by Wolff. The Chapman and Hall first edition (but not the later Routledge Railway Series edition) was dedicated to David Wilson Esq, MD, who was G-M’s landlord at 62 Brook Street and for some time appears to have had care of his elder son.

<sup>9</sup> But published under G-M’s name in the Tauchnitz edition of 1882, and duly attributed to G-M by Halkett and Laing (vol. 5) and the British Library.

<sup>10</sup> Attributed to G-M by the British Library.

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