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BRITISH CONSULS IN LISBON

THOMAS MAYNARD

Part I

1656-1689

(Contributed by M. S. JAYNE)

In February 1656 Philip Meadows was sent to Lisbon as Special Envoy of the Commonwealth of England, his principal business being to ratify the Treaty which had just been concluded between the two States. There was some delay in his departure owing to the conscientious scruples of Captain Whetstone of the «Phenix», who declined to sail until a Minister of Religion, whose views coincided with his own, had been appointed to his ship. By the 10th of March this difficulty had been overcome, and on the 11th Meadows was able to inform Mr. Secretary Thurloe that Captain Whetstone had loosed his topsail to give notice to his men to come aboard. They were now only waiting for the heavy baggage which had come by waggon from London.

Besides the Envoy the «Phenix» carried the new Consul, Thomas Maynard. Of his origin and early life nothing much is known. Maynard was and is an Essex name and there was more than one bearer of it in the Commonwealth service. When

Thomas first emerges it is as the holder of a post in Plymouth Dockyard, apparently in connection with the good maintenance of the Government's ships, but which was of sufficient importance to warrant his corresponding direct with the Secretary of State. From the following letter it is plain that he was one of Thurloe's regular informants and the request with which it closes is in the brief and businesslike style of one who has a reasonable assurance it will be granted.

«Plymouth, Nov. : 30th O. S. 1655.

«Sir, The last week we had no ships from any part, neither is there anything now considerable to signify to your honour, which I can write to be a positive truth. Here are three ships arrived from Aveiro in Portugal : the Masters report they were informed before they came from there that the ship in which the King of Portugal sent the articles of Peace was departed for England, and from Cadix there was intelligence that His Highness's Fleet in America had surprised a ship of the West India Spanish Fleet, which I hope will prove true, although our letteres from Portugal mention no such thing.

«If it please God there be a Peace concluded by His Highness with Portugal, and His Highness thinks it requisite to have any promotion made in Lisbon, in case any ship of the Fleet prove defective, (which happily may be thought more convenient to have a supply of necessaries there than to send them from home,) I beseech Your Honour to recommend me to His Highness for that service as well as for the place of Consul in which I shall be faithful to His Highness, and ever,

«Your Honour's humble servant

THOMAS MAYNARD.»

(*Thurloe*, vol. IV, p. 268).

There is a key to much that is unexplained in Maynard's career and a sidelight thrown into the shadowy corners of Commonwealth politics in a letter from Clarendon to Fanshawe after the latter had been appointed the first British Envoy to Portugal after the Restoration. In it he says : «the man (Mr. Maynard) hath deserved well of the King, and was first sent

there (to Lisbon) in Cromwell's time, by His Majesty's leave and direction, and therefore nothing upon that account ought to be a reproach to him». (*Heathcote Papers*, p. 24).

Maynard may have been a double crosser of exceptional brilliancy. No one who looked ahead seems to have had a blind faith in the continuance of the Commonwealth as a permanent form of Government and most people practised some sort of double insurance. The head of an important dockyard department, with the masters of ships fresh from the Continental ports in and out of his office, hears many things, learns much of his superiors private activities, and can throw out little hints of how he might serve them. However it may have been, both under the Commonwealth and under the Monarchy, however much trouble he caused, no one succeeded in getting him dismissed till a whole generation of those he knew too much about had passed away.

During the Commonwealth he got on tolerably well with the Factory. By far the larger number of the Members took their politics from the city of London, the stronghold of the Parliamentarians, which had approved Maynard's appointment, while on the other hand the latter's benevolence was assured by their refusal to pay consular to Chandler the former Consul, who was still supported by a small and impoverished body of Monarchists. Finally Maynard's popularity reached a peak which it never attained again when, in support of a claim that his house should enjoy extra-territorial rights, he underwent a brief and by no means rigorous imprisonment in the Inquisition. (*Lisbon Hist. Ass. — Report I*).

At the Restoration the oppressed Monarchists thought they had lost no time in putting in their word against him when, less than a month after Charles landed in England, 30 of them signed a petition stating that : «they do humbly pray to be delivered from Thomas Maynard, having borne without complaint many oppressions and indignities from him, owing to his unbridled passions and intolerable nature, which (so they declared) threatened not only their trade but their lives».

Unfortunately for them Maynard's application to have his patent renewed had gone even earlier and their petition crossed

with a letter confirming it. Not that the matter was entirely settled. While one Officer of State confirmed Maynard's appointment, another reinstated Chandler; the King in a fit of thoughtless good-nature bestowed the post on an out-at-elbows cavalier, Colonel Thomas Roydon; fifty London merchants advanced the claims of Francis Holbeche, who was also favoured by the Portuguese, and yet another group of London merchants produced a candidate called Francis Southwell. In this confusion of voices Maynard's easily prevailed.

«He is a man of very pretty parts», wrote an Envoy under whom he afterwards served, «and very officious — indeed liberal — when he must make his court». This soon became evident when the great folk began to move in the matter of the marriage between Charles and the Infanta Catherine. It was even more his pleasure than his business to make himself useful in a hundred little ways to the Conde de Ponte, who was going as special envoy to England, and before long his opportunities were multiplied by the arrival of Lord Sandwich, who, alack! left Mr. Pepys behind in London. The Englishmen were housed in the fine *Côrte Real* palace which stood on the site now occupied by the *Largo do Corpo Santo*, where Maynard bustled in and out all day, very short with any of the merchants who tried to get a word with him.

Though he probably saw to it that they did not waste his lordship's time with their tiresome complaints against himself, they were not entirely quelled, and finding open protest impossible they tried to involve him in the case of a seditious fellow called Hall, master of the *Royal Charles*, who with his mate Thomas Wood, had been overheard discoursing in a scandalous manner of His Majesty and the Duke of York, saying that the latter was a «roaring boy» and the King a great favourer of Papists. But once more after a word in the right ear nothing was heard of it.

The next storm which blew up was over the chaplain. The «Anti-Episcopalians» pressed for the return of Zachary Craddock, the former holder of the office who had landed himself and Maynard into trouble with the Inquisition. Apart from the obvious unwisdom of bringing him back nothing could have been more inconvenient to Maynard. He had been the latter's

close friend and lived in his house and should he now return there was a practical certainty that he would go about quoting the Consul's former views, which he had now completely abandoned, and, worse still, would head the very faction in the Factory that was the most troublesome. Maynard lost no time in declaring it to be his painful duty to inform the Privy Council that Craddock was a great enemy to the Liturgy of the Church of England and the Royal Family, often expressing these opinions in such words as he, Maynard, dared not commit to paper. Having successfully fended off Craddock, he was in no great hurry to see another take his place, as he had to contribute £ 150 out of his own pocket towards the chaplain's stipend. Such at least was the reason which Fanshawe gave the Bishop of London for the length of time which frequently elapsed between the departure of one clergyman and the appointment of his successor.

After Lord Sandwich and the Queen had sailed, the next event of note was the arrival of Lord and Lady Winchelsea, who were on their way to the Embassy at Constantinople when they encountered a great storm in the Bay, so that their ship had staggered into Lisbon with the main mast gone and their state cabin a foot deep in water. In these direful straits the travellers were happy indeed to find a consul like Maynard, who was there waiting to be of the utmost service to nobility in distress. In short he would take no refusal; he carried them to his own house, where, as he puts it, he provided them with «such homely fare as this country affordeth».

Neither time nor money were ill spent, for before he left the Consul's house, the Ambassador had written a letter to the Council on Maynard's behalf, setting it forth as his opinion that he knew of no person more fitly to be recommended to His Majesty and his Court, and this he can positively state from a perfect knowledge of his sobriety and worth. He mentions in passing that Maynard has admitted a desire that his allowance should be increased from £ 300 a year «as no man can undertake this place for twice that sum». He is convinced that the increase will benefit His Majesty's service quite as much as the recipient. Possibly because he had no great illusion about the weight of such arguments, he also begs that, as a personal favour to himself, that the iron guns for the King of Portugal may be



ordered through Maynard, «so that some advantage may accrue to him thereby». The grateful Earl departed before the result (if any) of these démarches became known but it was not long before Maynard had another and perhaps better opportunity of making himself profitably useful.

In accordance with one of the principal clauses in the Royal Marriage contract an English army arrived to take part in the campaign against the Spaniards. Maynard was early on board to interview the commander, Lord Inchiquin, and when he returned to shore was happy to report that: «His Lordship hath been induced to accept the hospitality my poor house doth afford, rather than go to the lodging the King hath provided for him».

Inchiquin was not a fortunate choice and was soon at loggerheads with the Portuguese Court. One of Maynard's worst failings was a habit of talebearing, particularly of reporting any unflattering remarks he overheard to the object of them. He was more than once charged with having envenomed a situation in this way and he may well have made matters worse on this occasion. At first he got on well with Schomberg, who came out to take over command of the expedition, but it was not long before his zeal and activity outran his diplomacy. The situation was charged with difficulties, the main one being that in such previous planning as the campaign had received, the matter of how the army was to be paid seems to have been left in blank. Nothing had been settled when they landed in Lisbon. The English Government seems to have assumed that as they had come to help the Portuguese, the latter would pay them, as they would have had to do for hired mercenaries. The Portuguese, however, saw the matter differently. Trouble soon began. At that time there was nothing like a commissariat with the army, which was supposed to forage, each man doing the best he could to feed himself and his horse, but the peasants soon discovered that they had no means of paying for what they took and supplies vanished as soon as they approached. Maynard's letters are full of pitiful and indignant accounts of the plight of the troops, but appeals for funds from home produced nothing more helpful than the proposal that the soldiers should be paid out of Catherine's dowery, which the Portuguese showed no signs of paying, and which was in any case

already mortgaged to the London merchants against previous loans.

At this juncture Schomberg and 75 officers were unhappily inspired to sign a petition that Maynard might be appointed to treat of their affairs with the Portuguese Court, probably encouraged by his noisy self-confidence that he would at least do something. The result, as might have been expected, was an immediate collision between himself and Castelo Melhor, the Secretary of State. A minor incident of some real or imagined slight to two English officers at Court, greatly envenomed by Maynard's handling, brought matters to a head. The next time business (probably the unwelcome question of the soldier's pay) took him to the Palace, Castelo Melhor, begging the larger issue, seized on the complaint of the two officers to charge him with an attempt to make a breach between the two Crowns, adding that «Cromwell was dead, and that we now had a King of England to whom he would give an account of my actions». To which Maynard retorted equally loudly that he did «bless God we had a King of England and I did beseech the Lord to give him a long and prosperous reign, but that what he meant by the other expressions I did not understand».

It was the beginning of a long and bitter feud, or it might be more accurate to say, the first open evidence of it, for Southwell thought Castelo Melhor was already prejudiced against Maynard by the fact that he had been in favour with the former's late enemy, the Queen Mother. Not all Fanshawe's tact could smooth over matters, the Secretary of State alleging the excuse of Maynard's bad manners for refusing to receive him and discuss the soldier's pay.

To the bitterness and wrangling thus engendered was added a chorus of merchants clamouring to have their goods released from the Inquisition, which impounded merchandise consigned to the order of persons upon whose orthodoxy someone had cast doubts, before they had been paid for them. The Consul's vociferations that, though he might meet with abusive language nothing should prevent him from doing his duty, held little promise of a peaceful settlement. Nor is it surprising to learn from him that neither the soldiers nor the merchants are satisfied

with what he has done, and that he gets as little thanks as may be from the Court.

In the midst of all his preoccupations, however, he invariably found time to be of service to his good friend, Mr. Secretary in London, and in almost all his letters there is a mention of «a few poor oranges or peaches from Setubal», which he has shipped home as a trifling token of his respect. In one of his letters he is glad that the horses which he has been at untold pains to procure have proved to his honour's content. He had tried them himself, and though he had formed no great opinion of the bay, as for the other, he never rid a horse he took so much delight in. More frequently he announces that after incredible trouble he has (thank God) been successful in getting another barrel of the same vintage as the last and a little cheaper. What wonder that London was in no hurry to change this excellent, active, intelligent fellow? Soldiers and merchants always grumbled, no matter what you did for them. When, some time later, the united clamour of the Court and the Factory to be rid of the fiery consul reached a pitch of shrillness that could no longer be ignored, a bogus letter of recall was composed and sent, with a covering one to Sir Robert Southwell, who had succeeded Fanshawe as Envoy, instructing him not to deliver it to Maynard till he had exhausted all means in his power to dissuade Castelo Melhor from insisting that he should be recalled. If he failed Maynard was to go home for a time, after appointing a deputy in his place for the term of his absence, thus preventing the post from being handed over to anyone else. Then comes what may well be an echo of Clarendon's letter: Southwell is to inform Maynard that His Majesty's confidence in him is as great as ever, and that if he keeps out of the way for a time the storm will blow over.

Upon hearing all this Maynard professed loudly that all he asked was to be allowed to go home and be heard in his own defence.

To which Southwell added that he offered to wager their Lordships of the Privy Council that the Consul knew very well what he was about.

«His failure here will be his virtue there; for if he is not

«complained of from hence the Exchange of London are very «likely to cry out against him». Southwell adds shrewdly; «For «aught I can perceive he understands himself and his world too «well to run into any unnecessary sorrow».

*(To be continued).*

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