POST-WAR TRAVEL IN 1817

Extracts from the Letter-Book of a Lisbon Banker

(Contributed by H. Hallam Hipwell Esq.)

In the Historical Association's Third Annual Report the article dealing with «Lisbon on the Eve of Invasion» closed with a lengthy quotation from a letter of Henry Gallwey dated 10th October 1807 and addressed to Paris.

It was feelingly illustrative of the position of the British colony in Lisbon on the eve of Junot's arrival and, one may observe parenthetically, has an almost direct interest in these present times when armed invasion of peace-loving neutral states has become a tactical weapon in the hands of a ruthless aggressor.

However, good times and bad times and all times pass over. As the Portuguese proverb runs, *boa guerra faz boa paz*, and only ten years after Henry Gallwey's letter was penned, his nephew, Michael David Gallwey, was touring Europe, enlarging his mind and pulling things together for the family firm. I use the word «firm» somewhat loosely. For among the mass of Gallwey-Mordaunt-Power papers now in the keeping of the Historical Association I have not yet come across anything in the nature of a formal deed of partnership.

Apparently there were Gallweys — merchant bankers — not only at Lisbon but also in Barcelona, Bordeaux, and Paris, all having more or less close business and family connections with

the Powers, who, like the Gallweys, hailed from County Cork and had well established businesses both there and in London. Henry Gallwey himself was born about 1750 at Mardyke, near Bantry in the county of Cork and must have come to Lisbon as a youth some sixteen or seventeen years old. On or about 1776 he married a Miss Caffary, of Lisbon, by whom he had three daughters. At the death of his first wife he married again, a Mary Barbara Mordaunt, born at Coimbra in January 1761, and she died in Paris on 21 November 1828. Into his various descendents one cannot go here, beyond saying that by the second wife he had a son, Henry, born 1st January 1786, who died in 1874 and was buried in the Paris cemetery of Père la Chaise. It was this Henry Gallwey who apparently kept M. D. Gallwey company for part of his travels, and the references to him as «my cousin» warrant the supposition that M. D. Gallwey was the nephew of Henry Gallwey Senior. As yet I have not been able to find any exact indication as to which branch of the family he sprang from. Nor can I say whence he started on his journey, since the MSS letter-book whence the following notes are taken was apparently begun at Christiania (now called Oslo) on the 5th July 1817. I have an idea that it was from London, since he writes to José Rodriguez at Lisbon from Bergen on the 25th July 1817, mentioning that he left London some time previously and refers to «my 2 adventures (hide shipments) per the «Diligente», the proceeds of which are to be remitted to him, care of D. Gallwey, at Paris.

The letter-book itself is but some 50 folio sheets of stout rag paper, stitched but without a cover, and was clearly kept simply as a record of correspondence despatched rather than as a diary of travel, though some casual notes at either end of the book are interesting. Thus times taken to cover certain routes are recorded :

Bergen	to Christiania	6	days.
id	id Gothenburg	13	id
id	id Rotterdam	21	id
Rotterdam	id Paris	4	id

One page and a half is filled with exchange parities — and what a coil of trouble exchange must have been then ! — when Norway, Sweden, Hanover, Holland, Hamburg, Berlin, Aus-

tria, Bavaria, Wurtemburg, Frankfort, Cologne, Liege, and Antwerp, all had different currencies and diverse values.

For instance he notes of Hanover that, «24 good groschen or 36 Marien groschen — one Convention dollar». One good groschen is intrinsically worth 3 groots at Bremen, but «they would only give 2 there». While of Bremen he says : — «72 groots — 1 Dollar. $4^{ds}.48^{grs}$ — 1 Napoleon. 6 Ds. — £ 1 stg.».

When our subject started his travels Continental Europe was only just recuperating after the complete disorganization of commerce and finance caused by Napoleon's efforts to exert economic pressure on England, his «Continental System «which was to aid in some measure his proposed invasion of that island. In truth it was an interesting moment for a well-informed man to take a personal survey of northern and central Europe. The Treaty of Ghent, which closed our brief war with the newly constituted United States of America, was barely a year old ; Brazil had proclaimed itself a kingdom ; further south the lands of the River Plate had officially declared that all ties with Spain were now severed. A time of stress and change, mental as well as material !

Constitutional government and liberal propaganda take much the same place in contemporary history as Bolshevism and Communism were to do a century later, while in England Ricardo was enunciating the basic principles of political economy and taxation, and «Crusty Christopher» North was the main support of the recently established «Blackwood's Magazine».

Stirring times ! But I must admit that they do not seem to have moved our traveller to much in the way of general comment. Indeed his stereotyped commercial phrases foreshadow the Victorian primness of firms such as Dombey and Son in their complete devotion to business ; they might even be deemed worthy of the pages of Samuel Smiles. I had for a moment hopes of some Pepysian disclosures when I found a note headed, «Enumeration of the Expressions of a Female Eye». Alas ! those naughty hopes were vain. Cautious Michael Gallwey does not say where, when, or how, he met — or averted — these expressions, but for the benefit, or guidance, of such as may read this article, here they are :

«The Glare, the Stare, the Leer, the Sneer, the «Invitation, the Defiance, the Denial, the Consent, the «Glance of Love, the Flash of Rage, the Sparkling of «Hope, the Languishment of Softness, the Squint of «Suspicion, the Fire of Jealousy, and the Lustre of «Pleasure.»

Evidently he prepared for his Scandinavian visits by extensive reading.

There are, at the opposite end of the letter book, numerous extracts from Von Buch's Travels in Norway in the years 1806-7-8, doubly interesting at the present moment but somewhat beside the subject of this paper. They cover Bergen and its history, the natural beauties of Christiania and its fjords, the method of making bark bread from the inner carapace of young fir-trees, fish auctions, and a most detailed account of long-lining for cod off the Norwegian coast. It is not without interest to note that according to latest news from Norway this filling but far from digestive substitute for wheaten bread is again perforce being tried. Gallwey comments on it as follows : «na«ture with reluctance licenses the bitter and contracting food, «and the boors endeavour to disguise the taste by washing it «down with water. After having lived on this bread a great «part of the winter they become weak and relaxed and are «incessantly tormented with an oppression shooting and burn«ing about the chest». Yet another instance of the manner in which Nazi Germany has succeeded in putting those sections of humanity under its temporary control back by at least a century ! Gallwey also notes that the coasts of Bergen and Scotland are so near that the passage is frequently performed in one day. He adds that the fishermen and boors of the two coasts can understand each other with facility.

There is also the copy of a Norwegian decree of 8th July 1818. It lays down the qualifications of anyone desirous of acquiring the rights of a burgess and merchant in that kingdom. He must be over 25, able to read and write Norwegian correctly and also possess a modicum of English, French, or German, and have served for at least four years in a recognized merchant's office. Before acceptance the would-be merchant is to

be examined by a committee of the town where he customarily resides, such examination to be both written and oral.

Although the first letter dates from Christiania (5th July 1817) it says nothing of his stay in the Norwegian capital beyond urging Sampayo & Co. of Cork, the addressees, to give their usual attention to the ships of Westbye Ryeberg & Co. He reached Bergen by the 25th July, but apparently left at the beginning of August, since, after a few purely business communications to Lisbon, his next entry dates from Rotterdam on 30th August 1817. It is addressed to David Gallwey, Paris, explaining why he could not go to Stockholm as originally proposed, thanks him «for the very handsome manner in which «you have been pleased to send me the credit», adding that «he «will not make use of it for one shilling more than will be «actually necessary». He also mentions that «through Mr. Young of this place I have been informed that Henry is gone to Batavia from New York». Just which of the many Henry Gallweys this may be I am not at all clear but think it must be another cousin of the writer. At the time, as I have mentioned at the outset, he is actually travelling with a cousin of that same name. Michael goes on with some comment about crops. Wheat is good everywhere except in Germany, the best grain on hand in Rotterdam being Polish. By the 13th September 1817 he reaches Amsterdam, finding «business very brisk but (as ever was customary with merchants)» they all complain. To prove «that it is unjust I shall merely say that some time back 120 «ships were on the List of Entries in one day to this port». Writing to A. T. Sampayo in London, he comments on the big drop — 50 % — in quotations for grain, saying «the importations «have been so considerable that there is no warehouse room «in the city and all the neighbouring villages are equally filled». Humour seldom appears in Gallwey's correspondence, but he does allude jokingly to a letter «from my brother John, who offers you the services of Master Osmund Gallwey, who made his appearance at Orotava on the 13th July». Osmund was a Mordaunt family name rather than a Gallwey cognomen, and the newborn infant was presumably a relation of Osmund Mordaunt, who died in Teneriffe on the 2nd September 1813.

At Amsterdam his cousin and fellow traveller, another Henry Gallwey, left him for Paris to undergo an operation on his eye,

and by the 2nd October we find Michael writing from Bremen. A week later he is at Hamburg, trying hard to recover «a small Ballance of £ 32 on a debt incurred in 1804 for account of Bertholon and Co., of Lisbon». As both firms whose signatures appeared on the original bill were bankrupt shortly after the date named, his hopes of collection must have been small. Meanwhile he writes to his tailor, James Fisher of London, asking what he will charge for a coat to be made and sent to Paris, and three weeks later he is off to Berlin. Apparently up to that point no special passport was needed, but when there he seems to have found that such a document was necessary, and it lies before me as I write. Wholly in script, its preamble reads :

> «Nous, George Henri Rose, Membre du Parlement «Impérial de la Grande Bretagne, Envoyé Extraord- «inaire et Ministre Plenipotentiare de Sa Majesté Bri- «tannique à la cour de Berlin.»

It is dated 13th November 1817, and countersigned by G. P. Rose, *attaché à la Légation*, and is annotated, «*bon pour le voyage en Autriche et à Paris*».

An interesting collection of visas it has too, from that of Prince de Hardenberg, the Chancellor of State at Berlin, down to the final Ministère de la Police de France, at Paris, where it was presented on the 4th April 1818.

Dresden, Vienna, Munich, Stuttgart, Mainz, Liège, Antwerp and Brussels ; interesting places these to visit so soon after the Napoleonic era had ended, but, unfortunately for us, M. D. Gallwey's letters keep strictly to business matters. After a short stay at Prague he goes to Vienna — and only discusses the position of the market for coffee and sugars !

«On this side Germany», he writes, «the trade is completely «monopolised by a few wholesale grocers who import direct for «their own account».

He gives an illustration that to persons engaged in commerce must strike a very modern note. «Very lately a cargo of sugars and coffee arrived at Trieste from Marseilles for this place

(Vienna) They were however forced to sell afloat, as no sale could be efected here on any terms».

From Munich, which he describes as «an insignificant place in point of commerce», he travels, via Frankfort a/Main, to Antwerp. Thenceforward, that is from the 1 March 1818 to the beginning of April, the correspondence turns on his efforts to collect a debt of some £ 500., from the Widow de Bels. A most involved affair ; the lady questioned the accounts, successfully disputed certain items, and apparently left matters where they were, since after nearly a month «nothing satisfactory has occurred», though Gallwey hopes that «they will so far commit themselves as to acknowledge the justice of your account». This is in a letter to A. T. Sampayo, dated from Antwerp on the 28th March.

Early April saw Gallwey back in Paris, and a letter of condolence to his brother David Gallwey, of Cork, on the loss of the latter's wife, refers to «my uncle and Aunt», obviously resident in Paris, urging David Gallwey to take a change and visit them in the French capital.

Readers of Balzac may remember how often and with what wealth of detail his novels dealing with the subjects which he classed as «Scenes de la Vie Parisienne» introduce operations on the Bourse in the period immediately succeeding Waterloo. Gallwey, a merchant-banker, naturally kept himself well informed in this direction, and there is a draft of a lengthy letter to Mrs. Gallwey in London under date 21 April 1818 which though merely relative to a family investment transaction has a certain interest at the present day. A few paragraphs are omitted as unimportant. It runs as follows :

> «I now wish to address you on a subject which «I have long thought of and which has already offered «matter of conversation between us, I mean the man- «ner of encreasing your revenue without (in my «opinion) any risk or danger... The manner I allude to «is by transferring part of your capital from the «English into the French Funds. Once I obtained from «Mr. Little an account of £ 15,000 stock that you hold «in the 5 per cent Navys.

> «For this sum you obtain now in England an in- «terest of £ 750 p. a. These £ 15,000 you might now «sell out at 108 p. cent, making £ 16,000 cash at 24 per «pound sterling makes 388,800 francs which would «purchase in the Funds here at 67 francs p. cent «580,298 francs at 5 p. cent p. a. would give you an «income of 29,015 francs at 24 francs would be «£ 1,208-10/-, so that you would get with the funds «here £ 458-10-/- more than you get in England. Many «people think the Funds here are not safe, others on «the other hand think them better. My uncle is of «opinion that they are as safe as any other and as a «proof of it he has invested his own money in the funds «here, which as you know he understands tolerably «well. I wish you to consult with Mr. Little on this «subject and *immediately* are to give me your answer «as soon as possible as in about 10 or 15 days a loan «will take place and should you resolve upon this «measure my uncle will take a part in the loan for «you which will probably cost only 65 instead of 67 «and perhaps even less... I think it a most advisable «plan of increasing your fortune and should at any «time the funds in England suffer any considerable «decline you can purchase back again.»

Apparently Mrs. Gallwey eventually did transfer a substantial part of her English holdings into French Rentes, for on the 3rd December 1818, in a letter to Archibald Little, of London, M. D. Gallwey says :

> «At the desire of my mother I have the pleasure «herewith to hand you a statement of the disposal of «her property lately drawn from England by my uncle «M. D. Gallwey. Had we waited a few days we might «have done a little better yet as it was not intended as «a speculation it was right to avail of the moderate «price of the moment and as you will perceive we have «every reason to be satisfied from the very considerable «increase my mother obtains to her property and I «flatter myself the operation will meet with your «approbation, as it is our sincere wish it should do. «The Funds still continue on the decline.

«As however it is entirely from excessive specula-
«tion and temporary embarassment of the holders, and
«not from any government cause or political motive,
«nothing is to be apprehended.»

From the statement, which deals with a sum of £ 5,000, converted into francs at 23.35, the Rentes appear to have been bought at 69, with ⅛th per cent brakerage.

There are but few letters to Lisbon after M. D. Gallwey's return to Paris but in various communications to firms visited by him during his journey he offers his services for the transaction of any business they may have in Lisbon, adding that «the strictest zeal and attention will be paid to all interests confided to my care».

M. D. Gallwey's younger brother, William, had been left at school with a Mr. Hunt, of Hammersmith, but in October 1818 his mother decided that he would be better at home, and various letters deal with his departure.

One letter, written in French, tells the boy to make sundry small payments and to ask at the Carolina Coffee House whether Mr. John Oliver has come back from Madeira, also his London address. These purchases include «the last four numbers of the Edinburgh Review».

Receipts are to be obtained for all payments, and any surplus from the draft p. £ 30. which accompanied the letter is to be turned over to Messrs. Richard Power & Co., «not forgetting to deduct cost of your coach hire to London before you do so».

There are some interesting comments on affairs in Paris which M. D. Gallwey sends to Richard Power & Co. under date of 7th October 1818. It throws light on the correspondence noted previously respecting investment, and runs thus :

«The Funds in this country (France) have within
«the last few days experienced a very considerable
«decline. In consequence of the evacuation of the Allied
«Armies many foreign capitalists were induced to sell
«out and this produced a small fluctuation. Speculators

«here had however calculated upon the contrary effect
«from the above cause and immense operations were
«done at the high prices of the beginning of October.
«The settling period approaching they took the alarm,
«and having purchased without limits they have been
«obliged to sacrifice at any price in order to meet their
«engagements which they found the more difficult to
«do, the Banks having refused to discount bills of more
«than 45 days. Finding it almost impossible to clear
«their accounts an interest of 3^{tcs}40 was one day given
«for the continuation of the accounts to the end of the
«month, tho' little was done at that, as Government
«gave every assistance in her power to facilitate their
«opperations. The accounts for this month are exceed-
«ingly heavy and there is little doubt but the Funds
«will yet experience a small decline for that period.»

One may recall that it was a time of great social unrest everywhere, England included ; already the lists were set for a titanic struggle between the Tory aristocracy and the new individualists and industrial interests, with their demands for far-reaching legislative reforms.

Jeremy Bentham's battle cry, «the greatest happiness of the greatest number», nowadays regarded as axiomatic, sounded like the tocsin of revolution in an England where half a million men, cast adrift at the end of the wars, were wandering about the countryside and dying in their hundreds and thousands of sheer starvation. Withal, England carried on her shoulders the greatest national debt ever known Small wonder that Mrs. Gallwey decided to transfer a substantial sum to Paris, and to bring her younger son to her side. And with this letter of detailed instructions, containing as it does so many close personal touches, one may fittingly close this cross-section of a private individual's life at a time of stress and uncertainty which, *aliter æquales*, is not without its parallel in these present days.

Here is the letter, dated Paris, 2nd December 1818, and addressed to Wm. Gallwey, Hammersmith :

«I write this day to Mr. Hunt to request he will
«close your account and send you over to us imme-

«diately. It appears that Mr. Hunt agreed with my «brother and mother that you were only to pay to the «day you quitted him. As your month will end on the «10th you will make your arrangements to leave Lon- «don on the 9th or the 10th at the very latest. Mr. Hunt «will give you the accounts, which you will present to «Mr. Little, who will pay them. At the same time he «will give you ten pounds for your travelling expen- «ces, etc., to Paris. You had better book yourself at «the White Bear, Piccadilly and ascertain on what day «you ought to be in Paris, which you will immediately «write to me in order that I may meet you at the «coach office. My mother says that you can order a «greatcoat before you leave London but do not make «any other cloths or anything else, as you can get «all that here. As you have the keys of my mother's «trunks she requests you will bring her silver teapot «cream jug and her teaspoons and sugar tongs which «are under Mr. Little's care. Her teacaddy and three «or 4 of her best table cloths which are in one of the «large trunks. These you will use as wrappers for your «cloaths, taking care not to cut them. Her coffee pot «which is also in the trunks and the castors which are «in Mr. White's hands as also a pair of small plated «candlesticks and a flat ditto and snuffers which are «in the trunk, ½ dozen tablespoons and ladle in Mr. «Little's hands. On the teapot you will have engraved «the letters M. B. G. at the bottom where it is little «seen and also on the creamjug, if not already done. «Take care not to have anything packed up in paper «and have all these things as much separated as pos- «sible. Should any remarks be made say you are «coming to establish in Paris. Bring my writing desk «and flute and note books and 2 waistcoats from «Fisher. Give the address of our house.»

A. P. S. to this letter is marked :

«Mr. Fisher : I shall thank you to make me two «neat and genteel Marseilles waistcoats, which you «will send me by my brother Mr. Wm. Gallwey, and «please not to make the collars too high.»