

VII – Sir Francis Villiers and the Fall of the Portuguese Monarchy

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When Sir Francis Villiers first arrived in Lisbon in 1906 to take up his post as British minister to Portugal, he found a political situation in which, in spite of its apparent stability, the seeds of the revolution that was to bring about the abolition of the monarchy that had ruled Portugal for 800 years had already been sown. From 1879 until 1906 political power in Portugal was shared between the two main parties – the Conservative Regeneradores and the Liberal Progressistas – who took it in turns to form a government. Under the defective electoral laws then prevailing in Portugal, whichever of these two parties was in power controlled the elections, and scant attention was paid to the representation of the people. In a letter to the Foreign Secretary, Sir Edward Grey,¹ written in October 1910, Sir Francis composed a stinging indictment of the entire Portuguese political system “Sittings of the Cortes”, he wrote, “ were spent in idle vociferation, and were often suspended for months together; the finances were carelessly if not corruptly conducted, annual deficits were accepted as inevitable, a considerable expenditure being always devoted to allowances granted, although not authorised by parliament, to supplement wholly inadequate salaries, taxation was unequal, and too often evaded by the wealthy, the administration of justice was notoriously imperfect, commercial policy consisted only

¹ Later Viscount Grey of Fallodon.

in the imposition of the highest possible duties, no attention was paid to the promotion of agriculture or the development of natural resources, to education, to the housing of the poor, to the protection of labour, or to any of those social questions which directly affect the people.” After one party had held office for a time and had, as Sir Francis put it, “rendered themselves exceptionally unpopular”, ministers would submit a request to the king that they knew he could not accept, whereupon they tendered their resignation. The king then had to arbitrate between the two parties, dismiss one prime minister and appoint another, and dissolve the Cortes.² Details of the transfer of power from one party to the other were decided between the leaders, and it was even settled in advance of the elections how many seats the opposition would be allowed to hold in the new Chamber of Deputies in the bicameral Cortes. “Almost incredible stories are told”, Sir Francis wrote in his annual report for 1906, “of the methods adopted to influence votes and of the means taken to manipulate the returns”.³ Social conditions in Portugal, with little industrialization and a population over 70 percent of whom were illiterate, were such that there would have been little popular participation in the democratic process even had the electoral system permitted it. Consequently a network had developed of political bosses known as *caciques*, who acted as agents between the party leaders and the electorate.

The Portuguese Cortes was composed of two chambers: the upper house was the House of Peers, which was composed of 90 peers, who did not have a hereditary right to sit by descent but were nominated by the king. The lower house was the

² Kenneth Bourne and D. Cameron Watt eds, *British Documents on Foreign Affairs: Reports and Papers from the Foreign Office Confidential Print*, Part 1, Series F, *Europe 1848-1914*, vol. 30, John T. V. Keiger, ed., *Portugal, 1907-1914*, doc. 131 [38666], No. 57. Sir Francis Villiers to Sir Edward Grey, Lisbon, 7 October 1910, pp. 162-3.

³ The National Archive (TNA). FO 881/8855, Portugal, General Report for the year 1906, Sir Francis Villiers to Sir Edward Grey, Lisbon, 23 January 1907, p. 12.

Chamber of Deputies and was composed of 155 members, of whom 148 represented continental Portugal, Madeira and the Azores, and seven the overseas colonies. The franchise was given to all Portuguese subjects aged 21 or over who could read and write or who paid taxes amounting to 500 *reis* a year (estimated by Sir Francis to be the equivalent of 2 shillings and twopence). There was also a Council of State with 72 members appointed by the king.

Already by the end of the nineteenth century this alternating system, with the king acting as arbitrator, had fallen into disrepute as the country developed, with improved communications, wider literacy, an expanded civil service, increased circulation of newspapers and more intellectuals and academics agitating for social and political reform. A Socialist party came into being under the leadership of José de Alpoim, and soon after a Republican party, which advocated the abolition of the monarchy as the simplest and most effective way of achieving the reforms demanded by the Socialists. Then in 1901 a Liberal Regeneradores party led by João Franco was formed by a splinter group in the Regeneradores party, with a radical programme of social and economic policies to be carried out within the framework of the constitutional monarchy.⁴

When Sir Francis Villiers arrived in Portugal in 1906, he found not only a political system that was ripe for reform but a nation that, as he never tired of pointing out to the Foreign Office in London, was burdened with many serious economic and social problems that the politicians seemed to him unable or unwilling to tackle. In his first report he wrote about almost every aspect of the administration in terms as unflattering as those he adopted four years later. He noted the widespread corruption

⁴ For a more detailed but admirably succinct account of the political situation in Portugal in the years immediately preceding the arrival of Sir Francis Villiers in Portugal see José Hermano Saraiva *Portugal: A Companion History* (Manchester, 1997), pp.102-6.

in the judiciary, commenting that “to obtain a verdict one must enter into direct relations with the judge and canvass the jury”. He was shocked to discover that, since education was not compulsory, there was an illiteracy rate of between 70 and 80 percent. Above all, he was dismayed by the parlous state of the nation’s finances, which were prevented from recovering from the bankruptcy and the abandonment of the gold standard in 1891 by the crippling high taxation, the monopolies on tobacco and other commodities, by the numerous sinecures, for which “persons in high positions drew the pay”, but the work of which “they never performed or thought of performing”, and by the high customs duties imposed on imported goods.⁵ However, in spite of finding so much to deplore in the state of affairs in Portugal and although he was a man of generally liberal views – he was not the youngest son of the great Liberal statesman the fourth earl of Clarendon for nothing – Sir Francis was a convinced monarchist and certainly not in sympathy either then or subsequently with the revolutionary ideas of the Republican party.

In February 1906 King Carlos dissolved the Chamber of Deputies as a result of opposition to the new tobacco monopoly contract, which had led to “riotous disorder, during which some of the furniture of the Cortes was wrecked” and the Prime Minister, Luciano de Castro, leader of the Progressistas, the party then in power, resigned. These events were followed by the appearance of several straws in the political wind which suggested that the Republican movement was gathering force among the people at large.

In April there were mutinies on two Portuguese warships – the *Dom Carlos* and the *Vasco da Gama*. On 4 May a crowd gathered at Lisbon railway station to meet Professor Bernardino Machado on his return to Lisbon from Coimbra, where he was a

⁵ Villiers to Grey, General Report for 1906, p.14.

professor of law. Machado was also a Republican deputy for one of the divisions of Lisbon and was later to be foreign minister in the first provisional government of the Republic. The police broke up the crowd, wounding 70 or 80 people in the process. Two days later Afonso Costa, a prominent, aggressive and violently anti-clerical member of the Republican Party, who was later to be minister of justice in the first provisional government of the Republic, attended a bullfight in Lisbon at which Queen Amélia and the Queen Mother Maria Pia were present. Sir Francis reported that, in marked contrast to the two queens, Costa was received by the large audience with “vociferous cheers again and again renewed”.⁶

At this juncture King Carlos decided to postpone any further meetings of the Cortes and appointed the leader of the Liberal Regeneradores, João Franco as prime minister. Sir Francis described Franco as a man “of high intelligence and great capacity for work, a powerful speaker, a good leader of men, but with some defects of manner, firm, independent in character, imbued with strong religious feeling and personally of simple habits, though wealthy by marriage. It is said of him that there is nothing in his public or private life with which he can be reproached. He is rather over fifty years of age, but has the appearance of a much younger man.”⁷

At the elections held on 19 August 1906, 72 seats were won by Franco’s Liberal Regeneradores, 44 by the Progressistas, 23 by the Conservative Regeneradores and 4 by the Republicans, all the last representing Lisbon seats, and on 29 October King Carlos opened the Cortes with a speech announcing measures providing for reforms in every branch of the administration, including a new electoral system, liberty of the press, old age pensions, reorganization of the army and navy, and development of the colonies.

⁶ Villiers to Grey, General Report for 1906, p.14.

⁷ Villiers to Grey, General Report for 1906, p. 12.

The proceedings of both Houses were marked by “great disorder, and attacks extremely bitter in character were made upon the monarchy and upon the king personally.” These attacks came chiefly from the Republicans and some dissidents from other parties, who held the king responsible for the violence used against the demonstrators at Lisbon railway station in May. They accused the king of having acted unconstitutionally by appointing Franco to be prime minister and of surrounding himself with a *camarilla* of intriguers, among them the marquês de Soveral, “the king’s most intimate friend and most trusted adviser”, who had been Portuguese minister in London, where he was known as the Blue Monkey, and was a member of the social circle surrounding the Prince of Wales. The government was criticized for having spent certain sums not authorized by the Cortes on the expenses of the royal household. Afonso Costa insisted that these sums be repaid and that the king be told to leave the country in order to avoid being thrown into prison. Above the din that this characteristically immoderate language provoked, Costa shouted “For less than Dom Carlos has done the head of Louis XVI fell.” Sir Francis wrote: “The confusion which ensued is indescribable, and the uproar extended to the galleries, which had to be cleared.”

Costa was ordered by the president to leave, but he refused and was removed by the guards. Another Republican deputy then mounted a desk and called upon the advancing soldiers to proclaim the Republic there and then. He went on to declare that a new era was about to begin for Portugal when “the ship of exile shall convey Dom Carlos away, reviled, harassed and despised – that royal criminal, who has known neither how to honour nor love the country which has tolerated him.” A third Republican deputy, the historian Teófilo Braga, who was later to be president of the first provisional government of the Republic, referred to the king as “a highwayman

in mantle and crown” and was also ordered to leave the Chamber, but refused and had to be removed by a guard.⁸

Sir Francis evidently did not share these low opinions of the king. He reported that Dom Carlos was described in the press as “indolent, incapable of any serious effort, and devoted to pleasure only, selfish, unreliable, and utterly indifferent to the interests of his people and the welfare of his country”, whereas in reality, “if those who have the best means of observation can be believed”, he was “assiduous in discharging his duties as sovereign, well-informed, of sound judgement, and fully appreciative of his responsibilities.” Nevertheless, neither in the Cortes nor in the press nor among the people was a single voice raised to defend him personally. The regard once felt for him, a regard greatly enhanced by the visit to Portugal of King Edward VII and Queen Alexandra and his own visit to England, seemed to have disappeared, and he was exposed to opprobrium, as unjust as violent, on every side.”⁹

As for Queen Amélia, “whose stately presence [she was very stout], great qualities and profound interest in every good work should have endeared her to all”, she never “attracted the affection of the people”. She was thought to be “clerical and reactionary” in her views and to exercise “her influence in a sense contrary to the aspirations of the people”. On the other hand, the king’s mother, Queen Maria Pia, widow of King Luís and sister of King Umberto I of Italy, was popular, although, according to Sir Francis, she was “without personal endowments or grace of manner”, and was notorious for her extravagant habits, to which the supposed financial straits of the royal family were attributed.¹⁰

⁸ Villiers to Grey, General Report for 1906, p. 18.

⁹ Villiers to Grey, General Report for 1906, p. 18.

¹⁰ Villiers to Grey, General Report for 1906, pp.18-19.

Braga and Costa, having been suspended from the Cortes for thirty days, went to Oporto, where a collision occurred between the crowd assembled to meet them and the police and soldiers guarding the streets. Some of the soldiers were wounded and one man was killed. The next day at a Republican meeting a manifesto was read out stating in language that Robespierre might have used in the French Revolution that the expulsion of Braga and Costa was “a tyrannical interference with the right of free speech”, that “the confidence of the nation in the very concept of monarchy had gone for ever”, that the abdication of Dom Carlos and rule by “a prince brought up in a palace” (i.e. Crown Prince Luís Felipe, who was to be assassinated with his father in 1908) would not be tolerated, and that a revolution was “necessary for the purification of our political life.”¹¹

While the Republican movement was rapidly gaining in strength and in the violence of the attacks of its leaders against the monarchy, the government of João Franco was equally rapidly acquiring all the attributes of a dictatorship. By virtue of the powers granted to him by the Crown, Franco now governed almost exclusively by decree, often in direct violation of the constitution, and he was consequently soon being vilified in the press with as much venom as the king. However, he appeared to be immune to their attacks, and, as Sir Francis put it, “returned their compliments in a characteristic and forcible manner”. As a result of the disturbances in Oporto and Lisbon, in June 1907 a decree was promulgated “forbidding the circulation, exposure or publication in any other way of writings, drawings or printed matter dangerous to public order or safety”, with the intention, as was stated in the preamble, of curbing “the unruly language and pernicious attitudes of the Portuguese press”, which had used the freedom from censorship granted to it by an Act passed earlier the same year

¹¹ Villiers to Grey, General Report for 1906, p. 18.

to attack the institutions of the country and their representatives and to foment, in Sir Francis's words, "a revolutionary agitation, having recourse to the grossest misrepresentation and most criminal incitations against public order." As a result of this decree several papers in Lisbon and Oporto, notably *O Mundo* and *O Pais*, both remarkable in Sir Francis's opinion for "violence of opinion and scurrility", were suspended for varying periods.¹²

As for the Cortes, in January and February 1907 nothing untoward occurred, though the opposition, as Sir Francis sarcastically reported, "developed a high capacity of obstruction and indulged to the full those powers of oratory with which the Portuguese are so abundantly gifted." However, in March the students of Coimbra University rioted over the rejection of a candidate for the post of professor of law on the grounds – or so it was widely believed – that he held Republican views. This was followed by strikes in the secondary schools and other educational establishments up and down the country.¹³

In May Franco dissolved the Chamber of Deputies by decree in the interests of public order. This was followed by the visit to Portugal of a certain Monsieur Galtier, correspondent of the French newspaper *Le Temps*. He had meetings both with Franco and with the Republican leaders, and an audience with the king, who told him that the situation in the Cortes had become impossible, so he had given Franco the means of governing without them, as "an exceptional remedy to an exceptional situation", and elections would only be held when he and Franco thought it was opportune and when "normality" had been restored. Galtier published an account of his conversation with

¹² TNA, FO 881/9195, Portugal, Annual Report for 1907, Sir Francis Villiers to Sir Edward Grey, Lisbon, 28 January 1908, p. 2.

¹³ Villiers to Grey, Annual Report for 1907, p. 10.

the king, and the Portuguese press (“with the exception of the little-read government organs”) was unanimous in attacking both the king and Franco.¹⁴

Franco’s reaction was to prohibit all public meetings, to impose still stricter controls on the press and to take judicial action against “all cases of offences against the state”. This last measure was justified by the discovery in August 1907 and again in January 1908 of two bomb manufactories, which gave rise to rumours that an attempt would soon be made on the life of the king or of Franco or both. These rumours were treated, as Sir Francis reported, “with absolute indifference by the king and the prime minister....His Majesty while in Lisbon can be seen any day driving in an automobile or open carriage attended by only a single aide-de-camp.”¹⁵

Further decrees in December 1907 replacing the elected municipal councils by nominated committees and giving the king power to nominate an unlimited number of life peers to the Upper House led to Dom Carlos being exposed to attacks on all fronts. “Having previously been blamed for being indolent and uncaring, he was now held personally responsible for everything in the country that did not go well.” Sir Francis added that “there is unfortunately no doubt that the present feeling against him has become more pronounced than ever”. He conjectured that, if elections were held, the Republicans would carry every constituency in Lisbon and Oporto, although in the rural districts he believed that the attitude of the people was “generally speaking...one of complete indifference, experience having taught them that one set of rulers is much the same as another and, moreover, there is no special dislike to the exercise of arbitrary power.”¹⁶

¹⁴ Villiers to Grey, Annual Report for 1907, p. 11.

¹⁵ Villiers to Grey, Annual Report for 1907, p. 12.

¹⁶ Villiers to Grey, Annual Report for 1907, p. 14.

On 28 January 1908, while staying at the Bragança Palace in Vila Viçosa with Queen Amélia and Crown Prince Luís Felipe, King Carlos signed a decree drawn up by Franco authorizing the deportation to Portuguese Timor without trial of anyone who had been denounced to the authorities for threatening state security, and is reputed to have declared as he did so that he was signing his own death warrant. So it was not altogether unexpected when on 1 February 1908, he and the crown prince were assassinated as, on their return to Lisbon, they rode with Queen Amélia and the king's younger son, the eighteen-year old Infante Dom Manuel in an open carriage through the Terreiro do Paço on their way to the Necessidades Palace.

Sir Francis shared the general opinion that the assassins had intended to kill not only King Carlos and the Crown Prince but also Dom Manuel, and then to expel the next heir to the throne, Dom Carlos's bother, Dom Afonso, duke of Oporto, whom Sir Francis damningly described in his report for 1910 as “not credited with the possession of any intellectual gifts” and who “by reason of certain faults of manner” “did not shine in public”. Dom Afonso was chiefly notable for having been the first person in Portugal to drive a motor car and for his habit of driving furiously through the streets of Lisbon shouting at everyone to get out of his way, thus earning himself the nickname of O Arreda (‘Out of the Way’).¹⁷

Sir Francis and his wife went to the Necessidades Palace on the evening after the assassination and saw Dom Manuel, who had been slightly wounded and who, “although plunged in the most profound affliction received us with his usual kindness and with a dignity and composure which were truly striking”. A few days later, Sir Francis wrote to Sir Edward Grey that those near the young king gave “universal

¹⁷ TNA, FO 881/9812, Portugal, Annual Report for 1910, Sir Francis Villiers to Sir Edward Grey, Lisbon, 28 Febraury 1911, p. 15. On Dom Afonso see Malcom Howse, *The Braganza Story: A Visit to the Royal Pantheon of Portugal* (Lisbon, 1999), p. 79.

testimony not only to his composure and dignity, but also to the intelligence and right judgement which he has displayed.” Almost his first act as king was to dismiss João Franco.¹⁸

With regard to the public reaction to the assassination, Sir Francis commented with dismay on “the absolute indifference” of the people “mingled in some cases with satisfaction, the signs of which no trouble is taken to conceal”. He reported that “although crowds gathered to witness the funeral cortege” going through the streets of Lisbon, “hardly a hat was raised when the biers passed by...and the usual avocations of the people have suffered no interruption”.¹⁹

In his annual report for 1908, Sir Francis quoted at length from an article in *O Século*, which was then the most influential Lisbon newspaper and which, for all its immoderate and exaggerated language, probably represented the prevailing attitude, at least in the capital, towards the new king and the future of the monarchy in Portugal:

Senhor Dom Manuel and the monarchy have before them a nation of whose democratic spirit there can be no doubt. The king and the monarchy must live in this spirit if they desire to live without disquiet, surprises and detestation. The betrayers of this democratic spirit for twenty years, with a lack of scruple and tact unparalleled in the history of any European nation, have produced a want of confidence which only proofs of the plainest, most loyal and entire regeneration can dispel. The first acts of the young sovereign have calmed the democracy, but have not disarmed it. The democracy...is waiting...for acts so clear, so noble, so generous and lofty that there can be no doubt of his usefulness and worth.

Then the democracy will disarm without disarming, i.e. it will demand by its votes freely given what now it only expects from revolutionary action. If others have told him differently, the young king must not believe them. Senhor Dom Manuel ...has a kingdom to conquer; let him conquer it if he can with the only weapon which disarms a Portuguese – with the heart.²⁰

¹⁸ Bourne and Watt eds, *British Documents on Foreign Affairs*, Part 1, Serie F, *Europe 1848-1914*; vol 30, *Portugal 1907-1914*, doc. 47 [4653] (No. 6), Villiers to Grey, Lisbon, 4 February 1908, p. 50 and doc. 52 [5469] (No. 9), Villiers to Grey, Lisbon, 11 February 1908, p. 52.

¹⁹ Bourne and Watt, vol. 30, doc. 52, p. 53.

²⁰ TNA, FO 881/9493, Portugal, Annual Report for 1908, Sir Francis Villiers to Sir Edward Grey, Lisbon, 20 May 1909, p. 54.

At about the same time Sir Francis reported that Afonso Costa at a Republican meeting held on 30 May 1909 had proclaimed that the monarchy was composed of an “organization of parasites living upon the people, which it was necessary to extirpate for the public welfare.” The late king was held responsible for all the ills of his reign, and for the misfortunes which had befallen the country, including subservience to England, and Dom Manuel was following in his father’s footsteps. Costa depicted the monarchy as rolling in the dust, dismembering the national territory, disgracing the flag and honour of Portugal and throwing these at the feet of a British colony, while “looking sideways...towards powerful England, expecting anxiously every day the arrival of a fleet bringing Edward VII on a visit to the boy king, in order to confront those who had the audacity to revolt against these extortions, tyrannies and infamies, with the English monarch and his tremendous *Dreadnoughts*.”

At another Republican meeting held in Lisbon on the same day, one speaker declared that Dom Manuel was “a youth whose education had blunted his intelligence” and so was the victim of “all those who were working under his weak shadow for the destruction of the country”, and this state of affairs could only be put right by “a sweeping revolution”.²¹

Sir Francis believed that what he called “the vapourings against England could be disregarded and were only meant for internal consumption”, and he was much more concerned by the failure of the monarchists to do anything to counteract the dangerous effects of “these inflammatory harangues”, and by the reluctance of the authorities to proceed against the extremists for fear that it would create a feeling in their favour throughout the country.

²¹ Bourne and Watt eds, *British Documents on Foreign Affairs*, Part 1, Serie F, *Europe 1848-1914*: vol. 330, *Portugal 1907-1914*, doc. 101 [21202] (No. 30), Villiers to Grey, Lisbon, 1 June 1909, p.116.

The belief that the alliance with Britain was one of subservience by Portugal to her more powerful ally was held most vociferously by the Socialists, whose leader, José de Alpoim was described by Sir Francis as “a dangerous man...of some ability and a forcible speaker, but...almost universally considered untrustworthy and quite unscrupulous in his endeavours to obtain power”, and “by his own admission implicated in the conspiracy which preceded the assassination of King Carlos.”²²

However, the alliance with Britain remained a fundamental tenet of Portuguese foreign policy throughout the short reign of Manuel II and thereafter. Much of Sir Francis’s report of 1909 was devoted to an account of Dom Manuel’s visit to England in November of that year. The young king, he wrote, “made in every quarter an extraordinarily favourable impression, due not only to the personal charm of his manner but also to the abilities which he displayed.” During the tour he was invested with the Order of the Garter, and there were discussions of his possible marriage to a British princess - Princess Alexandra of Fife and Princess Patricia of Connaught were both considered. It was thought by the Portuguese government that “an alliance with a British princess would contribute more powerfully than anything else to the consolidation of the throne and the pacification of the country.”²³

Sir Francis also reported on the extraordinary “manifestations of sorrow and sympathy” evoked in Lisbon and elsewhere in Portugal by the death of Edward VII on 6 May 1910, manifestations which were “remarkable in themselves and quite without parallel in this country”. King Manuel called at the British Legation “to condole and express his personal feelings at the loss of a great sovereign and a great friend, the first occasion on which a king of Portugal had ever called at a foreign legation for such a purpose.” The young king also attended his funeral at Windsor and on the

²² Bourne and Watt, vol. 30, doc.110; Inclosure in doc. 109 [8763] (No. 10), p.132.

²³ Bourne and Watt, vol. 30, doc. 110, p. 125. See also Howse, *The Braganza Story*, p. 103.

same day his uncle, Dom Afonso, Queen Amélia and members of the government attended a memorial service in the British church in Lisbon. When the Cortes reassembled on 1 June, both Houses devoted the whole of their first session exclusively to the commemoration of King Edward's death, and there were votes of condolence "supported by the leaders or representatives of every political party or group, who all spoke of his late Majesty with profound admiration and respect, recalling his friendly feelings towards Portugal."²⁴

Following Dom Manuel's dismissal of João Franco, there were no fewer than six changes of government during his brief reign of two years and eight months. The sessions of the Chamber of Deputies became ever more chaotic. One session ended with the 72-year-old minister of finance fighting a duel with a deputy who had accused him of fraud. Two shots were fired, but both duellists missed, probably on purpose. At another, a deputy was accused of using insulting language towards a supporter of the then prime minister General Telles, leader of the Progressista Party, so that, when he rose to speak, most of the deputies left the Chamber to mark their disapproval of him. The remaining deputies were too few to form a quorum, so after more chaotic sessions, at which desks were smashed, General Telles resigned after a ministry of only 22 days.

On 28 June 1910, the Cortes were dissolved and an election was held at which 90 Conservative Regeneradores and only 14 Republicans, 10 of them in Lisbon, were returned. However, Sir Francis reported that, when the king opened the Cortes on 23 September 1910, the attendance was conspicuously sparse, "no members of the

²⁴ Villiers to Grey, Annual Report for 1910, p. 4. For photographs of the rooms in the Necessidades Palace used by King Edward VII and Queen Alexandra on their visits to Lisbon see Manuel H. Côrte-Real, *O Palácio das Necessidades* (Lisbon, 1983), pp. 112-15, 117 and 120.

opposition, peers or deputies, being present”, an attempt to cheer the king “met with only a faint response”, and his reception in the streets was “markedly cold”.²⁵

After this events moved rapidly to a climax. The murder of Dr Miguel Bombarda, a prominent Republican deputy for Lisbon and director of a Lisbon lunatic asylum, by an ex-army officer who had been under his care was inevitably interpreted as a political assassination. At the same time, the visit to Lisbon by the president-elect of Brazil - the monarchy in Brazil had been overthrown in 1889 - provided an occasion for a mass display of pro-Republican sentiment.

At 1 am on 4 October 1910 the Central Republican Committee decided to act and ordered three shots to be fired from the Tagus as a signal to the cruiser *Adamastor* and a gunboat lying in the river to hoist the Republican flag, arms were distributed to civilian sympathizers and hitherto loyal soldiers and sailors overpowered their officers and declared for the Republic. Dom Manuel had come to Lisbon from Cintra for the visit of the president-elect of Brazil and had spent the night of 3 October at the Necessidades Palace. On 4 October he was, in the words of Sir Francis, “absolutely deserted, except by members of the royal household. The politicians who had brought the monarchy to destruction crowned their career of selfish mediocrity by rapid disappearance at the hour of danger...not a single officer of the army or navy came to the palace – a force of artillery at first intended for the protection of the king, was diverted to another purpose, and promises of reinforcement for the guard were not fulfilled.” The palace was shelled from the river, and the commander of the guard maintained that he would not be able to defend it against the sailors from the neighbouring barracks, who were prepared to attack with a force of armed civilians. So the king decided to leave. He escaped over the wall at the end of the palace garden

²⁵ Villiers to Grey, Annual Report for 1910, p. 13.

and proceeded by car to Mafra, where he was joined by his mother and grandmother. The next day they all three embarked on the royal yacht *Amélia* at Ericeira and sailed to Gibraltar, which they reached on the night of 6 October. From Gibraltar, Dom Manuel and Queen Amélia sailed on the British royal yacht to exile in England, while Queen Maria Pia and Dom Afonso went to Italy. Dom Manuel and his mother stayed initially at the home of her brother, the duc d'Orléans, at Wood Norton, near Evesham, and in January 1911 they rented Abercorn House, Richmond.²⁶

In his last annual report, Sir Francis expressed the view that Dom Manuel II, for all his charm and his manifest desire to do the best for his country was considered, rightly or wrongly, to be “a man without individuality, dominated by the Queen Mother, living by preference almost exclusively with the members of his Court and household, whose loyalty was unshaken to the last, but who, intensely conceited like most Portuguese, were also narrow-minded to a degree which is almost inconceivable and...unable...to realise the approach of danger to the throne...So finally the conviction grew even in the army and the Court that he did not have the qualities of a leader that might have saved his throne, and this conviction was confirmed by the circumstances attending his departure from the country.”²⁷

As for the effect which the overthrow of the monarchy and the establishment of a republic had on Anglo-Portuguese relations, Sir Francis declared in his last annual report that they had “suffered no diminution during his time in Lisbon and the strongest assurances of the value attached to the British alliance were given by the various ministers who held office during the last year, by no means the least emphatic having been offered” by the president of the provisional government of the Republic, Teófilo Braga, and his minister for foreign affairs, Bernardino Machado. Sir Francis

²⁶ Villiers to Grey, Annual Report for 1910, p. 14. See also Howse, *The Braganza Story*, pp. 103-11.

²⁷ Villiers to Grey, Annual Report for 1910, p. 15.

reported that, when the British government, followed soon after by the French and Spanish governments, offered recognition to the provisional government, an immense crowd, which he reckoned numbered at least 30,000, gathered in the Terreiro do Paço, and marched first to the British Legation and then to the French and Spanish Legations, and that during the two hours that it took the crowd to pass by the doors of the British Legation a band played the British and Portuguese national anthems alternately.

Sir Francis then made a short speech through Mr Oakley, the Legation's translator, to express thanks for this demonstration of the goodwill of the Portuguese people towards Britain. He regretted that his knowledge of Portuguese [i.e. his lack of knowledge] did not permit him to address the assemblage directly, but words were not required as evidence of the cordial friendship entertained for Portugal in Great Britain.²⁸ This friendship Sir Francis's grandson can happily confirm is as cordial in 2006 as it evidently was in 1910.

²⁸ Bourne and Watt, vol..30, doc. 137 [42674], Villiers to Grey, Lisbon, 18 November 1910, pp. 173-4.