

## HUDSON, MALMESBURY AND CAVOUR: BRITISH DIPLOMACY AND THE ITALIAN QUESTION, FEBRUARY 1858 TO JUNE 1859

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**ABSTRACT.** *This article examines the attitude and policy of Lord Malmesbury in regard to the growing Italian crisis of 1858–9. Making use of previously unavailable archival material (in particular the private papers of Malmesbury himself) it seeks to present a much fuller picture of tory Italian policy than has, until now, been possible. Although it is recognized that Malmesbury's Italian policy was based upon a sincere desire for peace, this does not explain why Malmesbury chose to hold Cavour personally responsible for the Italian crisis and directed his peace efforts not at Paris but at Turin and Vienna. This had much to do with Malmesbury's close personal links with the French emperor, Louis Napoleon. In addition, this article challenges the traditional view of Sir James Hudson as 'more Italian than the Italians'. Hudson was not prepared to support Cavour in a course of action which promised only to deprive Piedmont of her constitutional freedoms and deliver Italy into the hands of France.*

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### I

There have been a number of British foreign policy studies in relation to the Italian crisis of 1858–9. These have focused on the policy of Lord Malmesbury, the foreign secretary in Derby's minority tory government of February 1858 to June 1859.<sup>1</sup> All mention Sir James Hudson, the British minister to the kingdom of Sardinia (Piedmont) from 1852 until 1861, and the first British minister to the kingdom of Italy from 1861 to 1863.<sup>2</sup> Most assessments of Hudson's role in events in Italy echo the public sentiments of Malmesbury. In *Memoirs of an ex-minister*, Malmesbury included the following diary extract dated 11 April 1859:

<sup>1</sup> See: H. Hearder, 'The foreign policy of Lord Malmesbury, 1858–59' (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of London, 1956); D. Beales, *England and Italy, 1859–1860* (London, 1961); G. Giarrizzo, 'La politica inglese verso l'Italia e il Regno di Sardegna nel 1857–1861', *Critica Storica*, 1 (1962), 399–420.

<sup>2</sup> For specific works on Hudson see: N. Carter, 'Sir James Hudson, British diplomacy and the Italian question, February 1858 to June 1861' (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Wales College of Cardiff, 1994); F. Curato, ed., *Le relazioni diplomatiche tra la Gran Bretagna ed il regno di Sardegna (1852–1856): Il carteggio diplomatico di Sir James Hudson* (Turin, 1956); F. Curato, 'Alcune lettere inedite di James Hudson a patrioti italiani', *Archivio Storico Italiano* (1968); A. Clarke, 'Cavour e Hudson (1855–1860)', *Miscellanea Cavouriana* (1964); J. Fleming, 'Art dealing and the Risorgimento', *Burlington Magazine* (1973).

‘The fact is that he [Hudson] is more Italian than the Italians themselves, and he lives almost entirely with the ultras of that cause.’<sup>3</sup>

*The Times* obituary of Hudson in 1885, which described Hudson as ‘the right hand man and counsellor of Cavour to whom he was simply invaluable’, has also found a resonance with historians. Compare these statements with Hearder’s comments in ‘The foreign policy of Lord Malmesbury’: ‘Malmesbury’s agent in Turin was a source of weakness to British policy... Sir James Hudson was growing more sympathetic towards the policy of Cavour than he was towards that of his own government.’<sup>4</sup> And with Beales’s verdict in *England and Italy, 1859–1860*: ‘Just as virtually no-one accepted all Mazzini’s teaching, so there was scarcely a strict English Cavourian... Perhaps the nearest case was that of Sir James Hudson... whom Cavour described as more “Italian” than himself.’<sup>5</sup>

Hudson was an Italophile. Even before his arrival in Turin, Hudson’s *Italianità* – his Italian sentiment – had impressed Italian exiles in London. Antonio Panizzi of the British Museum wrote in February 1852: ‘Mi trovai a pranzo con lui [Hudson]... ebbimo una lunga confabulazione insieme e mi piacque molto. S’esprime *italianissimamente* con molto calore e senza esitazione.’<sup>6</sup>

This article, however, argues that Hudson was not ‘more Italian than the Italians’, or a ‘strict English Cavourian’. On the contrary, Hudson was always mindful of British interests and was willing to criticize and to break with Cavour if Piedmontese policy appeared to endanger those interests, or if that policy did not seem to be in the general interest of Italy as a whole. The deterioration of relations between Hudson and Malmesbury in 1858–9, which resulted in Malmesbury’s description of Hudson as ‘more Italian than the Italians’, was as much a consequence of Malmesbury’s own personal prejudices as it was due to any failings on Hudson’s part as British representative at Turin. Malmesbury and Hudson had similar goals in Italy, but they were divided on the issue of whom to blame for, and how to react to, the growing Italian crisis.

## II

Malmesbury, a passionate collector of renaissance art and a frequent visitor to Italy, regarded himself as ‘Italianissimo’, recounting for the benefit of Queen Victoria ‘those romantic feelings which the former history and the present

<sup>3</sup> Lord Malmesbury, *Memoirs of an ex-minister* (London, 1885), p. 475.

<sup>4</sup> Hearder, ‘The foreign policy of Lord Malmesbury’, pp. 311–12.

<sup>5</sup> Beales, *England and Italy*, p. 33.

<sup>6</sup> Panizzi to Massari, 3 Feb. 1852, Museo Centrale del Risorgimento di Roma, busta 383, n. 16(3). In 1851, Hudson had revealed similar Italian sentiments in a letter to Lord Palmerston, then foreign secretary: ‘the three most impressionable years of my life (from 16 to 19) were spent under the eye of a good and clever man at or near Florence... I was made to study Italy: I was taught and shown how the soul and body of poor Italy was bound in fetters – and it was pointed out to me that it would be a crowning work to deliver her from her bondage.’ Hudson to Palmerston, 10 Oct. 1851, Southampton University Library, papers of Lord Palmerston, GC/HU/39.

degradation of Italy may naturally inspire even at a more advanced time of life'.<sup>7</sup> Malmesbury, though, had no concept of Italian nationalism and he had no desire to see the Austrian presence removed from Lombardy–Venetia. To Malmesbury, Italy was 'a mosaic of nationalities'. In his opinion, it was '*sound policy* as well as *sound honesty* to leave Austria in quiet possession of her Italian dominions... Drive Austria out of Italy and leave Italy to govern herself, Italy will become a 2nd Mexico... the prejudices and even dislike of the various provinces to one another is ingrained by centuries.'<sup>8</sup>

In addition, although Malmesbury claimed to have a 'strong predilection' for Piedmont, his personal view of the Piedmontese (expressed in 1856) was that he had never seen 'a people so cocky and puffed up or who more wanted to be taken down a peg'.<sup>9</sup> In 1858–9, the bellicose and unprincipled behaviour of Cavour and Emanuele d'Azeglio (the Piedmontese representative to London) confirmed Malmesbury in this belief.

When Malmesbury entered office in February 1858, Britain and Piedmont were involved in a legal dispute with the kingdom of Naples over the *Cagliari*, a Piedmontese-registered mailing ship that had been seized and then confiscated by the Neapolitan authorities in 1857. The ship's crew – which included two Britons – had been imprisoned. On becoming foreign secretary, Malmesbury had offered Piedmont the 'moral support' and 'good offices' of the British government to help to secure the release of the crew. The subsequent behaviour of the Piedmontese government in the affair, however, did not impress him. Malmesbury was soon complaining that d'Azeglio had been trying to drive the government 'into an alliance offensive and defensive with him... he makes his friend Lord S[haftesbury] whip up orators in both Houses to get up a Sardinian cry'. The Piedmontese intention was clear: 'I know nothing would satisfy her but our sending... help [to] her to eat macaroni at Naples.' This Malmesbury refused to contemplate: 'Nothing shall induce me to bombard Naples if I can help it – for I would as soon think of striking a woman in the face.' Cavour, declared Malmesbury, 'ought to be shot if he goes to war'.<sup>10</sup>

By the end of 1858, Malmesbury was aware that Cavour was seeking a more serious conflagration in Italy than war with Naples. It had become increasingly apparent that Cavour hoped to expel Austria forcibly from Lombardy–Venetia, and wanted the military assistance of imperial France for this purpose. Malmesbury had little time for Cavour's antics, which threatened to undermine the territorial settlement of 1815 to which Malmesbury was committed. Malmesbury was also constantly offended by the impolitic behaviour of

<sup>7</sup> Malmesbury to Queen Victoria, 7 Mar. 1858, Hampshire Record Office (H.R.O.), Malmesbury papers (MP), 9M73/52.

<sup>8</sup> Malmesbury to Hudson, 1 July 1858, H.R.O., MP, 9M73/54; Malmesbury to Cowley, 7 Dec. 1858, H.R.O., MP, 9M73/53.

<sup>9</sup> Clarendon to Palmerston, 25 Oct. 1856, in D. Mack Smith, *Victor Emanuel, Cavour, and the Risorgimento* (London, 1971), p. 91, n. 1.

<sup>10</sup> Malmesbury to Hudson, 15 Apr. 1858, 6 May 1858, and 30 Apr. 1858, H.R.O., MP, 9M73/54; Malmesbury to Cowley, 16 Apr. 1858, H.R.O., MP, 9M73/53.

d'Azeglio<sup>11</sup> and by Cavour's constant accusations that Britain had 'abandoned' Piedmont.<sup>12</sup>

In January 1859 Malmesbury lost all patience with Piedmont. When the Piedmontese monarch, Victor Emmanuel, announced (10 January) that Piedmont could not remain insensible to the 'cry of suffering' (*grido di dolore*) which reached her from so many parts of Italy, Malmesbury raged: 'I can muster no patience towards that little conceited mischievous State now called "Sardinia"... That Europe should be deluged with blood for the personal ambition of an Italian attorney and a tambour major like Cavour and his master is intolerable.'<sup>13</sup>

In Malmesbury's opinion, Cavour's intentions were 'to find compensation for his army and retain office for himself by Austrian territory'. 'You will tell him my views,' Malmesbury ordered Hudson, 'as to the best means of improving Central Italy but as he does not care about *that* it is only to put us in the right that you will do so.'<sup>14</sup>

In contrast to Malmesbury's criticism of Piedmontese policy was his indulgence of the French emperor, Louis Napoleon. Malmesbury held Piedmont and Cavour responsible for the disintegration of the European peace. Louis Napoleon was exonerated. One week before Cavour met with Louis Napoleon at Plombières (July 1858) – at the invitation of Louis Napoleon who had already made known his desire for war – Malmesbury wrote: 'I have no fear of Louis Napoleon going to war with anyone at present.'<sup>15</sup> In December 1858, by which time Louis Napoleon had agreed to war the following summer, he had sent his cousin, Prince Jerome Napoleon, to Russia to begin negotiations for Russian neutrality, and had even talked to Palmerston and Clarendon of the possibility of war in Lombardy against Austria, Malmesbury assured Queen Victoria that no war 'is at present contemplated by the Emperor Napoleon (who has just contradicted the report officially)... no warlike preparations are making in France, such as must precede... an Italian war'.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>11</sup> D'Azeglio had a habit of leaking information (including details of his meetings with Malmesbury) to the whig leadership and to the press. His whig sympathies were such that, when the Derby government fell in June 1859, d'Azeglio 'cheered like mad' and was seen by Malmesbury 'drumming on his hat and hollowing like a bull... When will that young man learn the decencies of life and the duties of his position.' Malmesbury to Hudson, 12 June 1859, H.R.O., MP, 9M73/56.

<sup>12</sup> For example: 'Nous n'avons plus rien à attendre, je le crains bien, des hommes d'Etat de l'Angleterre: ils sont tous, plus ou moins, pour l'alliance Autrichienne.' Cavour to E. d'Azeglio, 23 May 1858, *Cavour e l'Inghilterra: carteggio con V. E. d'Azeglio* (Bologna, 1961), II(i), 222. Malmesbury vigorously denied this: 'Mr Cavour is like a pretty woman who thinks, because you are always telling her so, that you do not admire her. He is ever requiring compliments in and out of parliament and from our minister at Turin, therefore pray let him have them – Our "predilection for Austria" amounts to a wish to be on friendly terms with her as with all countries... altho' personally we admire a free state more than a despotic one.' Malmesbury to West (chargé d'affaires, Turin), 18 Nov. 1858, H.R.O., MP, 9M73/54.

<sup>13</sup> Malmesbury to Cowley, 13 Jan. 1859, H.R.O., MP, 9M73/53.

<sup>14</sup> Malmesbury to Hudson, 13 Jan. 1859, H.R.O., MP, 9M73/54.

<sup>15</sup> Malmesbury to Hudson, 14 July 1858, H.R.O., MP, 9M73/54.

<sup>16</sup> Malmesbury to Queen Victoria, 10 Dec. 1858, H.R.O., MP, 9M73/52.

When, on New Year's Day 1859, Louis Napoleon publicly 'seemed to go out of his way to indicate polite hostility to Austria',<sup>17</sup> Malmesbury's faith in the emperor's peaceful intent appeared misplaced. Malmesbury, however, while displeased, was understanding:

I believe it is his [Louis Napoleon's] fear of assassination, which haunts him perpetually, and has robbed him of all his former courage and coolness. It is driving him on to war, thinking that by supporting the cause of Italian nationality he will disarm those men who, in his earlier days, were his confederates in Carbonarism.<sup>18</sup>

Malmesbury's leniency toward Louis Napoleon was due in part to the recent history of good Anglo-French relations – the two countries had been allies in the Crimea. It owed far more though, to the singular personal bond that existed between Malmesbury and Louis Napoleon, and to the influential opinion of Lord Cowley,<sup>19</sup> the British ambassador at Paris.

Malmesbury had first met Louis Napoleon in 1829, in Italy. Their friendship was such that Malmesbury visited Louis Napoleon in prison in 1845. In 1852 Louis Napoleon – then the French president – sent a personal letter of congratulation to Malmesbury on his becoming foreign secretary in the first Derby administration. In October of that year Malmesbury defended Louis Napoleon to Derby, amid widespread concern at the possibility of a French attack on Britain.

Within a month of his return to the foreign office in 1858, Malmesbury was again defending Louis Napoleon, this time from allegations that the now French emperor had once taken the oath of the Assassins Society while in Italy in the 1820s. To a concerned Queen Victoria, Malmesbury wrote:

Lord Malmesbury can almost assure Your Majesty that such is not the case... the Prince Louis Napoleon to the knowledge of Lord Malmesbury certainly engaged himself in the conspiracies of the time – but it was with the higher class of Carbonari... Lord Malmesbury believes the report, therefore, to be a fable.<sup>20</sup>

The personal good will which Malmesbury extended to Louis Napoleon helped Anglo-French relations to survive some heavy diplomatic squalls during the course of 1858, particularly in the wake of the Orsini assassination attempt on the life of Louis Napoleon (Orsini had been resident in England prior to the attack). Hudson, after visiting Malmesbury in October 1858 at Malmesbury's Scottish estate of Achnacarry, spoke of the best understanding between London and Paris and dismissed as a chimera the suggestion of British antipathy toward France.<sup>21</sup> So it proved. Up until April 1859 Malmesbury clung to the French alliance. It was not at Paris, but at Vienna (through

<sup>17</sup> H. Harder, *Cavour* (London, 1994), p. 140.

<sup>18</sup> Malmesbury, diary entry, 12 Jan. 1859, *Memoirs*, pp. 458–9.

<sup>19</sup> For more on Henry Wellesley, the first earl of Cowley, see: F. A. Wellesley, ed., *The Paris embassy during the Second Empire* (London, 1928). Cowley served as ambassador to Paris from 1852 to 1867.

<sup>20</sup> Malmesbury to Queen Victoria, 7 Mar. 1858, H.R.O., MP, 9M73/52.  
<sup>21</sup> Cavour to Villamarina, 27 Nov. 1858, *Il carteggio Cavour–Nigra 1858–1861* (Bologna, 1961), 1, 211.

negotiation) and at Turin (through verbal intimidation) that Malmesbury sought to resolve the Italian question and avert European conflict. Though Louis Napoleon's own behaviour disappointed Malmesbury and French military preparations forced him to accept that France was, after all, preparing for war, Malmesbury remained convinced that Louis Napoleon 'would give anything to undo the work... into which he has been betrayed by Cavour'. At the end of March, as France stalled progress on arrangements for a European congress on the Italian question, Malmesbury's regret was evident: 'We appear to be moving in a vicious circle and the friend we want to save is like a millstone around our necks.'<sup>22</sup>

Only at the beginning of April did Malmesbury suspect Louis Napoleon of duplicity. Cowley reported from Paris that Louis Napoleon, having earlier given his word that he would ask Piedmont to disarm, had changed his mind and was now denying having given any such pledge. Since the issue of Piedmontese disarmament was one of the major obstacles to be overcome if a congress was ever to sit, and, since Malmesbury had by now placed all his hopes for peace on such a meeting, the emperor's latest prevarication was the last straw. 'You and I must stand clear before the public of the rascality going on at Paris,' Malmesbury told Cowley, 'I want to put on record that Austria is justified and that we have been deceived by France.' Malmesbury now considered that Louis Napoleon had, 'from the first meant an Italian war'.<sup>23</sup>

Malmesbury's comments of early April have been taken to indicate a general anti-French stance in his approach to the Italian question. Instead they were no more than the bitter recriminations of a man who felt betrayed by a friend, and a last-ditch attempt to encourage Austria to make concessions. 'State that... France has now put herself quite in the wrong by breaking her promise to Cowley to make Sardinia disarm but that Austria may take advantage of this and claim every merit', Malmesbury instructed Loftus (ambassador at Vienna) on 5 April.<sup>24</sup>

Malmesbury, of course, was not solely responsible for determining British foreign policy. Derby as prime minister and Disraeli as leader in the Commons would have been closely consulted. Neither figure, however, seems to have disputed the basic tenets of Malmesbury's foreign policy relating to Italy. This owed much to the influence of Cowley.

Cowley, like Malmesbury, could not believe Louis Napoleon would ever commit 'such an act of insanity' as to make war with Austria over Italy. After Louis Napoleon's comments on New Year's Day 1859, Cowley, though admitting the French emperor had been 'in secret communication with Cavour *at times*', was quick to accept French assurances that Louis Napoleon had not encouraged Cavour to incite hostilities in Italy against Austria. Even in late April, after the first French troops had entered Piedmont in response to

<sup>22</sup> Malmesbury to Bloomfield, 16 Mar. 1858, H.R.O., MP, 9M73/55; Malmesbury to Cowley, 28 Mar. 1859, H.R.O., MP, 9M73/53.

<sup>23</sup> Malmesbury to Cowley, 4 Apr. 1859, and 9 Apr. 1859, H.R.O., MP, 9M73/53.

<sup>24</sup> Malmesbury to Loftus, 5 Apr. 1859, H.R.O., MP, 9M73/57.

the Austrian ultimatum, Cowley rejected the existence of a Franco-Piedmontese military treaty.<sup>25</sup>

Cowley was not so forgiving of Cavour and Piedmont. The ‘Piedmontese agitator’ had ‘ruined himself in the opinion of every honest man’, by his conduct. Cowley neither trusted Cavour’s word, nor did he believe ‘that Sardinia had as much the real good of Italy at heart, as she certainly has her own aggrandisement’. In mid-April, as Europe verged on the brink of war, Cowley told Hübner, the Austrian ambassador to Paris, ‘You ought to summon the Piedmontese to disarm, enter, destroy them, and then declare you are ready to negotiate.’<sup>26</sup>

Bolstered by Cowley’s reports from Paris, Malmesbury had no difficulty in securing cabinet backing for his Italian policy. Throughout the Italian crisis, Cowley was Malmesbury’s ‘chief adviser and informant and his most trusted envoy’. ‘I never knew a man of business so naturally gifted for that profession’, Malmesbury later recalled of Cowley. ‘Straightforward himself, he easily discovered guile in others who sought to deceive him.’<sup>27</sup>

It was Cowley who was given the task of implementing the first British peace initiative of the Italian crisis. In late February 1859 Cowley went to Vienna to secure Austrian concessions over Italy. He had virtually free-rein to conduct the mission as he saw fit. Although the mission proved to be a failure, the importance of Cowley to British foreign policy was clear. When Malmesbury published the Blue Book on Italian affairs, he described Cowley as its co-author.<sup>28</sup>

Together, Malmesbury and Cowley shaped the British approach to the Italian question, based upon the assumption that responsibility for the crisis lay with Cavour and Piedmont. Malmesbury spelt out the fundamentals of British policy at the end of December 1858. ‘Our policy is very easy and very decided’, Malmesbury wrote, ‘It is to do nothing which can assist any party in violating the treaties of 1815.’<sup>29</sup> For Malmesbury, the European peace, which had lasted nearly forty years from Waterloo until the Crimean War, had been founded upon the territorial arrangements of the Vienna settlement. To maintain the European peace meant to maintain the treaties of 1815. To this end, Austria was to be left in possession of Lombardy–Venetia, while the other main sources of discontent in Italy had to be remedied, so to starve Cavour and Piedmont of any pretext for war. The British solution was a four point plan, put forward by

<sup>25</sup> Cowley to Malmesbury, 9 Jan. 1859, H.R.O., MP, 9M73/8; Hearder, ‘The foreign policy of Lord Malmesbury’, p. 274.

<sup>26</sup> Cowley to Malmesbury, 18 Jan. 1859, H.R.O., MP, 9M73/8; Cowley to Hudson, 13 Feb. 1859, Public Record Office (P.R.O.), Cowley papers (CP), FO 519/225; Cowley to Palmerston, 25 Jan. 1859, P.R.O., CP, FO 519/194; A. Blumberg, *A carefully planned accident: the Italian war of 1859* (London and Toronto, 1990), p. 97.

<sup>27</sup> Beales, *England and Italy*, p. 46; Malmesbury, *Memoirs*, p. 418, n. 2. Cowley was not so fulsome in his praise of Malmesbury’s performance as foreign secretary: ‘He has been most anxious to do well. I do not say he is up to such a crisis – few men are...’ Cowley to Clarendon, 4 June 1859, P.R.O., CP, FO 519/194.

<sup>28</sup> Blumberg, *A carefully planned accident*, pp. 78–83; Beales, *England and Italy*, p. 47.

<sup>29</sup> Malmesbury to Bloomfield, 28 Dec. 1858, H.R.O., MP, 9M73/54.

Malmesbury in mid-March 1859 as the basis for the proposed congress, but which he had touted unofficially since the beginning of February. The four points covered what Malmesbury regarded as the major issues at stake in Italy: the evacuation of French and Austrian troops from the papal states; the reform of the papal states; the security of Piedmont; the substitution of Austria's 1847 treaties with the minor Italian states with a federal league. Of the four, Malmesbury regarded papal reform as the most pressing.

Papal reform, Malmesbury envisaged, would involve both France and Austria, as the two leading catholic powers in Europe, and would most likely include the evacuation of French and Austrian troops from the papal states. Both parties would enjoy the support of Britain in this process and both sides would have the opportunity to demonstrate their Italian credentials without recourse to war and without political or territorial loss. With the French desire to 'do something' for Italy satisfied, Austria still in possession of Lombardy–Venetia and the principal source of discontent in Italy removed, Cavour and Piedmont would be 'without a leg left to stand upon'.

Malmesbury's interest in papal reform pre-dated his four point plan by several months. In October 1858, Malmesbury was already writing that 'If anything is to be done to ameliorate the position of Italy... it must begin with the papal states and be carried out by Catholic countries with our Protestant consent.'<sup>30</sup> Malmesbury later expanded on his proposals for papal reform, even suggesting that 'England... could give... her material assistance to establish another distribution of the pope's territory, or a forced improvement of the pope's government.' This, he considered, was the only way to improve the condition of Italy without recourse to war.<sup>31</sup>

Between January and April 1859, Malmesbury dropped all reference to the use of English force in, and the territorial rearrangement of, the papal states. The change in emphasis, however, did not reflect a change in Malmesbury's personal views but an awareness that such radical proposals for territorial changes in central Italy (which would mean a breach of the 1815 treaties<sup>32</sup>) were unrealistic. No peace package that included such a scheme would be acceptable to Austria – or France. In fact, Malmesbury was to find it virtually impossible to get Austria, France and Piedmont to agree on even the least contentious matters.

### III

Hudson, like Malmesbury, wished to avert war in Italy, and regarded the promotion of peaceful reform, with particular emphasis on papal reform, as the best solution to the crisis. This directly contradicts Malmesbury's assertion that

<sup>30</sup> Malmesbury to West, 21 Oct. 1858, H.R.O., MP, 9M73/73/54.

<sup>31</sup> Malmesbury to Cowley, 7 Dec. 1858, H.R.O., MP, 9M73/53; Malmesbury to Queen Victoria, 10 Dec. 1858, H.R.O., MP, 9M73/52.

<sup>32</sup> Malmesbury was aware of the contradiction implicit in his proposal: 'We are ready... to consider a reconstruction of the Central territory,' he affirmed to Cowley, 'but we will not consent beyond this to any alterations in the territorial arrangements of 1815 which have ensured the longest peace on record.' Malmesbury to Cowley, 7 Jan. 1859, H.R.O., MP, 9M73/53.



Hudson was unwilling 'to aid, however indirectly, in preventing a war which he thought would bring about his favourite object – namely, the unification of Italy'.<sup>33</sup> Yet Hudson's preoccupation with peace and reform was expressed in his despatches to Malmesbury and in his frequent conversations with Giuseppe Massari, the editor of the *Gazzetta Piemontese* and confidant of Cavour.<sup>34</sup>

Hudson sincerely believed in the need for an amelioration of papal government, not only to benefit central Italy but also to ensure the Italian peace. 'I know that the Bolognese gentry, who are rich, clever gentlemanly people do not want war or Revolution', Hudson once told Malmesbury. 'They would coalesce with the Austrians if they thought England would or could force Austria to grant reforms.' In addition, Hudson argued,

a very small modicum of Reform in the papal states would give Louis Napoleon an opportunity of escaping from a position the danger of which to his Dynasty he must see plainly enough. It would checkmate Cavour's war policy and allow the sore to heal between Austria and Russia and the Italians would be too occupied with the Legations that they would be quiet for the next ten years.<sup>35</sup>

Hudson's views on the papal question were valued by Malmesbury, who regarded Hudson as his 'Italian encyclopaedia'. Indeed, Malmesbury's particular interest in papal reform dated from Hudson's visit to Achnacarry in the autumn of 1858.<sup>36</sup> Hudson, however, did not limit himself to papal matters. Early in 1858 he put the case for more general reform:

The remedy for the ills of Italy is as simple as it is safe...step into the vacant space between France and Austria on this Italian (rather say European) question... [urge] upon those gros chiens France and Austria, who really constitute the *Italian difficulty*, the absolute necessity for their conceding something.

Insert the narrow end of the wedge – Time... will drive it home in the right direction: Fail to do this and the Italian question will hang upon Europe like a wet blanket...

Austria must now be convinced of the wisdom of the policy of the Archduke Maximilian. He has not heard of 'conspiracy' since he has been at Milan...the Principle of Monarchy has gained and that of Republicanism has lost in the Lombardo-Veneto.

Well I maintain that is a satisfactory result.<sup>37</sup>

Where problems arose between Hudson and Malmesbury was that, although they agreed on the need for reform in Italy, they held wildly differing opinions on the issue of responsibility for the Italian crisis. Malmesbury blamed Cavour and Piedmont, regarding Louis Napoleon as the 'victim' of Cavour's intrigues. Hudson argued to the contrary: Louis Napoleon was the *agent provocateur* in Italy and the Italian crisis was a Bonapartist plot. Cavour and Piedmont were the puppets of imperial France.

<sup>33</sup> Malmesbury, diary entry, 11 Apr. 1859, *Memoirs*, p. 475.

<sup>34</sup> See: Massari's diary entries in E. Morelli, ed., *Diario dalle cento voci 1858–1860* (Bologna, 1959), pp. 118, 121, 125–6, 130–1, 136, 142, 164, 168, 183.

<sup>35</sup> Hudson to Malmesbury, 2 Feb. 1859, and 19 Feb. 1859, H.R.O., MP, 9M73/14.

<sup>36</sup> See: Carter, 'Sir James Hudson, British diplomacy and the Italian question', pp. 38–40.

<sup>37</sup> Hudson to Malmesbury, 30 Mar. 1858, H.R.O., MP, 9M73/13.

It was Louis Napoleon's conduct in the wake of the Orsini assassination attempt that led Hudson to suspect the emperor of having embarked upon an aggressive and interventionist Italian policy. Hudson was concerned that letters written by Orsini from prison to Louis Napoleon, exhorting the emperor to champion the cause of Italian independence, had been published in France and Piedmont on Louis Napoleon's instruction. Hudson believed that Louis Napoleon sought to use Orsini's letters to stir up nationalist feeling in Italy against Austria, which France could then exploit for its own political gain. 'The more I consider the fact of Louis Napoleon having himself sent Orsini's letter for publication here the more I am led to consider this arch-conspirator means mischief', Hudson confided to Malmesbury in April 1858. Shortly after, as Louis Napoleon prevaricated on supporting British efforts at Naples in the *Cagliari* affair, Hudson's suspicions deepened: 'I confess to feeling very nervous when I see France making a waiting race of an Italian question... Louis Napoleon means mischief to Austria, and no stick would do better in his hand to beat her with than an Italian one.'

Of equal concern to Hudson was the effect that Louis Napoleon's behaviour had upon Cavour and Piedmontese policy. As early as 30 March 1858, Hudson was reporting to Malmesbury that Louis Napoleon, via an intermediary, had intimated to Cavour that he would soon 'do something' for Italy. This phrase, Hudson conceded, had an 'unlucky fascination' about it – Cavour was 'blinded' by its influence. As the months passed Hudson saw no improvement in Cavour's condition. Cavour, so Hudson stated in July 1858, was 'completely led away by Louis Napoleon', fed on 'flattering phrases'.

To all this delusion I have opposed that... a policy which separates Sardinia from England is suicidal and that all LN looks to is his Dynasty, his interests and his policy, which last is certainly not favourable to liberal constitutions or institutions.

But all this is of no avail. I have urged that the true policy of Piémont is Peace – Reduction in the army and reduced taxation – internal improvements and a strong liberal monarchical government.<sup>38</sup>

Hudson's conviction that Louis Napoleon was the prime mover in Italian events and Cavour merely his accomplice, differed so much from Malmesbury's reading of the situation that it was perhaps inevitable that Malmesbury should come to regard Hudson as a disciple of Cavour and Piedmont. Nor did Hudson help his cause by claiming that Cavour's 'unlucky fascination' with Louis Napoleon stemmed (at least in part) from Britain's failure to support adequately Piedmont against the advances of French, Austrian, papal and republican power. 'Where can he look for strength to steer a middle course if you abandon him?' Hudson asked Malmesbury, 'clearly nowhere save France.'<sup>39</sup>

As Malmesbury's suspicions of Cavour deepened, so his trust in Hudson was eroded. In August 1858, Massari learnt that Malmesbury considered Hudson

<sup>38</sup> Hudson to Malmesbury, 15 Apr. 1858, and 1 May 1858, H.R.O., MP, 9M73/13; Hudson to Malmesbury, 9 July 1858, P.R.O., CP, FO 519/194.

<sup>39</sup> Hudson to Malmesbury, 15 Apr. 1858, H.R.O., MP, 9M73/13.

‘come difensore à outrance della politica piemontese’, a condition Malmesbury blamed on Hudson’s long tenure at Turin.<sup>40</sup> When in the autumn of 1858 Hudson returned to Britain on leave, Malmesbury offered him alternative employment at the Hague, with the incentive of an increased pension entitlement.<sup>41</sup> Hudson rejected the offer and returned to Turin. Malmesbury, though, did not disguise his reservations: ‘I wish I liked the Sardinian Minister here as well as, I hear, Cavour likes Hudson.’<sup>42</sup>

Why did Malmesbury allow Hudson to stay at Turin? Malmesbury later claimed that, as a general rule, no diplomatic changes were possible without the approbation of the ministers themselves.<sup>43</sup> Yet earlier in the year Malmesbury had forced an intransigent Lord Normanby out of the Florence mission. More likely, Malmesbury’s willingness to keep Turin open to Hudson was a consequence of his professional respect for Hudson’s diplomatic skills and deep knowledge of Italian politics. In addition, and perhaps as important, was Malmesbury’s personal friendship with Hudson, founded upon a shared love of hunting and of Italian renaissance art. In October 1858, Malmesbury enjoyed Hudson’s company at Achnacarry so much that he at once invited Hudson back for the following year.<sup>44</sup> For the foreign secretary personal ties – as his dealings with Louis Napoleon showed – were often as important as political considerations.

Malmesbury, however, misunderstood Hudson’s approach to the Italian question, and the nature of Hudson’s support for Cavour. Although Hudson was a long-standing admirer of Cavour (as was Cavour of Hudson<sup>45</sup>) he was not Cavour’s stooge or dupe. Hudson’s intention was to avoid an Italian war while at the same time re-establishing British influence in the Italian peninsula at the expense of France. For this, Britain had to take an active role in support of Italian reform and give positive support to Cavour so to lessen his reliance upon France. Without British involvement in Italy and without Cavour in power in Piedmont, Hudson feared the ‘blundering zeal of France’ and the ‘stubbornness’ of Austria would deliver Italy back into ‘that old continental groove of Blacks and Reds, Ultramontanes and Republicans, Sanfedisti and Carbonari’. Thus, while Malmesbury tried to distance British policy from Cavour, Hudson was keen to forge closer British ties with Piedmont so to

<sup>40</sup> Massari to Cavour, 17 Aug. 1858, *Cavour e l’Inghilterra*, II(i), 229.

<sup>41</sup> See: E. d’Azeglio to Cavour, 4 Nov. 1858, *Cavour e l’Inghilterra*, II(i), 237. It is likely that the salary for the Hague would also have been higher than at Turin. When Malmesbury offered Napier the Hague mission in November 1858, the salary stated was £4,000. Hudson, a minister at Turin, was on a salary of £3,500.

<sup>42</sup> Malmesbury to West, 21 Oct. 1858, H.R.O., MP, 9M73/54.

<sup>43</sup> Malmesbury to Cowley, 29 Mar. 1859, P.R.O., CP, FO 519/196.

<sup>44</sup> Malmesbury appreciated Hudson’s humour, he respected him as ‘a first-rate rifle shot and sportman’ and, apparently, he owed his life to Hudson, *Memoirs*, pp. 383, 450–1, 506–7; Malmesbury to Hudson, 8 Apr. 1858, H.R.O., MP, 9M73/54. Hudson also acted as an art dealer for Malmesbury while minister at Turin, purchasing a number of works for Malmesbury’s private collection.

<sup>45</sup> See, for example: Cavour to E. d’Azeglio, 15 May 1855, *Cavour e l’Inghilterra*, I, 103.

provide Cavour with a pacific alternative to the war-orientated conspiracies of Louis Napoleon. If this was not done, Hudson warned Malmesbury, ‘you must expect to see Piémont throw herself into the arms of France in order to avoid what to her is worse than France, namely Austria and the pope’.<sup>46</sup>

Malmesbury – and Cavour – also failed to understand that Hudson’s support for Piedmont was conditional, reliant upon Piedmont following a path of rational and peaceful progress for the wider Italian good. Consequently, Hudson was to become more and more isolated from Malmesbury and Cavour after his return to Piedmont in November 1858, as the Italian question reached its critical phase.

#### IV

From November 1858 Malmesbury was increasingly ready to believe that Hudson was ignoring orders that clashed with (what Malmesbury perceived to be) his pro-Piedmontese sympathies. On at least three occasions between January and April 1859, Malmesbury was to accuse Hudson of failing to represent adequately, or indeed of actively undermining, British policy toward Piedmont, although the responsibility for these failures rested as much with Malmesbury’s own confusing policy statements as with Hudson.<sup>47</sup>

Malmesbury was especially concerned at Hudson’s occasional lapses into silence that characterized the months leading up to the outbreak of war in April 1859. To Malmesbury this suggested Hudson was concealing information from him and he wrote frequently to Hudson complaining of a lack of news. Hudson was in an unenviable position. Although his reports did become less frequent as the months passed, this was not because he was keeping information back from Malmesbury but rather because he was aware that what he *did* write was more often than not ‘ignored in London as hopelessly prejudiced’.<sup>48</sup> Although the style of Hudson’s despatches (rather than their contents) could be held partly responsible for this, the opinion of Cowley was significant. Cowley nourished Malmesbury’s misgivings. All Hudson’s correspondence with Malmesbury

<sup>46</sup> Hudson to Malmesbury, 9 Mar. 1858, and 30 Mar. 1858, H.R.O., MP, 9M73/13.

<sup>47</sup> In late February 1859, Malmesbury complained to Queen Victoria that Hudson, without permission, had informed Cavour of Cowley’s mission to Vienna and had even asked Cavour’s opinion of it. Malmesbury, though, had earlier instructed Hudson to ‘Inform your Count that Lord Cowley is going to Vienna on a confidential mission, to ascertain if we can place the relations of France and Austria on a better footing’. Malmesbury to Hudson, 25 Feb. 1859, G. Giarrizzo, ed., *Le relazioni diplomatiche fra la Gran Bretagna e il regno di Sardegna* (Rome, 1962), vi, 367. Even when it was the case that Hudson was guilty of an error of judgement, his misdemeanour was only of minor practical significance. For example, in mid-January Hudson showed to Cavour, and discussed with Massari, a confidential despatch from Malmesbury to Loftus at Vienna. The despatch stated that Britain would remain neutral in the event of war. Although, strictly speaking, Hudson should not have revealed the contents of the despatch, it was hardly telling the Piedmontese government anything that it did not already know. Cf. D. Mack Smith, ed., *The making of Italy, 1796–1870* (London, 1968), p. 259, and *Victor Emanuel, Cavour, and the Risorgimento*, p. 155. Ironically, on the one occasion when Hudson did wilfully disregard foreign office instructions – during the *Cagliari* affair in 1858 – Malmesbury did not take him to task. See: Carter, ‘Sir James Hudson, British diplomacy and the Italian question’, ch. 1, *passim*.

<sup>48</sup> Beales, *England and Italy*, p. 47.

passed through Cowley's hands and, to the ambassador's mind, Hudson's persistent accusations against Louis Napoleon clearly indicated a Piedmontese bias.<sup>49</sup>

The relative paucity of Hudson's reports could also be excused on the grounds that there was very little to report. Cavour, as Hudson had long been aware, could be 'close, cautious, suspicious... and very difficult to "corner" as the yankees express it'.<sup>50</sup> Since Hudson's return to Turin in November 1858, Cavour had been particularly reticent, fearing that Malmesbury sought to use Hudson to reveal the inner secrets of Piedmontese policy.<sup>51</sup> Moreover, much of what Cavour (and Victor Emmanuel) did say came from Paris. Louis Napoleon was responsible for the inclusion of the phrase 'grido di dolore' in Victor Emmanuel's speech of 10 January.<sup>52</sup> In February, Cavour sought French advice on how best to answer the British demand that the Piedmontese government account for its opposition to Austrian rule in Italy. With some justification, Hudson told Malmesbury on 28 February: 'For my part I have, as you know, long ceased to consider Sardinia as playing first fiddle in this Italian Question, she registers L. Napoleon's will – nothing more.'<sup>53</sup>

Since the beginning of 1859 Hudson's relations with Cavour had steadily soured, as Hudson urged the Piedmontese government to reconsider its war policy and to free itself from the influence of Paris. To begin with, it had been assumed at Turin that Hudson was implementing British government orders reluctantly.<sup>54</sup> Cavour claimed that Hudson had actually declared himself to be absolutely in favour of war against Austria.<sup>55</sup> As the weeks passed, however, Cavour grew irritated with Hudson's failure to support Piedmontese policy. Massari noted in mid-March: '[Cavour] Mi dice... 'quegl'Inglese come si conducono male assai: anche Sir James!'<sup>56</sup>

While the deterioration in relations between Hudson and Cavour was the consequence of their general disagreement over Piedmont's commitment to war and to the French alliance, their differences were given added emphasis as the two clashed on a number of specific issues.

The first centred upon the marriage of Prince Jerome Napoleon to Victor Emmanuel's daughter, Princess Clotilde, on 30 January. The Prince had never

<sup>49</sup> Cowley to Malmesbury, 9 Jan. 1859, H.R.O., MP, 9M73/8.

<sup>50</sup> Hudson to Clarendon, 9 Feb. 1856, F. Curato, ed., *Le relazioni diplomatiche fra la Gran Bretagna e il regno di Sardegna* (Rome, 1969), v, 228.

<sup>51</sup> 'Je suis... persuadé qu'on s'est décidé à le renvoyer à Turin, malgré les griefs qu'on avait contre lui, parcequ'on a pensé que c'était l'homme le plus en état de pénétrer nos desseins et de lire au fond de nos pensées. Aussi, je compte être avec lui plus amical que jamais; mais aussi réservé que j'avais à traiter avec Lord Palmerston lui-même.' Cavour to E. d'Azeglio, 21 Nov. 1858, *Cavour e l'Inghilterra*, II(i), 238.

<sup>52</sup> Blumberg, *A carefully planned accident*, pp. 57–8.

<sup>53</sup> Hudson to Malmesbury, 28 Feb. 1859, H.R.O., MP, 9M73/14. See also: Blumberg, *A carefully planned accident*, pp. 80–1; C. Pischedda and G. Talamo, eds., *Tutti gli scritti di Camillo Cavour* (Turin, 1978), pp. 2008–9, 2020–1.

<sup>54</sup> Massari, diary entry, 20 Jan. 1859, *Diario*, p. 121.

<sup>55</sup> Cavour to Nigra, 9 Jan. 1859, *Carteggio Cavour–Nigra*, I, 299.

<sup>56</sup> Massari, diary entry, 20 Mar. 1859, *Diario*, p. 175. See also: Massari, diary entry, 11 Mar. 1859, *Diario*, pp. 166–8; Massari to Panizzi, 22 Mar. 1859, L. Fagan, ed., *Lettere ad Antonio Panizzi di uomini illustri e di amici italiani 1823–1870* (Florence, 1880), pp. 297–8.

met Clotilde until 17 January. When the marriage was announced, Hudson realized that Cavour had, in exchange for the hand of Clotilde, secured a military treaty with Louis Napoleon. According to Hudson, 'This and the order to the Admiralty at Genoa to pack the merchant shipping in close tiers and keep the fairway in and out of the harbour clear, looks more like mischief than anything I have seen yet.'<sup>57</sup>

Hudson went out of his way to show his disapprobation for the marriage; he did not attend any of the gala theatre performances held in Prince Napoleon's honour, or take part in the royal wedding procession. Both Cavour and Victor Emmanuel criticized Hudson's conduct. Hudson responded with a violent outburst to Massari against the marriage and, in a heated discussion with the king, he let Victor Emmanuel 'clearly see the danger that he is exposing himself to by listening to the voice of the Parisian charmer'. Hudson also had 'some reason to complain of Cavour. He kept this marriage a close secret. The French minister knew nothing of it, nor of the visit of Prince Napoleon... This is all of a piece with confidential communications which go between the Emperor and Cavour.'<sup>58</sup>

Through February, Hudson continued to register his disapproval. 'I have not the slightest faith in Louis Napoleon's or Cavour's professions of peace,' Hudson told Malmesbury, 'they desire war and will have it if at all possible.'<sup>59</sup> Hudson's suspicions were confirmed when, on Malmesbury's orders, he asked Cavour if Piedmont intended to attack Austria. Cavour refused to answer, merely saying that the Italian question was becoming so complex that it was 'impossible to say what may happen'.<sup>60</sup> On 6 March, Cavour further dismayed Hudson when he announced the mobilization of Piedmontese reserve troops. Hudson was incensed that the mobilization decree had been signed by Cavour only two days after Cavour had agreed (at Hudson's request) to defer any decision on the matter for one week. Massari noted: 'Egli ne rimane poco contento, e mi dice con visibile dispetto, che ora tutti gli sforzi del suo governo saranno diretti *to upset Cavour*.'<sup>61</sup>

Malmesbury too expressed annoyance with the Piedmontese decision. The incident also added to his doubts regarding Hudson. Malmesbury was dismayed to learn that Hudson had used Massari as an intermediary with Cavour during the affair. Hudson had often usefully employed Massari in this way but, to Malmesbury, the use of a non-British, non-official, confidant of Cavour suggested an unhealthy intimacy. Cavour too fuelled Malmesbury's suspicions of Hudson, when he claimed Hudson had never seriously asked him to deny Piedmont's hostile intent against Austria. Malmesbury, who had been pressing this question since mid-February, was outraged. Although, soon after, Malmesbury suggested Hudson could be one of the British representatives to

<sup>57</sup> Hudson to Malmesbury, 23 Jan. 1859, H.R.O., MP, 9M73/14.

<sup>58</sup> Hudson to Malmesbury, 27 Jan. 1859, P.R.O., CP, FO 519/194.

<sup>59</sup> Hudson to Malmesbury, 19 Feb. 1859, H.R.O., MP, 9M73/14.

<sup>60</sup> Hudson to Malmesbury, 28 Feb. 1859, H.R.O., MP, 9M73/14.

<sup>61</sup> P. Pietro Pirri, ed., *Diario segreto (1859-1878): Federigo Sclopis di Salerano* (Turin, 1959), p. 89; Massari, diary entry, 8 Mar. 1859, *Diario*, p. 164.

the proposed European congress on Italy, he nevertheless expressed concern that Hudson might not 'run fair'.<sup>62</sup>

By mid-March, Hudson's relations with Malmesbury and Cavour had reached a low ebb. Hudson's position was now precarious. Two reports that reached Malmesbury in the last fortnight of March 1859 appeared to render that position untenable.

The first report came from Odo Russell, the British representative at Rome. Russell recounted (26 March) a recent conversation with Colloredo, the Austrian ambassador to the papal states.

Colloredo... spoke with much bitterness to me of the policy of Sir James Hudson – he was devoted to Cavour, an enemy of Austria and had done the Austrian cause endless harm without interruption for ten years. He wondered H. Maj. Gov. had not removed him from Turin and placed some one there less prejudiced in favour of Cavour.<sup>63</sup>

More serious was a despatch from Cowley (28 March) relating a conversation he had held the previous day with Cavour, at that time in Paris, and desperate to revive the faltering French alliance.

He says that Hudson is a greater revolutionist than any Italian, and that he has egged on the Sardinian government to action from first to last, and that his house is the regular rendezvous of all the disaffected. I dare say that there is exaggeration in all of this, tho' I have no doubt that our friend might have acted with more discretion.<sup>64</sup>

Malmesbury's response was swift. 'Altho' you do not tell me to keep to myself what Cavour says of Hudson,' Malmesbury told Cowley, 'I think the latter should know it both for the good of the service and to show him what a nice fellow he has cohabited with... We ought to have another man at Turin.'<sup>65</sup> Malmesbury conditionally offered the Turin mission to the minister at Berlin, Lord Bloomfield.<sup>66</sup> One week later, Malmesbury recalled Hudson from Turin on enforced leave of absence.

Hudson, unaware of Cavour's comments, was mystified and upset when he received Malmesbury's orders to return to London. Cavour affected an air of innocent concern.<sup>67</sup> According to Malmesbury, Hudson arrived in London 'in a state of great alarm, fearing he might not be allowed to return to Turin as minister, and took leave of Cavour, saying it was doubtful whether he would see him again'.<sup>68</sup>

<sup>62</sup> Cavour to E. d'Azeglio, 13 Mar. 1859, *Cavour e l'Inghilterra*, II(i), 273; Malmesbury to Cowley, 19 Mar. 1859, H.R.O., MP, 9M73/53.

<sup>63</sup> Odo Russell to Malmesbury, 26 Mar. 1859, P.R.O., CP, FO 519/196.

<sup>64</sup> Cowley to Malmesbury, 28 Mar. 1859, P.R.O., CP, FO 519/225.

<sup>65</sup> Malmesbury to Cowley, 29 Mar. 1859, P.R.O., CP, FO 519/196.

<sup>66</sup> Malmesbury to Bloomfield, 31 Mar. 1859, H.R.O., MP, 9M73/55. Bloomfield, however, alarmed by the critical state of Italy, was unwilling to take up the proffered post. (I am grateful to Professor Derek Beales for this information.)

<sup>67</sup> Massari, diary entry, 7 Apr. 1859, *Diario*, p. 193.

<sup>68</sup> Malmesbury, political diary, 10 Apr. 1859, H.R.O., MP, 9M73/79; Malmesbury, diary entry, 11 Apr. 1859, *Memoirs*, p. 475. There is a discrepancy between the two sources as to what date Hudson actually arrived in London.

Hudson had reason to fear for his future. In Paris on his way to London, Hudson had seen Cowley and learnt of the violent language which Cavour had used against him. Moreover, although Malmesbury told Hudson that he could expect to be employed at the proposed congress on Italy, Malmesbury did not say where Hudson's long-term future lay. Certainly, Malmesbury did not intend that Hudson should return to Turin.

But was Malmesbury justified in recalling Hudson? Cavour's allegations against Hudson were at the root of this decision. Malmesbury's diary entry of 11 April when he talked of Hudson as 'more Italian than the Italian themselves', living 'almost entirely with the ultras of that cause', echoed Cavour's claim that Hudson was 'a greater revolutionist than any Italian'. But what did Malmesbury mean? Who did he assume were the 'ultras' of the Italian cause? And why was Malmesbury so eager to believe Cavour, when, on many other issues, he dismissed Cavour's claims as lies, or at best, half-truths? Malmesbury had no reason to accept Cavour's allegations against Hudson as fact. Cavour, as Cowley noted, had been in a state of acute anxiety at Paris. In this condition, as Malmesbury should have known, Cavour was prone to all manner of exaggeration and self-deception.<sup>69</sup>

Nor did Malmesbury pause to consider why Cavour should have chosen to attack Hudson. Contrary to what Malmesbury believed, Cavour's statement did not prove Hudson to be 'more Italian than the Italians'. Instead, it revealed Cavour's dissatisfaction with Hudson's anti-war and anti-French attitude. Massari's diary entry for 28 March reflects this: 'Hudson ha colto assai male a proposito l'occasione di dirmi, che abbiamo avuto torto di mettere innanzi l'idea dello Stato forte, e che per salvarci dobbiamo tornare alle riforme.'<sup>70</sup>

After Hudson had left Paris on his return to London, Cowley made the significant observation: 'I have told him (Hudson) what his *friend* Cavour says about him, but there does not seem to be much love lost between them now.'<sup>71</sup> By the time of his recall, Hudson had no doubt that a congress offered the only acceptable – peaceful – solution to the Italian question. Writing to Massari from London, 'not as a diplomatist but as an old friend', Hudson stressed the necessity of Piedmont accepting a negotiated settlement to the crisis. A congress, Hudson foresaw, would bring substantial benefits to Italy: Austria would be confined to the left bank of the Po and forced to renounce its 1847 treaty arrangements with the minor Italian states; central Italy would be

<sup>69</sup> See: D. Mack Smith, 'Cavour and Clarendon: English documents on the Italian question at the congress of Paris', *Atti del XXXV congresso di storia del Risorgimento Italiano* (1956), pp. 239, 242. In March, 1859, Cavour's anxiety stemmed from the knowledge that, if France could not be induced to fight with Piedmont against Austria, then there could be no war. Not only would this render Cavour's position untenable (and wreak havoc on Piedmont's financial and political fabric), but his ultimate ambition – the expulsion of Austria from Italy – would not be realized.

<sup>70</sup> Massari, diary entry, 28 Mar. 1859, *Diario*, p. 183. Hudson's views were shared by other English Italophiles, for example, Lord Shaftesbury. See: Shaftesbury to E. d'Azeglio, 15 Jan. 1859, *Cavour e l'Inghilterra*, II (i), 248–9.

<sup>71</sup> Cowley to Malmesbury, 10 Apr. 1859, P.R.O., CP, FO 519/225.



reformed; a confederation of Italian states would be created. ‘You will have broken the neck of Austrian influence in Italy’, wrote Hudson, ‘and will be enabled to pursue such a line of policy as will suit the interests of Italians.’<sup>72</sup>

## V

As it turned out, no congress was held. In mid-April Austria summoned Piedmont to disarm. Cavour had the *casus belli* which he required to invoke the French alliance. Austria’s actions completely scuppered British peace efforts. Having failed to maintain the European peace, Malmesbury now sought to contain the conflict within Italy and to encourage the other (as yet) non-belligerent European powers (particularly Prussia) to follow the British example of ‘strict neutrality’. In a further effort to localize hostilities, Malmesbury looked to re-establish diplomatic relations with the kingdom of Naples (severed in 1856). The reactionary Bourbon monarch, Ferdinand II, was seriously ill and was expected to die. Malmesbury hoped that Ferdinand’s death would make possible a rapprochement with Naples. By re-establishing diplomatic relations with Ferdinand’s successor, Britain would be in a position to secure Neapolitan neutrality in the Italian war and would be better able to inculcate the new regime in the ways of constitutional government.

It was to Hudson that Malmesbury looked to take responsibility for re-establishing diplomatic relations with Naples. On 22 April, Malmesbury instructed Hudson to return to Turin but to be ready to go to Naples if Ferdinand died. Once there, Hudson was to congratulate the dead king’s son on his accession and to stress the need for constitutional government.

The choice of Hudson is not as surprising as it appears. The failure of British peace efforts meant Malmesbury, reluctantly, had to send Hudson, the most knowledgeable of the government’s Italian diplomats, back to Italy. Without Hudson, Britain was poorly represented in the peninsula. By sending Hudson to Naples it would make positive use of Hudson’s knowledge of Italian affairs while ensuring against the possibility of Hudson remaining indefinitely at Turin. Malmesbury, however, was soon even to doubt Hudson’s suitability for this task.

On his return to Turin, Hudson busied himself talking to Neapolitan exiles and to professional colleagues who had first hand experience of Neapolitan affairs. On 12 May 1859, Hudson sent Malmesbury a lengthy – and, in parts, confusing – memorandum, based upon these conversations, concerning the condition of Italy in general and of Naples in particular. The purpose of the memorandum, Hudson stated, was to reconcile the interests of Naples with those of Italy on the one hand and with England on the other, securing at the same time the concurrence of Piedmont and France.

In his memorandum, Hudson argued that Britain should be prepared to see the end of Austrian rule in Italy and be ready to act as a guarantor of Italian

<sup>72</sup> Hudson to Massari, 13 Apr. 1859, Clarke, ‘Cavour e Hudson’, pp. 237–8. See also: E. d’Azeglio to Cavour, 12 Apr. 1859, *Cavour e l’Inghilterra*, II(i), 302.

liberties against possible French intrigues. What was required was positive British involvement in the peninsula, in support of an independent, constitutional Italy. Not only was this desired by the Italians themselves but it made sense in terms of British interests. Through the adoption of such a policy, Louis Napoleon would be constrained to act within the confines of his Italian manifesto. Britain, meanwhile, would re-acquire the respect and moral influence in Italy which she had lost over the past months.

Hudson claimed it was at Naples that the shortest and surest means to achieving this end was to be found. If Ferdinand abdicated, or (better still) died, the new king would have the opportunity to change the form of government at the moment of his accession; to establish a constitutional monarchy, capable of winning the support of all moderate liberals in the kingdom of two Sicilies. Britain – as Malmesbury envisaged – should therefore channel its energies at Naples into encouraging the new regime along such lines. Hudson, though, went further. Once constitutional rule was established, Naples could join with Piedmont in an Italian alliance. The new king would ‘thus reconcile his dynasty with Italy and Europe’. Such an alliance, underpinned by the moral support of Britain, would pre-empt any undue extension of French influence within the Italian peninsula. It would also ensure that the war remained localized. With Louis Napoleon forced to stick to his Italian manifesto, Germany would be appeased, while Russia would be glad to see Austrian power in Italy diminished with the safety of the reigning dynasty of Naples guaranteed.

To delay in making British influence felt at Naples, Hudson stated, could only be to Britain’s and to Italy’s disadvantage. France would soon emerge victorious from the war with Austria. If by that time the Neapolitan monarchy had failed to demonstrate a commitment to either the constitutional or to the national cause, the resulting excitement could provoke revolution in Naples. If such a revolution was successful, the Bourbon monarchy would collapse, and it would be impossible to predict what might follow. If the revolution failed, the monarchy would be faced with two options, equally futile. The first would be to do after the revolution what it might have done before – introduce constitutional reform and adhere to the national cause. The regime’s tardy recognition of the need for such changes, however, would do little to raise public confidence in it and the dynasty’s collapse would simply be postponed. The second choice would be for the monarchy to persist in its reactionary ways. Again though, this would only be a stay of execution: it would surely be lost to another revolution at a later period. If no revolution took place and Naples remained neutral, the Bourbon monarchy, Hudson forecast, would be seen as pro-Austrian. Austria’s defeat would leave Naples at the mercy of France. Faced with a choice between extinction and French domination, the Neapolitan monarchy might easily accept the latter of the two evils.<sup>73</sup>

<sup>73</sup> Hudson to Malmesbury, ‘Memorandum on the actual condition of Italy in general and of Naples in particular’, 12 May 1859, G. Giarrizzo, ed., *Le relazioni diplomatiche*, vii, 81–9. In a

Hudson reiterated his arguments in a shorter and private despatch to Malmesbury of 15 May. To Hudson's mind, the task of localizing the war and confining it to Italy was a relatively easy one to achieve. All Malmesbury had to do was nail the French emperor to the terms of his manifesto: 'The Italians will hold him to his manifesto if you will lend them a hand.' Hudson continued:

They add 'If we can prevent revolution, keep down the Republicans and Mazzinians, maintain Constitutional Monarchy, England ought to be with us... If we control Italy we shall be strong enough to force him [Louis Napoleon] to respect us, and if we are not, the weight which England can always throw into the scale on the side of Constitutional Monarchy at Naples and in Tuscany will be quite sufficient to check... any ambitious notions which Louis Napoleon may mediate respecting Central Italy or Murat.'

Hudson suggested that Britain should act with France at Naples.<sup>74</sup> Hudson's memorandum and his private despatch of 15 May were ill-received by both Cowley and Malmesbury. To Cowley, the memorandum underlined Hudson's 'infatuation' with Cavour. As to Hudson's private despatch, 'The humbug of Cavour being the representative of Constitutional Government in Italy when he had just trampled all Constitutional Government under foot, would be ridiculous if it were not so serious.'<sup>75</sup>

Malmesbury shared Cowley's views. Writing of the memorandum, Malmesbury fumed:

Hudson is a man who imbibes and fattens on any atmosphere he breathes. If he lived with Ferdinand of Naples he would echo his policy just as he does Cavour's. He is swept away by the stream (whatever it may be) that he swims in. He must be a charming lover!<sup>76</sup>

Malmesbury delivered a stinging rebuke to Hudson:

Withdraw from the poetry which pervades the atmosphere in which you live... you are to read and speak the prose that pervades the air of London. In plain English then, nobody cares *one damn* for the Italians and no one would spend a drop of blood or a guinea to help them, their friend Louis Napoleon, or their enemies the Austrians...<sup>77</sup>

Malmesbury's temper was not improved when, shortly after having written to Hudson concerning the Naples memorandum, he received Hudson's despatch of 15 May. Although it was all very well for Hudson to talk of 'the weight which England can throw in', Malmesbury made clear that, in his opinion, 'once Napoleon has turned out Austria *his* "moral" influence will be double what *hers* ever was'.

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covering private despatch of the same day, Hudson stated: 'Cavour has rendered Revolutions impossible in Sicily (for the present at least) by putting La Farina, who represents the Sicilian emigrants and is their organ, in the Home Office here. But these are palliatives – the cure must come from you... There is no time to be lost, however...' Hudson to Malmesbury, 12 May 1859, H.R.O., MP, 9M73/14.

<sup>74</sup> Hudson to Malmesbury, 15 May 1859, H.R.O., MP, 9M73/14.

<sup>75</sup> Cowley to Malmesbury, 18 May 1859, P.R.O., CP, FO 519/225.

<sup>76</sup> Malmesbury to Cowley, 17 May 1859, P.R.O., CP, FO 519/196.

<sup>77</sup> Malmesbury to Hudson, 19 May 1859, H.R.O., MP, 9M73/55.

The men of 1815 did not give Lombardy and Venice to Austria pour ses beaux yeux, but to be a *barrier against France* in Italy, feeling that if Italy did belong to Austria it would not affect England... when Italy belongs to France so does the Mediterranean!... we are the Queen's Servants! When we are only her subjects we may have our private hobbies in Italy as elsewhere.

While therefore I am Sec. of State, I confess to you the utter repulsion I have to act with Cavour. I look upon him as the father of all the ills present and to come...<sup>78</sup>

Hudson's memorandum particularly merited criticism. It was poorly argued and badly structured. It was overtly hostile to Austria.<sup>79</sup> It ignored the dishonourable role played by Piedmont in bringing about the current conflict. Both Malmesbury and Cowley pointed out that Hudson's talk of Piedmont as the champion of constitutional liberty in Italy had a hollow ring given that the Statuto had recently been suspended at Turin.<sup>80</sup>

What Malmesbury most objected to, though, was the idea that Piedmont, having colluded with France and having provoked the war against Austria, should now enjoy British help in restricting French influence in Italy. In Malmesbury's opinion it was preposterous to expect Britain to encourage constitutional government at Naples merely to allow that government to join with Piedmont in a military alliance against Austria and in a political alliance against France. 'Cavour must reap as he has sown', was Malmesbury's judgement. Malmesbury made clear to Hudson what would be expected of him if he did go to Naples: 'you will...urge the cutting down of the *suspended* Constitution... but you will oppose *most positively* the marching of the army to the north. The policy of Naples is to be independent both of Austria and France.'<sup>81</sup>

Although Cavour's name was barely mentioned by Hudson, either in his memorandum or subsequent despatch, Malmesbury had no doubt that Hudson was merely voicing the opinions of Cavour.

I cannot say I see any tangible element to which we can attach ourselves in what you call the 'Italians'. Geographically speaking I know what they are but when I come to a *policy*, an *army* and a *navy* I don't see them... You must not believe either that he (Cavour) is a God in Piedmont. I have seen many private letters (chiefly I confess from Piedmontese ladies) who curse his name. All this does not apply to Naples where there is a *policy*, an *army* and *navy*...<sup>82</sup>

Yet, despite the violence of Malmesbury's denunciations, Hudson's proposals had fundamentally the same objectives as those of Malmesbury. Hudson

<sup>78</sup> Malmesbury to Hudson, 20 May 1859, H.R.O., MP, 9M73/55.

<sup>79</sup> Hudson once referred to Austria as 'the enemy' in a telegraphic despatch to Malmesbury. Hudson to Malmesbury, 7 May 1859, H.R.O., MP, 9M73/58.

<sup>80</sup> Other claims made in the memorandum – had Malmesbury known – could also have been disputed. Although Hudson asserted that Italians would welcome British constitutional efforts at Naples, this was not entirely true. Cavour and Massari both feared that Malmesbury sought through British involvement at Naples to create a southern counter-balance to Piedmontese influence in the north. Massari, diary entries, 26 Apr., 23 May, 25 May 1859, *Diario*, pp. 223, 250–2.

<sup>81</sup> Malmesbury to Hudson, 19 May 1859, H.R.O., MP, 9M73/55.

<sup>82</sup> Malmesbury to Hudson, 19 May 1859, H.R.O., MP, 9M73/55.

believed that Britain could take advantage of the opportunity afforded by the death of Ferdinand II to secure four key gains in Italy. First, Britain could save the Neapolitan dynasty – from itself and from France. Second, Britain could guarantee Italian liberties and independence from both France and Austria. As Hudson pointed out, Malmesbury's earlier idea of an Italian federal league (expressed in his four point plan of February/March) had this intention. Third, Britain could re-occupy the moral ground in Italy from which Louis Napoleon's success had driven her. Fourth, Britain could ensure that the war remained localized. Ever since Hudson had first suspected that Louis Napoleon meant 'mischief' against Austria in Italy, he had stressed the need for Britain to offer the Italians, and particularly the Piedmontese, a peaceful alternative to the French alliance. Hudson had consistently warned that, once Louis Napoleon was allowed into Italy, then Italy would become French. A big French fleet in the Mediterranean, Hudson had observed – which was what French control of Italy would mean – would not be to Britain's advantage. To combat this danger, Hudson had expressed the hope in the summer of 1858 that Malmesbury too, would have a big fleet, so 'à la guerre comme à la guerre'.<sup>83</sup> For Malmesbury to warn Hudson that 'when Italy belongs to France so does the Mediterranean!', revealed just how little Malmesbury understood Hudson.

Hudson's arguments contained in his memorandum and despatch had, in fact, much to recommend them. Certainly they compared favourably to Malmesbury's own chosen course of action. Malmesbury's policy of strict neutrality was unimaginative and was borne out of entirely negative considerations. Malmesbury hated Cavour and was unable to see the Italian conflict as anything other than an exercise in Piedmontese self-aggrandisement; he felt betrayed by Louis Napoleon; and he realized that he was constrained by Austria's thick-headedness from supporting Vienna. Malmesbury explained the position to Loftus:

the whole of *society*, that is all the upper classes are *Austrian*, but below that the nation is *Italian* on this question, and Parliament is made up of the latter who understand nothing of *Foreign Policy* and its great ramifications and only comprehend what is familiar to their minds, namely the stupid [illegible] of Austrian Rule in Italy and at home. Had not the hated French interfered I do not doubt that an English Government would have been obliged *openly to defend Sardinia*... There is great disappointment expressed here at the Austrian army not having done more and having constantly the worst of every encounter.<sup>84</sup>

While Malmesbury wanted essentially the same results as Hudson in Italy and shared the same fears (by May 1859) as Hudson for the peninsula, he did not possess a policy capable of securing such objectives. 'Strict neutrality' might encourage other European powers to remain neutral and so help to localize the war, but how was 'strict neutrality' going to solve the problem of French dominance in Italy? What good would the panacea of constitutional

<sup>83</sup> Hudson to Malmesbury, 19 July 1858, P.R.O., CP, FO 519/194.

<sup>84</sup> Malmesbury to Loftus, 1 June 1859, H.R.O., MP, 9M73/56.

monarchy at Naples be if that kingdom found itself further isolated in Italy and at the mercy of Louis Napoleon?

Malmesbury was prepared to see the Italian conflagration burn itself out, and only then would he assess the damage. Hudson, in contrast, at least offered a positive response to the outbreak of war and showed himself willing to adapt to a changing situation. Before hostilities had commenced, Hudson had been ready to toe the British government's line and pressure Piedmont to accept a peaceful settlement to the Italian question through congress. Once the conflict had begun, however, Hudson recognized that to continue to stress the sanctity of the 1815 treaties (which were already a dead letter in a number of areas<sup>85</sup>) was a pointless exercise. Change was inevitable in the political structure of Italy. What character the new Italy assumed after the war could be influenced by Britain – but only if Britain made clear what it would and would not allow to take place during the war and encouraged the Italian states to stand clear of Louis Napoleon. Britain would then be in a position to guide the new Italy in a constitutional and pro-British sense after the war.

Malmesbury's bitter response to Hudson's memorandum and despatch ended any possibility of resuscitating the moribund working relationship which existed between the foreign secretary and the minister at Turin. Determined that Hudson should not be given the opportunity to mislead the Neapolitan authorities, Malmesbury ordered Odo Russell to leave Rome for Naples immediately,<sup>86</sup> in order to arrive there before Hudson and, as Malmesbury explained to Victoria, 'to take care that the policy of Y.M.'s Government is understood'. Malmesbury advised Victoria that Hudson should not be considered for the permanent ministerial position at Naples, which, it was envisaged, would shortly be created; Hudson's mission 'should only be special'.<sup>87</sup> Within the week, however, Malmesbury had decided that Hudson should not be used even in this capacity.

Malmesbury's decision to cancel Hudson's special mission to Naples seems to have been prompted by a private despatch from Cowley to Malmesbury (26 May), and one from Hudson to Cowley (25 May), the content of which was undoubtedly relayed to Malmesbury by Cowley. The ambassador's advice, as usual, was that Hudson should not be relied upon: 'If the young king is wise he will set his constitutional standard against that of Cavour, but I fear that Hudson will play the latter's game and try and draw Naples into the wake of Sardinia, unless you give him positive orders to the contrary.'<sup>88</sup>

For once, Cowley's fears appeared justified. Hudson's despatch of 25 May read:

We ought... to *join* France and Piedmont... to ensure the localisation of the war and to get it over as soon as possible.

If not, the war by lasting will become general, the Greeks, the Slavs, the Hungarians

<sup>85</sup> Hudson to Malmesbury, 6 June 1859, H.R.O., MP, 9M73/14.

<sup>86</sup> Malmesbury to Odo Russell, 20 May and 23 May 1859, H.R.O., MP, 9M73/58.

<sup>87</sup> Malmesbury to Queen Victoria, 23 May 1859, H.R.O., MP, 9M73/52.

<sup>88</sup> Cowley to Malmesbury, 26 May 1859, P.R.O., CP, FO 519/194.

will join the dance... whereas by finishing the Italian Question quickly we shall... the sooner commence the operation of that federal Union which has no notion of accepting a French for an Austrian Protectorate.

Lord Malmesbury says this is all poetry...<sup>89</sup>

The despatch proposing a course of action, to which Malmesbury had already made clear his absolute opposition, was a deliberate challenge to Malmesbury's authority. Malmesbury at once cancelled Hudson's mission to Naples and renewed his efforts to remove Hudson from Turin. Malmesbury, however, remained reluctant to dismiss Hudson from the diplomatic service altogether. Malmesbury once more sought to relocate Hudson to a 'safe' mission away from Italy, which would satisfy Hudson's honour and meet his financial needs. This time the bait was Lisbon. On 31 May, Malmesbury wrote to Hudson:

Lisbon will be vacant immediately. It is a first class mission and the Queen approves of your promotion... I should advise you to take it not only on this account but to get out of the boiling pot you are in now. It is £4000 a year and in a cheap country. Howard [minister incumbent at Lisbon] goes to Hanover... Gordon to Stockholm, Magenis to Naples, Paget to Turin... Do not mention the names of the changes.<sup>90</sup>

Lisbon was clearly Malmesbury's final offer.

A bullish and, at times, sarcastic despatch from Hudson to Malmesbury dated 1 June, though unrelated to the question of his transfer, indicated that Malmesbury could expect a refusal.

It is not likely that I should contest anything you tell me and therefore I accept as fact that what the women tell you is true viz that Cavour is not the 'God upon Earth'...

I, however, make a clean breast of it – I do not consult or listen either to young women or old ones. I get my information on this Country from men who have large interests invested in it... I talk to every class from the Priest to the Peasant. What do they say? they all agree in one story – they say anything is better than this perpetual seesaw between France and Austria... Give us but one or the other, but not both at the same time. Make Italy Italian or Austrian...

If you accept this as fact and adopt it as a basis of Policy, the road is clear – but believe me, my dear Lord, you will find the policy of reconciliation – of *mezzi termini* – if not impossible at all events precarious.<sup>91</sup>

When Hudson did reply to Malmesbury's offer of Lisbon, the answer was, predictably, negative. As with the despatch of 1 June, it was laced with irony. 'I am greatly moved by the constant solicitude of Her Majesty for the interests of myself', Hudson began, 'therefore am I deeply grateful for the gracious intention of Promoting me in the line... But I would beg to point out... that to send me to Lisbon is not promotion.'<sup>92</sup> Rather than accept a transfer to another

<sup>89</sup> Hudson to Cowley, 25 May 1859, P.R.O., CP, FO 519/194.

<sup>90</sup> Malmesbury to Hudson, 31 May 1859, H.R.O., MP, 9M73/55. Malmesbury omitted to state that few, if any, of these diplomatic appointments had been confirmed. Magenis, for example, was only told on 3 June that he could expect a transfer, and even then he was not told the likely destination.

<sup>91</sup> Hudson to Malmesbury, 1 June 1859, H.R.O., MP, 9M73/14.

<sup>92</sup> Hudson to Malmesbury, 4 June 1859, H.R.O., MP, 9M73/14. Queen Victoria's 'constant solicitude' for Hudson's interests amounted to a wish to have him 'removed from Turin without

mission, Hudson offered to retire – on the condition that he would receive a first-class pension. If Malmesbury agreed to this, Hudson would place at the foreign secretary's disposal 'those highly improvable and never sufficiently to be praised missions of Turin and Lisbon for which you will doubtless have many bidders'.

In fact, it was Malmesbury rather than Hudson who would take no further part in the Italian question. On 10 June, the government was defeated in the Commons; Derby tendered his resignation; Malmesbury's official relations with Hudson came to an end. 'I conclude Hudson is dancing about stark naked with joy at the development', Malmesbury wrote. Certainly, according to Massari, Hudson received the news of the tory defeat 'con manifestazioni di gioia non dissimolata', saying, 'Ora ... there is no danger of a general war.'<sup>93</sup>

Despite the dismal state of their professional relations, Malmesbury and Hudson nevertheless remained on good personal terms. Hudson again spent October hunting with Malmesbury in Scotland. Hudson also continued to purchase partridge, quail and moufflon for the Malmesbury estate. The turbulent nature of Hudson's relations with Malmesbury was best explained by Massari, who likened Hudson's relations with Malmesbury to the story of the butcher and Charles Fox. The latter was asking the butcher for his vote. 'I like your person, but damn your politics', the butcher said, to which Fox replied, 'I like your frankness but damn your manners.' In Massari's version, Hudson was the butcher, Malmesbury was Fox.<sup>94</sup>

## VI

Malmesbury seriously compromised the effectiveness of British policy at Turin by his failure to act decisively regarding Hudson. Since Malmesbury had no confidence in Hudson there was little purpose in retaining his services at Turin. By keeping Hudson there and then ignoring his reports, Malmesbury rendered the Turin mission worthless.

Malmesbury's failure to remove Hudson from Piedmont symbolized the failure of his Italian policy. As in his dealings with Hudson, so on the wider diplomatic stage, Malmesbury undoubtedly allowed personal feelings to cloud his political judgement. His failure to pressure France into reversing its war policy stemmed from his friendship with Louis Napoleon. This precluded any rational or critical examination of the emperor's statements. As long as Malmesbury believed Louis Napoleon could be trusted, it was inevitable that his peace initiatives would fail. When Malmesbury realized his folly, it was too late – Austria was committed to war.

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delay ... the stuff he sends ... is worthy of the nonsense of the "Daily News"'. Queen Victoria to Malmesbury, 7 June 1859, H.R.O., MP, 9M73/448. The Queen's hostility towards Hudson stemmed from her pro-Austrian sympathies.

<sup>93</sup> Malmesbury to Cowley, 14 June 1859, P.R.O., CP, FO 519/196; Massari, diary entry, 11 June 1859, *Diario*, pp. 268–9. <sup>94</sup> Massari, diary entry, 4 June 1859, *Diario*, pp. 262–3.



In his handling of Italian affairs, Malmesbury also demonstrated a marked inability to translate statements of intent into fact. This was partly due to the weakness of the minority government in which he served. It was also a reflection of Malmesbury's failure to develop a diplomatic strategy that could combat the ever-deepening Italian crisis. Malmesbury wanted Italian reforms but not at the expense of the 1815 treaties, which satisfied neither Austrian interests nor those of the Italian national movement. The lack of imagination that Malmesbury displayed in his approach to the Italian question meant that, once war had broken out, he was left holding only the fig leaf of neutrality.

Hudson must share part of the blame for the breakdown in relations with Malmesbury. The often strident nature of Hudson's despatches weakened his arguments and confirmed Malmesbury's belief that Hudson was a mouthpiece for Cavour. Nevertheless, Hudson offered a coherent, alternative, strategy to that pursued by Malmesbury, based upon the (reasonable) assumption that, if Britain was to get something out of the Italian question, it first needed to put something in, beyond the nebulous concept of moral support.

Contrary to what Malmesbury thought, Hudson rarely strayed across the boundaries of diplomatic protocol. Although Hudson effected something of a political reconciliation with Cavour after his return to Turin in mid-April 1859, relations between them remained distant. To judge from Massari's diary, Hudson had only limited personal contact with Cavour during the war. In part, this was due to the increased demands upon Cavour's time and to the fact that Cavour regarded British policy as an irrelevance. Undoubtedly, though, the anti-war attitude that Hudson had assumed prior to hostilities, which had generated such ill-feeling in Cavour toward Hudson, must have created an atmosphere of mutual suspicion that could not be immediately dispelled.