

gratitude for the vigour and energy with which he had conducted the war after the fall of Lord Aberdeen and the exposure of the administrative scandals of the Crimean winter. Palmerston, though always posing as a Whig, remained in many points true to the traditions of the Canningite Tories, to whom he had belonged in his youth. He believed in a firm foreign policy and the protection of British interests wherever they were endangered. He thought that political reform had gone far enough in 1832, and had no desire to tamper with the constitution. Small social and economic reforms he could tolerate, but he always found ingenious reasons for shelving the proposals of his more ardent followers when they tried to take up again the sort of legislation that had been predominant in the "thirties." The Radical members of his party chafed furiously against his apathetic attitude towards their projects, but till his death they could never succeed in getting their way. The fact was that the middle classes, in whose hands political power had lain since the Reform Bill, were very much of Palmerston's way of thinking, and had little or no wish to move on. They admired the old statesman's bustling and occasionally boisterous foreign policy, enjoyed his slightly cynical humour, and had every confidence in his sterling common sense.

In many ways it was fortunate that domestic politics were in a very quiet state between 1855 and 1865, for foreign affairs were always in a difficult and more than once in a dangerous condition. The source of trouble was generally to be found in the tortuous and vacillating line of conduct pursued by Napoleon III., who was always endeavouring to fish in troubled waters, and to maintain his difficult seat on the French throne by theatrical triumphs of the military or diplomatic sort. Though he maintained as a rule an appearance of friendship for England, yet we always found him a slippery ally, and were at least once on the verge of war with him. There is always a

English relations with Napoleon III.