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THE LITTLE-KNOWN AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF SIR JOHN STOKES, THE FIRST BRITISH REPRESENTATIVE IN THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION OF THE DANUBE (1856 – 1871) – PART TWO –

Sir John Stokes, the first British representative in the European Commission of the Danube, wrote a little known account of his life. This second part of the paper contains excerpts from three chapters of his memories, dealing with the works of the international institution in the period of time spanning from 1860 to 1871.

The internationalisation of the Danube and the establishment of a new regime of navigation on the fluvial and maritime sector of the river, through the provisions of the 1856 Treaty of Paris, created favourable premises for the improvement of navigation at the Lower Danube, under the supervision of the European Commission of the Danube, the institutional body responsible with carrying out the technical works at the Danube mouths and on the fluvial sector up to the point of Isaktcha[1]. The first estimations, based on an enormous amount of date on depths, winds and flows collected on all the three branches of the river, proved the complexity of the engineering works needed and the impossibility of the E.C.D. to finish them in the period of the mandate given in 1856. The commercial importance of the Danubian ports of Galatz and Ibraila for the British and French economic circles and the tendencies of the Austrian Empire to impose its supremacy over the entire course of the river generated a concerted action of the Western Powers, with the notable result, during a Conference in 1858, of extending the mandate of the Commission "to the complete achievement of the said works".

The consolidation of the international body allowed the engineer-in-chief of the Commission, the British Ch. Hartley[2], to focus on the technical

[1] For details on the evolution of the "Danube Question" in the period 1856 – 1871, cf. Spiridon G. Focas, *The Lower Danube River,* East European Monographs, Boulder, 1987; P. Gogeanu, *Dunărea în relaţiile internaţionale,* Bucureşti, 1970; I. Cârţână, I. Seftiuc, *Dunărea în istoria poporului român,* Bucureşti, 1972; Ştefan Stanciu, *România şi Comisia Europeană a Dunării. Diplomaţie. Suveranitate. Cooperare internaţională,* Galaţi, 2002;

[2] C. W. S. Hartley, *A Biography of Sir Charles Harltey, Civil Engineer (1825 – 1915). The Father of the Danube*, 2 volumes, Edwin Mellen Press, Lampeter, 1989, p. 147 sqq.; David Turnock, *Sir Charles Hartley and the Development of Romania's Lower Danube – Black Sea*

works, considered "provisional", started in 1858 at the Sulina mouth, "for the smallest sum and with the greatest speed". The construction of the piers and the permanent increase of the depths on the bar proved the efficiency of the technical works, progressively turned the Sulina branch of the Danube into the outlet to the sea chosen for permanent improvement.

Strengthened in its international position, the E.C.D. steadily gained new prerogatives, John Stokes, the first British representative in the Danube Commission[3], playing a major role in entrusting the Commission with legislative, executive, administrative, and juridical powers. As a result, a Public Act was signed on November 2, 1865 in Galatz, investing the European Commission with the responsibility of drawing up a Regulation for Navigation and Police and with imposing a Tariff for Navigation Taxes for vessels circulating on its sector of competence.

The success of the technical works and the permanent increase in the number of ships navigating at the Lower Danube, plus a loan raised in excellent financial conditions, following the personal efforts of John Stokes, provided the European Commission with the funds necessary to continue the prolongation and the strengthening of the Sulina piers and, as much, to attempt to remove the shoals which obstructed the passage on many points along the branch.

As the mandate of the E.C.D. was to expire in 1871, and after the Russian government's measure to denounce the restrictions imposed by the Treaty of Paris on the tsarist naval military force in the Black Sea, a Conference was held in London in the first months of 1871, with the consequence of obtaining a new extension of its duration of existence. In all these events, John Stokes, the skilful defender of the British political and economic interests at the Lower Danube, played a role that made him believe, not without reason, that the affairs of the Commission were, during the seventh decade of the 19th century, much in his hands. The fragments published below, taken from chapters IX, X, and XI of John Stokes' autobiography, cover a whole decade of activity in the European Commission of the Danube (1860 – 1871). The excerpts provide a detailed and interesting account on the priorities which kept the attention of the E.C.D. in its early period of activity, being thus a first hand source for the early history of the international institution based in Galatz.

Commerce in the Late Nineteenth Century, in vol. *Anglo – Romanian Relations after 1821*, Iaşi, 1983.

[3] Cf. Constantin Ardeleanu, *The Little-Known Autobiography of Sir John Stokes, the First British Representative in the Europen Commission of the Danube (1856 – 1871),* part one, in "Analele Universităţii Dunărea de Jos Galaţi", Istorie, tome II, 2003, p. 87 - 102.

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Appendix

"In March 1860 we had the happiness of realizing the first effects of our works at the mouth of the Sulina. The entrance to the river deepened, under the influence of the floods, to 16 feet. This appeared to us, to justify the imposition of the tariff of dues which we were authorized to levy, as already vessels had benefited by the works which we had carried out, in being able to enter the river without lightening and to leave it with only partial lightening.

Hartley, who was at that time in Egypt, received with great delight our news of the effect which his work had produced, but, alas, that effect was not to last long, for when further high floods came down a great deposit was precipitated and the depth was again reduced to 13 feet.

It became evident that the effect of the one pier which alone at that time had been constructed, was not sufficient to secure an improved entrance. This experience was interesting, because an Austrian Engineer, Mr. Wex, had maintained that one pier was quite sufficient. As soon as Hartley returned he began the second or South pier, which had always been part of his project. Great progress was made in 1860 in carrying the North pier to its length of 1800 metres, in leading out the South pier and in securing it parallelism of the extremities at 600 feet apart. During the summer of 1860 the Commission discussed the principles on which the tariff should be fixed, with the result that it was constructed on a double sliding scale, varying according to the size of the vessels and the depth of the entrance. Vessels were classified according to their draught of water as represented by their tonnage, and each class was taxed according to the depth of water at the entrance. The greater the depth, the more a vessel paid, buff vessels of small tonnage did not pay higher rates for depths beyond their average draught. This tariff was agreed to by the Commission on July 5th, 1860, to be put in force from the 1st September of that year. It had been worked out principally by the Russian Commissioner, Baron d'Offenberg, and myself, that is, I adopted some of his suggestions in modification of my proposals and worked out all the detailed rates, a problem which it required some patience and ingenuity to solve. Very soon after putting the tariff in force the Commission became aware of the fact that the levying of the tolls on vessels of different nations according to their tonnage did not carry out the express stipulation in the Treaty of Paris that the flags of all nations should be treated on a footing of perfect equality; for it soon came to our knowledge that hardly any two vessels had adopted the same rule of measurement, and that consequently very unequal dues were being paid. The Commission had fixed the English ton as the unit on which the dues were to be levied, and representations were soon made to them that this bore unequally on different countries. In order to remedy this inequality as far as possible, I persuaded H.M's Government to take measurements according to English rules, of the vessels of foreign nations, so as to establish a comparison between the English tonnage and that of other nations. The carrying out of this enabled me to submit to the

Commission a comparative table by means of which the tonnage on the papers of each ship could be corrected to its English equivalent. This system was brought into operation in the year 1861, but the Commission endeavoured to amend and improve the table by making the measurements themselves at the mouth of the Danube, and the English Government was requested to continue the system, so as to provide further data for improving the factors of correction.

It came to light that those decimal factors, though based on an average, bore very hardly on certain forms of vessels, and that it by no means established a perfect equality between ship and ship, though it gave roughly, what was demanded by the treaty. The question came often before the Commission, owing to complaints of individual shipowners, and led them to recommend that the different Governments should arrive at an understanding by which the measurements of ships should be based on certain rules fixed by international agreement. This was a motive which led me to study very carefully the question of tonnage measurement, and as will be seen, this led to important results in my career […]

Before leaving [for England, in the summer of 1861] I took part in the revision of the different regulations which the Commission had put in force for the better government of the navigation. The range of their operations may be gathered from the list of rules, which comprised one for the police of the Port and Roadstead of Sulina, another for those of the river between Isaktcha and the mouth, and others for the pilotage of the lower Danube, and for regulating the service of the lighters. […]

I was back in Galatz early in October. I found that the works at the mouth of the Sulhna had made satisfactory progress. In 1860 the Commission were requested to examine into the conditions of the fisheries at the mouth of the Kilia, and the different Commissioners had to obtain the authority of their governments to enable them to take up this question. In 1861, all being provided with full powers for the purpose, they entered upon the matter, and some very interesting discussions ensued.

It was evident that Russia, even then, was endeavouring to regain a footing at the Kilia mouth, in resisting which efforts the Austrian and Turkish Commissioners acted with me. […]

In March 1861, when the ice on the Danube broke up, and navigation was resumed we were pleased to find that the provisional works, which were then approaching completion, had produced a fine channel across the bar, 18 feet deep; and the Commission began to look forward to finishing them in the summer.

In the early part of the year the Governments had decided to relinquish, for the present at any rate, the idea of improving the St. George's branch. This furnished to the Russian Commissioner, who was always desirous of restraining the activity of the European Commission within the narrowest limits, and of getting rid of it as soon as possible, a pretext for attempting to bring about the cessation of its functions altogether. As the arguments which he and the French Commissioner put forward had a plausible appearance they met with support from both the Prussian and Sardinian delegates. I had therefore, in the absence of my Austrian colleagues, to contend single handed against this proposal, and successfully staved off any decision until his return in June, when he put forward certain proposals which met with my entire support and Checkmated the Russians. My contention had always been that, if the permanent improvement of the St.

George's branch was to be given up, we ought to perfect, as far as possible, the Sulina works, and deepen the insufficient channel, so that vessels entering might be able to ascend the river to the grain ports of Galatz and Ibraila. M. Becke adopted this view, and suggested that the Commission ought to make clear to all the world the great improvement which it had already effected at the mouth and in the general conditions of the navigation, and that, to this effect, they ought to consolidate in the Public Act the regulations and the tariff which they had passed. M. Becke's arguments produced the effect of setting aside for a time the Russian proposal, and eventually led to its being forgotten altogether; for it took quite 4 years to get Turkey and the Governments into agreement as to what this Public Act was to be. He also proposed that there should be a striking official function, declaring the opening of the mouth of the river to vessels of large size.

In August of this year, 1861, the proposed festival took place. The Commission made preparations on a large scale to entertain officials from the Riverain States and from Turkey; a formal procession was made down the river and through the piers, after which a banquet was given in a pavilion temporarily erected for that purpose, and speeches were made, describing all that had been done. Reporters were present, so that accounts of all these proceedings might be published in the European papers. My own part in the speech-making was confined to proposing the health of the Sultan, Abdul Assiz, who had recently come to the throne. The whole thing went off very well, and thenceforward the Commission was occupied in considering works for the improvement of the channel of the Sulina, and in preparing the Public Act, which was future to be the law for all navigation in the Lower Danube.

In the administration of the navigation of the river the Commission had experienced great difficulties in controlling the police. It was not thought desirable to bring the vessels of war, on whose support they depended for the maintenance of their authority, into direct contact with other vessels, on account of the variety of flags, and because there was a risk that vessels of one Power might interfere with vessels of war of another Power. The Commission determined therefore, to appoint an Inspector General of the Navigation, with sub-inspectors under him, who, armed with the authority of the Commission, should take care that the regulations published by the Commission were properly obeyed. The Turkish Commissioner, however, could not at once take part in this decision, and it was not till the latter end of 1861 that the Commission were able to appoint their Inspector General. For this post they accepted the nomination by the Sublime Porte of M. Drigalsky, a Polish officer in the Turkish service. This man who was a son-in-law of Col. Malinowski, proved to be a very efficient and active officer. Under his authority and that of his four subordinate agents the Commission was able to obtain complete control of the navigation from Isaktcha to Sulina. The judgements rendered by M. Drigalsky, in accordance with the regulations of the Commission, were subject to an appeal by offenders against those regulations, to the European Commission of the Danube, as Supreme Court. That body, therefore, held the somewhat unusual position of legislating for the navigation, administering the laws by its agents and, finally, judging the cases on appeal. This system was confirmed, and received the authority of all the Powers of Europe. It may appear somewhat anomalous but it worked

most satisfactorily and has never, so far as I am aware, after 37 years of its operation, given rise to any complaints. […]

In 1864 it was decided to erect a lighthouse at the entrance of the St. George. It was lit for the first time in May 1865, and in the same month I accompanied some of my colleagues to the St. George's mouth for the purpose of examining it. We had a very interesting trip, and, on our way back, stopped at Toultcha in order to dine with our new President, Amid Rassim Pasha, who proved to be a very genial and agreeable colleague. He was not only President of the Commission but also Governor General of the Mouths of the Danube, and rose subsequently to even higher commands. […]

The year 1865 saw the completion of our Public Act. The Powers had all agreed, and the Sublime Porte at last consented to it, and thus it became part of the International Law of Europe. The Act reserved to the Commission the power of amending the different regulations and tariffs annexed to it, and already, in 1868-9 they were occupied in making amendments based on the experience gained.

After the signature of the Public Act, I brought before my colleagues a proposal to resume the discussion which I had opened in 1861-2, with a view, either to undertake permanent works in the St. George's branch, or to consolidate our works at the mouth of the Sulina and pursue a definite programme for the improvement of that branch. I now urged upon my colleagues that they should altogether renounce the idea of doing anything to the St. George, and that they should decide upon a programme for the permanent improvement of the Sulina. Hartley had drawn up a report for carrying out this project at an estimated cost of about £125,000.

The Commission arrived at a decision favourable to this proposal and, in order to enable it to be put in hand, it was decided to take steps to raise a loan, and negotiations were entered into for the purpose of obtaining this amount. In the meantime, the necessity for these works which I had so stoutly stood up for in 1861, had become more and more apparent. It had been decided in 1862 that further operations should be carried out and we had raised a loan from Mr. Norik of a German Bank at Hamburg for a portion of these, but we required a much larger sum for the permanent works agreed to in 1865, and so we entered into negotiations with the same Bank to obtain the necessary funds. […]

This year [1866] was an important one in many ways for the war all through that winter put a stop to our hopes of getting the loan from the North German Bank at Hamburg, with which we were in negotiations and the financial difficulties of the Commission became very great. I had always taken a leading part in obtaining funds for our works, and I suggested that we should raise £10,000 by issuing bonds paying a good rate of interest which would induce people to take up, and so enable us to carry on the work till we could tide over our difficulties. This plan was adopted and I was able to get many of the Bonds subscribed for by friends in England and on the Danube. […]

[On the 25th of May 1867, John Stokes took steamer for Vienna]. There I called on my old friend Lord Bloomfield, and saw Mr. Weikersheim, our Consul- General, whom I tried to interest in helping the Commission to raise the money required. On the 31st of May I left Vienna […] The affairs of the Commission naturally occupied much of my thoughts and, during my stay at Hall, I got a summons to Vienna in order to further the objects of the Commission with regard to the loan. I went into Vienna on the

16th June and, for the next two days was closely occupied with negotiations with Mr. Weikersheim which, however, did not come to a satisfactory conclusion. I had the advantage at Vienna of discussing the affairs of the Commission with Mr. Mallet of the Board of Trade, with the result that I received a telegram from Lord Stanley (subsequently Lord Derby) who was then Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, desiring me to repair to London. On the 4th July, therefore, I journeyed, via Stuttgart and Cologne, to London. On the road I heard of my promotion to Lieut. Colonel. […]

As regards my Commission business, I was able to make much progress with H.M.'s Government. I had frequent interviews at the Foreign Office and the Board of Trade and as usual, met with very little encouragement from Mr. Hammond, the Permanent Under-Secretary at the Foreign Office. But, to my great satisfaction, I found Lord Stanley fully alive to the representations which I was able to make to him with regard to the position of the Danube Commission, and the importance of our being able to obtain the money to complete the works at the mouth of the Sulina and in the Branch. I had urged upon his Lordship that if the other Powers would not give any assistance, that it would be to the British interest in the River, that this country should advance the money by itself. I pointed out to him that there was not the slightest risk to be incurred in making that advance, as the dues which we were raising at the mouth of the river were already so large, that they were amply sufficient to pay off the interest and sinking fund on a loan; especially if we could get this loan on the moderate terms which a Government guarantee would render practicable.

We were now paying as much as 10 or 12 per-cent for the money, but a Government guarantee should reduce the interest to some 3 or 4 per-cent and thus make the burden lighter. Lord Stanley took a broad and statesmanlike view, and directed Mr. Hammond to draw up a memorandum for him to send to the Treasury urging my point. I must say that Mr. Hammond, although himself opposed to the measure drew up an admirable paper which he desired me to look through, and which I could not myself have written more forcibly urging my Board of Trade which had always stood by me in this matter, eventually consented that either this country should make the loan itself or should join with other Powers in guaranteeing the amount required. This was a most satisfactory conclusion to my visit to England. I was able also to confirm the interest which my wife's uncle, Mr. H. Maynard, took in the affairs of the Commission. He had long been trying to procure a loan for us in London where his large business connection enabled him to put us in communication with financial houses. This following up of the thread of our affairs through Mr. Maynard was still necessary, because, although Lord Stanley had taken up my proposal so warmly, I could not know for some time after that, what reception the Treasury would give to his proposals. Therefore, I continued my endeavour to form a financial combination which should be of use to the Commission, supposing that eventually the Treasury would not consent. […]

[From England, Stokes went to Paris, and from there started for Galatz], via Vienna, where I met my former colleague, Mr. de Becke, and Count Beust with whom I had subsequently more important dealings. I remained three or four days in Vienna and on arriving at Galatz I visited the works at the mouth of the Sulina, and found they were making very satisfactory progress, though on a small scale. The winter of 1867-8, was much occupied with matters connected with the raising of the loan for the permanent

works and with correspondence and discussions relative to the proper light-house to be established for the navigation of the Danube. […]

The spring of 1868 saw the consummation of the efforts I had made and of the support given by Lord Stanley, as, on the initiative of H.M. Government, all the Powers, except Russia, had consented to guarantee the loan for the permanent works. The Government consented also at my suggestion that the firm issuing the loan should apply to them in the first instance, for payment of any sum required to make up the annual charge of interest and sinking fund, and that they should recover their share from the other Governments. This, of course, simplified negotiations with the financial firm, and I may here say that neither H.M. Government nor any other was ever called upon to make good any annual payment, because the revenues of the Commission were always amply sufficient for the purpose. An act of Parliament was passed called "The Danube Works Loan Act" authorizing Her Majesty to give this guarantee, and I received on the 30th. April 1868, full powers under the Great Seal of England, to sign a convention for the purpose.

I may here mention a sad occurrence which took place just about this time. My Italian colleague, M. Susinno, took very much to heart my renouncing, on the part of the English Government, any intention of taking up permanent works in the mouth of the St. George. His reasons for this were quite inexplicable to us, as he had had no part in the original decisions; he thought, however, that the course taken reflected in some sense on his performance of his duties, and committed suicide. This, of course, had a very painful effect upon his colleagues, and especially on myself, as he attributed to my action what he judged to be a misfortune, though I never could consider that anything I had done or said entitled him to take this view. This occurrence, to some extent, marred my satisfaction at the triumph of my recent policy. The issue of the loan was now undertaken and carried out by the house of Bischoffsheim and Co., with whom Mr. Maynard had put us in communication, and on terms very favourable to the Commission. The loan was concluded at 4 per-cent, the interest and sinking fund to be paid off in 14 years after the payment of the last instalment of the loan to the Commission.

The works could now be taken up with energy. Those at the mouth of the river were speedily concluded and those in the river branch were continued. The works at the mouth consisted principally in converting the old timber piers into solid reefs of cement blocks raised on a sub-stratum of loose stone, which had been thrown in pell-mell on either side of the piles, and had with time consolidated into a very firm foundation on which to build permanent piers. The result of this consolidation of the piers was to increase the depth from 17 to 21 feet in the navigable channel; a result on which we could look with great satisfaction when we considered the state of the mouth at the time of undertaking our duties in 1856. […]

By the end of 1869 the consolidation of the north pier had been nearly completed, with excellent effect upon the depth at the mouth and it was decided to erect an iron lighthouse at the end of the pier in place of the temporary one hitherto in use.

The affairs of the Commission generally, were very much in my hands at this time as, with the exception of the Russian, all the Commissioners had been changed more or less frequently, and therefore the long experience gained since 1856 gave me a

preponderating influence at our councils, where, since his efforts to nullify our exertions had proved ineffectual, the Russian Commissioner worked more or less cordially with me in advancing the general interests of the navigation. I was the Commissioner who represented the principal commercial interest in the Danube, the tonnage of the English ships being now superior to that of all the other vessels trading there. The part also which I had played in solving the difficulties as regards finance during the last 10 or 11 years, gave me additional weight, and as I had made a careful study of the statistics of the Commission, which were very interesting in showing the growth of trade and its importance to different countries, I was able from time to time to present reports upon them which very much influenced the decisions of my colleagues. A matter which exercised my mind very much at this time, was the bearing of the Articles of the Tariff upon the English Ships. When the tariff was first levied there was scarcely any steam navigation on the river except by the small steam packs of Austria and France, but the improvements in steam vessels and the growth of the English trade since the mouth was opened had led to an immense increase in the number of English steamships. Thus, from only 16 vessels of 9,000 tons in 1862, our steam navigation had grown to 226 vessels of a tonnage of 119,000 tons in 1869. As these vessels were not mail boats they did not enjoy any of the advantages originally granted to the French and Austrian packets, whilst the latter, owing to the improved depth in the river, had.been transformed from insignificant post-boats into cargo carrying vessels, and were thereby enjoying an unfair privilege over the English ships, as they only paid dues amounting to one quarter of those exacted from other vessels. By successive proposals I finally succeeded in rectifying this disproportion. […]

The struggle which at this time broke out between France and Germany deeply engaged the attention of all, and during the remainder of this year, as our works at the mouth of the river drew to completion, our thoughts were entirely directed towards the bloody campaign in France. The disasters of the French army led the Czar, in the autumn, to denounce those articles of the Treaty of Paris which imposed great restrictions upon Russia in the Black Sea. The sanction of that Treaty depended on the ability of France and England to oblige Russia to adhere to its provisions. The utter destruction of the French army therefore gave to the Czar an opportunity, of which he was not slow to avail himself, of breaking loose from the stipulations of the Treaty. The English Government at first wrote a haughty despatch, insisting on its maintenance, but this tone quickly gave place to a more moderate one, suggesting a Conference to be held in London for the consideration of the Czar's declaration. Mr. Gladstone, who was always ready to surrender English interests abroad, saw great justice in the Czar's desire to be free of the restrictions placed upon him in the Black Sea. I, of course only knew of what was going on through the newspapers, but it occurred to me that whatever concessions might be made to Russia as regards her fortifications at Sebastopol and her fleets in the Black Sea, the rights conferred by the Treaty on European Powers to uphold the freedom of navigation in the Danube, ought not to be sacrificed. I therefore wrote very strongly to Lord Granville on the subject, setting forth the view that English interests were of such paramount importance in the Danube, that Great Britain ought to maintain its share in the control of the river, which, under present arrangements, was

only extended to the Spring of 1871. I urged that this was an excellent opportunity, while conceding points to Russia, for insisting on our permanent hold upon the Danube.

Towards the end of November I received an intimation from the Foreign of five, that the Austrian Government had requested that I might be allowed to proceed to Vienna to discuss with them matters connected with the navigation of the Danube. This was a very great compliment to me, and a recognition of the friendly cooperation which had always existed between their Commissioners and myself during the 14 years that we had worked together, as well as of their conviction that I could bring to bear on the discussion with them, a greater knowledge of the question than their own recently appointed representative. I lost no time in starting for Vienna, and a very rough journey I had, for the winter had commenced with deep snow, and the navigation of the river having ceased, I had to make my way firstly by the unfinished railway from Galatz to Roman, and then by road across the broken country to Lemberg, where I took train again for Vienna. There I was most kindly received by Lord Bloomfield, and placed in communication with the Austrian Government. The Minister, through whom I had to act, was Baron Gagern, the Permanent Under Secretary of the Foreign office – a most courteous and pleasant old gentleman, who spoke English perfectly. Under his directions I saw the various Ministers of the Austrian Government - Count Beust, the Imperial Chancellor, Baron de Pretis, Minister of Commerce, Baron Orzy, a Hungarian Minister, and Count Julian Andrassy, Prime Minister of Hungary, to see whom I went down to Pesth with Baron Gagern. With all these Ministers I had most interesting conversations, of which I took accurate notes at the time.

Early one morning when I was in my bath, I heard a heavy knock at the door, and asked "Who's there?" "Baron Gagern". "Well, Baron", I said, "I should be very happy to see you, but I am in my bath at this moment; if you like to come in you may." I wrapped a towel round me and he entered. He told me that Count Beust wished to see me at 9 o'clock, so I accordingly got ready as soon as I could. These interviews with the Austrian Ministers extended over several days, and I found that the views which I had expressed to Lord Granville met with very warm support in Austria. They quite agreed with me that, if the Russian power was to be re-instated in the Black Sea, the European control over the mouths of the Danube ought certainly to be perpetuated. One of the arguments which I had used was that, as the guarantee of the Danube loan extended to the year 1883, the existence of the European Commission of the Danube ought, in my opinion, to be made permanent or, at all events, prolonged to that date, and that the jurisdiction of the Commission should be extended to Ibraila: that this town was the real terminus of the sea-going vessels which paid dues at the mouth and that therefore the Commission ought to have control of the navigation over the whole of the river to that point.

Lord Bloomfield recommended me to write to the Foreign Office, and request permission to go on to London, to lay before H.M. Government the views of the Austrian Government, which had been communicated to me by the various Ministers. No reply came to this application for some days, and he advised me to set out without waiting for an answer, because the Conference was to assemble very soon. I therefore, acting on this advice, started homewards and arrived in London in December, I at once repaired to the Foreign Office, where I was greeted by Mr. Hammond, the Permanent

Under Secretary, with the enquiry what I was doing there! I said that I had come home by the advice of the Ambassador to lay before Lord Granville the views expressed to me by the Austro-Hungarian Ministers. He told me I ought, as a soldier, to know better than to desert my post. I replied "I beg your pardon, Sir, I left my post by your orders." My post was, of course, at Galatz. He told me that I could see Lord Granville. I saw him, and found him an icicle. He asked me no questions. However I was told to wait in England for the present. In a very few days I received from the Foreign Office a bundle of papers on which I was desired to report. They contained the views of the Austrian Government on the Danube question. This gave me a fine opportunity of again urging my own views, and I even went so far, in a private letter to Lord Granville, as to say that I considered that English interests would be sacrificed if this occasion was not taken to ensure the continuance of the European Commission of the Danube. From this time forward until, and after the meeting of the London Conference, my relations with the Foreign of five were of the most frequent and satisfactory character. All matters connected with the Danube were constantly referred to me by the Government, and I attended meetings of the Committee of the Cabinet which was considering the Danube questions in relation to the Conference. My services were privately acknowledged in a most gratifying manner by Lord Granville and by other members of the Cabinet. I was in constant communication with the different Ambassadors, and the special Plenipotentiaries sent over to this country for the Conference. So constant and intimate were these consultations that I have been with Lord Granville at midnight and gone from him to the Austrian Ambassador, and had to knock up the Plenipotentiaries from their rest to discuss matters with them. In fact, there was a complete transformation scene from my interviews on arrival to the intimate relations with Ministers for weeks afterwards.

Finally, I drafted the Articles of the Treaty which embodied the rules for the maintenance of the Danube control. Unfortunately, my suggestion for perpetuating the control did not reach the Sublime Porte in time to get their assent; this had only been given as to the twelve years to 1883, and it was not thought desirable to delay the meetings of the Conference to get any modification of it. My interviews with Musurus Pasha were of the most friendly nature.

I was rather amused during these conferences by Baron Brunnow, for many years Russian Ambassador in this country, calling me to account for not having got on well with the Russian Commissioner on the Danube. I told him that we always got on excellently; we were the best of friends, but our policy was different.

The Austrian Ambassador, Count Apponyi, was always most friendly and his Hungarian colleague acted cordially with me in everything. These conferences went on till the month of March. After the new Treaty - the Treaty of London - was signed, the time approached for me to leave. Mr. Hammond was kind enough to say that I had done my duty, and done it well. Shortly after my return to the Danube, I had the satisfaction of receiving the announcement that Her Majesty had been pleased to make me a Companion of the Bath.

While I was in England, having now brought matters to a satisfactory conclusion, - I had considered that I should now return to my military duty, for I was already suffering loss of promotion through my continued residence on the Danube, and yet I had been unwilling to leave that work until I could consider it at an end. The

Inspector General of Fortifications had much discussion with me as to the best man to succeed me on the Danube, and finally, Col. Gordon R.E., of Chinese fame, was recommended for the post. Consequently, early in June, I received an intimation that he would be appointed, and I recommended that he should come out some months before I left, in order that he might be thoroughly initiated into the various complicated arrangements that existed. […]

At the latter end of October Col. Gordon arrived to take over his Commissionership, and I accompanied him to all the different parts of the Delta. He was a man of extraordinary habits and bearing, whom one could not help liking and appreciating for his simplicity of character and deep religious feeling. He was always smoking and always reading his Bible. He was a man of singular courage and directness but also of singular views, very difficult to get on with.

Although we were perfectly good friends and never had a difference, I could see that there were troublous times in store for those who had to work under him on the Danube. I had prepared, with very great care, a memorandum of some hundred pages, giving him a detailed explanation of every question that would come up for his consideration. I was anxious that things should go on as they had been, but I found that his views were not in favour of English predominance. My object had always been to ensure this predominance and I had succeeded. It was an influence which was for the good of all countries, for, although we took the lead in the work, we did not arrogate to ourselves any of the advantages. It was by ensuring English influence and direction that we had things done honestly and well, and that was a matter which I considered of primary importance in everything connected with this international work.

One of the last things I did as Commissioner, was to approve of some important works at the head of the Delta. The shore had been forming at the point where the Kilia and Toultcha branches separated, and it was decided, on the proposition of Sir Charles Hartley and on my recommendation, that a similar class of works to that which had succeeded so well in the lower parts of the river should be started there. But the mass of water was so large that there was some anxiety felt as to whether the works would produce the same effect. I may here say, that these works proved entirely successful and produced a fine, broad, deep channel, which prevented more water from being turned into the Kilia branch.

In December I relinquished the Commissionership which I had held for over 15 years, and received the most gratifying testimony from all sides, of the appreciation of my own countrymen and of the employees of the Commission, as to the share I had had in the generally successful results of our labours. I received a very handsome silver centre-piece for the table, from the English residents on the Danube, and a silver cup from the employees of the Commission. It was very painful to me to say "good-bye" to the Danube. […]"

Galați