

THE COUSINS' WAR

Ishchenko N. A.

Taurida National V. I. Vernadsky University, Simferopol, Ukraine

The article deals with the unknown page of the Pembrokes-Vorontsovs' family history, the details of the activity of Sidney Herbert Pembroke, the Minister of War, and his cousin Semyon Mikhaylovitch Vorontsov during the Crimean War of 1853–1856, as well as the connections of the old English kin modern representatives with the history and culture of their ancestors.

Key words: the Pembrokes, the Vorontsovs, the Crimean War, Wilton-House, Alupka palace.

The Crimean War of 1853–1856 was not a civil war but it did nevertheless bring two members of one famous Russian family into conflict with each other. The men in question were two grandsons of Count Semyon Romanovitch Vorontsov (1744–1832). One of them – Sidney Herbert Pembroke (1810–1861), was British Secretary of State for War at the period of the Crimean War. The other was his cousin, Semyon Mikhailovitch Vorontsov (1823–1882), who took part in the defence of Sevastopol in 1855.

The Vorontsovs' family, and in particular Semyon Romanovitch Vorontsov, played the most active role in the history of Russian-English relations in the late eighteenth and first half of the nineteenth century. During the years of his diplomatic service as a Russian ambassador in Britain from 1784 he attracted many admirers in the various British social and political circles, so much so that, when he retired in 1806 he made Britain his home forever. He lived there for 25 years more, his daughter marrying into one of Britain's most prominent families.

His two children, Mikhail and Ekaterina, enjoyed far differing fortunes. His elder son Mikhail (1782–1856) got a brilliant education in Britain and in 1801 returned to Saint-Petersburg and subsequently enjoyed a very successful civil and military career in Russia. He took part in the Russian-Turkish wars and in the wars with Napoleon, and in the period 1814–1819 he was a commander of Russian Expeditionary troops in France. In 1823 he was appointed a governor-general of Novorossia and in 1824 was made a governor-general of the Caucasus, a post that he held until 1854 when, with the outbreak of the Crimean War, he volunteered for the army. The war aggravated the difficult topographical position of Russia on the Caucasus, with two Turkish armies threatening the Russian frontiers. The czar's armies held them back, however, and Mikhail Vorontsov left Caucasus as a hero in March of 1855. In August of 1856 he was given the rank of field-marshal.

In 1819 Mikhail Semyonovitch married the beautiful Polish countess Elizaveta Ksaveryevna Branitskaya. The Duke of Wellington, with whom Vorontsov had become acquainted in France, was a proxy-father on their wedding. In 1845 Count Vorontsov was made a prince and in 1852 he was awarded a title of «serenity».

There is a popular Russian saying: a real man must do three things in his life – to give birth to a son, to build a house and to plant a tree. Mikhail Semyonovitch fulfilled all three of

these successfully. His wife gave birth to son, Semyon (1823–1882), and daughter Sophia (1825–1879), he built a magnificent palace in Alupka in 1848 and laid there out a unique park.

His sister, the daughter of Russian ambassador, Ekaterina (1783–1856) spent nearly all her life in Britain. In 1808 she became the wife of George Augustus Herbert, 11th Earl of Pembroke and 8th Earl of Montgomery (1759–1827). Her husband was a representative of one of the noblest aristocratic English families and an old friend of her father. That marriage was a unique case – such marriages were very rare both amidst Russian and Britain nobility. That unity between Russian aristocracy and British peerage was the second case in its way. As J. Debrett stated in 1820 in his book *The Peerage of England, Scotland and Ireland*, the first one was a marriage of Prince I.I. Baryatinsky in 1806 with Lord Sherborne's daughter Ann Margaret Dutton. The marriage of Vorontsov's daughter and Earl Pembroke became possible thanks to Semyon Romanovitch's services for the British crown and his long years of residence in England.

Ekaterina was George Augustus Herbert's second wife. He became a widower at an early age and had four children after the first marriage (two of them died in their childhood). Unlike his private life, the military and civil career of the 11th Earl of Pembroke was more successful. In 1773 he joined the British army. In 1782 he became a lieutenant colonel of the Royal Dragoons and in 1812 reached the rank of general. As early as in 1788 Pembroke became a member of King's Secret Council and his vice-chamberlain. In 1794 he succeeded to his father and occupied a place in House of Lords, being a governor-general of Wiltshire. In 1805 he became a Cavalier of the Garter order.

The new family took up their residence in Wilton House, the family estate of the Pembrokes, which was founded by William Herbert in 1544. Here, in the period from 1809 to 1819, their children were born, one son and five daughters. Ekaterina Semyonovna occupied a fitting place at English court. She had a beautiful voice and very often sang in duet with the poet T. Moore. She even presented him a number of Russian melodies for his album.

Being connected as relatives, the Vorontsovs and the Pembrokes kept up close and warm relations. Semyon Romanovitch stayed with his daughter and grandchildren in Wilton for a long time. From time to time Mikhail Semyonovitch and his family visited England and his sister. Mikhail Semyonovitch himself wrote in his «Memoirs» (in chapter «1832»): «We spent the beginning of 1832 in London with trips to Brighton where we placed our son Semyon in school and our daughter Sophia – temporarily to Miss Persey». His aide-de-camp M.P. Scherbinin recollected in the «Memoirs», published in 1876, that in the late 1830s he «went with count to England and spent a winter in Wilton, near Solsberry, in magnificent estate of countess Pembroke, sister of Mikhail Semyonovitch. The countess lived there with her son Sidney Herbert, who got his education in Oxford University and had already demonstrated his brilliant talents, and her daughters, who were distinguished by their extraordinary beauty and courtesy. This pious family presented the most pleasant picture. All its members were connected with each other with the ties of friendship and unanimous consent. «Full harmony of feelings and faiths, based on the unconditional laws of morality, ruled in that family».

Most likely, it was George Herbert who recommended his brother-in-law to engage one of the best English architects Edward Blore (1789–1879) to design the future palace in

Alupka. Pembroke knew Blore as a talented specialist able to fulfill an order in a short period of time because in 1831 hospital of St. Magdalene was built in Wilton according to Blore's project.

So, the younger Vorontsov's and Pembrokes knew each other very well. But what of Sidney Herbert? In the collection of Western European graphics of the Alupka palace-museum there is his portrait, painted in the manner of mezzo-tinto by the English engraver George Raphael Ward (1798–1878) from the original portrait, painted by Francis Grant (1803–1878) in 1847. A young man is painted against a background of rural landscape with the hills, river and field paths. Classical regular features of handsome face, open look, graceful pose and elegant suit speak about inborn natural nobility of English aristocrat. His autograph, which is pasted under the portrait, was kept with care by many Vorontsovs' generations. The signs on the engraving explain that the publisher to Her Majesty Paul Colnagi, who was a friend of the Vorontsovs and the Pembrokes, made this print on November 29, 1847. Sidney Herbert's autograph proves that the young man maintained friendly relations with his Russian relatives. His mother Ekaterina Semyonovna was constantly anxious about it. In late 1830s from Russian government she obtained for her son a right to own an estate in Finland, which was left for her after the death of her father. But further events didn't favour the English aristocrat's attempt to become a Russian landowner.

Sidney Herbert started his political career as a conservative MP for Wiltshire South in 1832. In 1845–1846 he became Secretary at War under Sir Robert Peel. His activity was especially productive in the period of the Crimean campaign. From 1852 till 1855 he was Secretary of War under Lord Aberdeen. The Longstanding friendship tied Sidney Herbert and Florence Nightingale (1820–1910). Holding the progressive ideas as to the woman's role in society, it was he who sent her with 38 nurses to Scutari to care for the soldiers.

The Secretary at War has got a tough time during the Crimean War. Health of Sidney Herbert was failing under the pressure of his job. According to the public opinion, he mismanaged the Crimean War. In January 1855, the government of Lord Aberdeen fell, largely because of its mishandling of the war and he lost his position in the War Office. From February 2 till February 28, 1855 he was Home Secretary, from March till May 1855 – Secretary at Colonial Affairs. In 1856 he was in favour of military reform and some expected him to become a Prime Minister. In 1859 he became Secretary at War for the last time under Lord Palmerston. In 1861, the year of his untimely death, he was awarded with a title of «baron» with a right to be in sessions in the House of Lords.

In 1846 Sidney Herbert married his childhood love Elizabeth Ashe, a Court-Repingham, the daughter of General a Court, who became a famous correspondent of many high society ladies' magazines as it was stated in «Who is Who» in 1910. She also supported Florence Nightingale's campaign to show that women should be allowed to nurse men. After her husband's death she met Florence in Rome and they became friends. In the gothic hall of Wilton House stands a sculptural portrait of Florence Nightingale and everybody can see her white armband with red border. The text, written by Sidney Herbert, is fastened to it and runs: «Sign, which Florence Nightingale and all the nurses in the army hospitals wore during the Crimean War».

Sidney Herbert's activity as Secretary at War during the Crimean War divided the united family into two expostulated camps and painfully resounded in the hearts of his

Russian relatives. His cousin Semyon Mikhailovitch Vorontsov, the only son of Mikhail Semyonovitch, got his education in Russia. In 1842 he graduated from lyceum in Odessa and worked at War Office. In October 1847 titular councillor (the lowest civil rank in tsar's Russia) prince Semyon Mikhailovitch, bearing the court title of, «gentleman of the monarch's bed-chamber», was sent to Life Guards Preobrazhensky regiment and appointed aide-de-camp to His Emperor Majesty. Usually an appointment to Retinue «was given for the charge of combatant forces into proper order, for outstanding distinguished services and selfless fulfillment of one's duties». But at that period Semyon Mikhailovitch was said «not to be distinguished with any talents». There is documentary evidence that he was given the retinue rank for his father's services. In Nicholas' prescripts, addressed to the name of prince Mikhail Semyonovitch Vorontsov, it was stated: «Recollecting that the initial field of your services was the civil one and that you changed it for the military service following your own wish in the region, where your son, prince Semyon, was constantly with you, sharing all the hardships and difficulties of war, I couldn't deny myself a pleasure to direct his service to the way you follow. That's why I appointed your son my aide-de-camp and enlisted him in Life Guards Preobrazhensky regiment for staying with you. I hope that he'll follow his brave father's footsteps and, like he, become a worthy and excellent warrior». Being a commander of Kurinsky foot regiment on the Caucasus, Semyon Mikhailovitch took part in many military operations. In 1851 Khadzhi-Murat came down to him from the mountains and surrendered to Russians.

That period in the life of Semyon Vorontsov was coloured by two events, which were considered among the happy events in the life of family and were specially noted by Mikhail Semyonovitch Vorontsov in his «Memoirs». On August 26, 1851 in Alupka palace Semyon Vorontsov married the widow of colonel Spolypin Maria Vasilyevna, born Princess Trubetskaya. On October 1, 1852 «Vorontsov, Prince Semyon Mikhailovitch, commander of M. Vorontsov's Chasseur regiment, aide-de-camp, colonel was promoted Major-General for his distinguished services against mountaineers».

Contemporary opinions differ on Semyon Mikhailovitch. One of them gave him deteriorative characteristics, calling him «a man not interesting at all, sluggish and flabby», which «didn't resemble his father neither in appearance nor in soul. Others mentioned the prince's practical mind and his bravery. Somehow or other, Semyon Mikhailovitch was a defender of Sevastopol. The letter of A. O. Smirnova from September 1855 is an evidence of it: «These 11 months of Sevastopol siege was a real nightmare. Vorontsov (Prince Semyon Mikhailovitch) was wounded more badly than I was told: he's got a contusion with a bomb splinter». And further: «He (Prince A. I. Baryatinsky, head of Caucasian corps during the Crimean War) respects Semyon Vorontsov and is very happy that at last he's got the brigade he asked for at the beginning of the war. He saw him in an affair in the Caucasus where he was prepared to sacrifice his life. He told me: «We've got enough generals for parades; Semyon Mikhailovitch is not suited for the parade generals; he is a military and battle general. I don't tell you that he is a military leader, but they are so few». Semyon Vorontsov finished the war in the rank of aide-de-camp general, which was given to him on December 6, 1856.

The cognate relations of the Vorontsovs and the Pembrokes played a positive role in the fortunes of the Alupka palace in the period of the Crimean War. The names of the

owners of the Crimean estates were well known for the allies not only from the Tatar guides but also mainly from the pages of numerous guide-books, travelers' descriptions and engravings, replicated in Europe before the war. Captain William Jess, having seen this palace shortly before the Crimean War, complained in his book «Russia and the War» that Edward Blore has erected the monument to his glory too far from England. So, the civilized Britain in non-civilized Russia regarded it as their duty to preserve a masterpiece of English palace and park art. Besides, there was a portrait of Queen Victoria in Alupka palace, which she, at that time – a young girl, herself presented to Mikhail Semyonovitch Vorontsov. The wise prince ordered the portrait to be hung in the honorary place so that the one, entering his palace, could see it at once.

Somehow or other, when Britain soldiers landed in Alupka they spared it, being restrained by with respect for the great services of its owner in England, the English character of both the palace and park around it, and the portrait of Queen Victoria which was displayed quite prominently.

By a strange coincidence the last year of the Crimean War – 1856 – saw the death of both brother and sister, Prince Mikhail Vorontsov and Lady Pembroke. The war, which separated their children, advanced the deaths of the parents. A thread, which connected the closely-related people, was broken. The Prince died in November in Odessa, Lady Pembroke in March in Wilton. He was buried in Odessa cathedral, she in Wilton parish church, to which she contributed so much during her life.

After his father's death Semyon Mikhailovitch inherited a large Alupka entailed estate and proved to be a diligent landowner, especially in wine-growing and wine-making. The wines of his southern coast estates gained a well-deserved reputation and, as they say, excelled the foreign ones in quality. The mayor of Yalta of that time V.A. Rybitsky stated that Emperor Alexander II, when staying in Livadia, «often went to Alupka to have afternoon tea».

Family relations between the Russian and English cousins were not, fortunately, broken after the Crimean War. The Head of Alupka Palace exposition department Galina Filatova has found in the palace an interesting photograph with the dedicatory inscription on it: «For Simon Woronzow from Ema de Vessey». Emma Herbert, Sidney Herbert's youngest sister (1819–1884) married Viscount de Vessey from Lakes Abbey in Ireland in 1839. An old gentleman in the picture is her husband, a young lady – her daughter Fanny.

One of the richest Crimean landowners, the first Mayor of Odessa Semyon Mikhailovitch Vorontsov died on May 6, 1882 in Saint-Petersburg. He was buried in Alexandro-Newskaya lavra. The year after his death an old friend of his family Vladimir Poltoratsky noted in his diary: «The late prince Semyon Mikhailovitch Vorontsov represented an odd mixture of crazy generosity and dirty stinginess, jealousy and unbelief with boundless trustfulness». Let us leave this opinion to the conscience of his contemporary and recollect that it was Semyon Mikhailovitch who initiated the publication of «An Archive of Prince Vorontsov». Thus, his name was immortalized with this unique edition of the written sources of the XVIII–XIX centuries.

Semyon Mikhailovitch died childless and thus the ancient line of the Vorontsovs died with him. After his death the life of Alupka entailed estate was frozen for 20 years. Only in 1904 the new owner came to it – the Vorontsovs-Dashkovs, the representatives of the offshoot of the Vorontsov's kin.

The son of Ekaterina Vorontsov, Lord Sidney Herbert, outlived his mother only for 5 years. He died when he was 51 and left seven children. In 1861 near a tombstone of Ekaterina in Wilton church appeared a tombstone of her only son. The photographs of two tombstones were sent from England to Alupka, where they are kept now. In 1869 a bronze statue of Secretary of War Sidney Herbert by J. H. Foley (1818–1874) was erected at Waterloo Square in London near the old War Office in front of the Crimean Memorial. In 1915 he was joined by a neighbor in the shape of a bronze statue of Florence Nightingale by A.G. Walker (1861–1936). The grateful descendants immortalized memory of the English, whose destinies were determined by the Crimea and the Crimean War.

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Раскрываются малоизвестные страницы семейной истории Пемброков-Воронцовых, подробности деятельности военного министра Сиднея Герберта Пемброка и его двоюродного брата Семена Михайловича Воронцова в период Крымской войны 1853–1856 гг., а также связь современных представителей старинного английского рода с историей и культурой их предков.

Ключевые слова: Пемброки, Воронцовы, Крымская война, Вилтон-хауз, Алупинский дворец.

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Аналізуються маловідомі сторінки родинної історії Пемброків-Воронцових. Розглянуті подробиці діяльності військового міністра Сіднея Герберта Пемброка та його двоюрідного брата Семена Михайловича Воронцова у роки Кримської війни 1853–1856 років, а також зв'язок сучасних представників старовинної англійської родини з історією та культурою предків.

Ключові слова: Пемброки, Воронцови, Кримська війна, Вилтон-хаус, Алупкінський палац.

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Рецензенты:

д.и.н., проф. И. В. Тункина

д.и.н., проф. С. С. Щевелев