GREAT BRITAIN
AND THE
AMERICAN CIVIL WAR

BY

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British Interests and Activities in Texas, The Power of Ideals in American History, etc.

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL. II.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS

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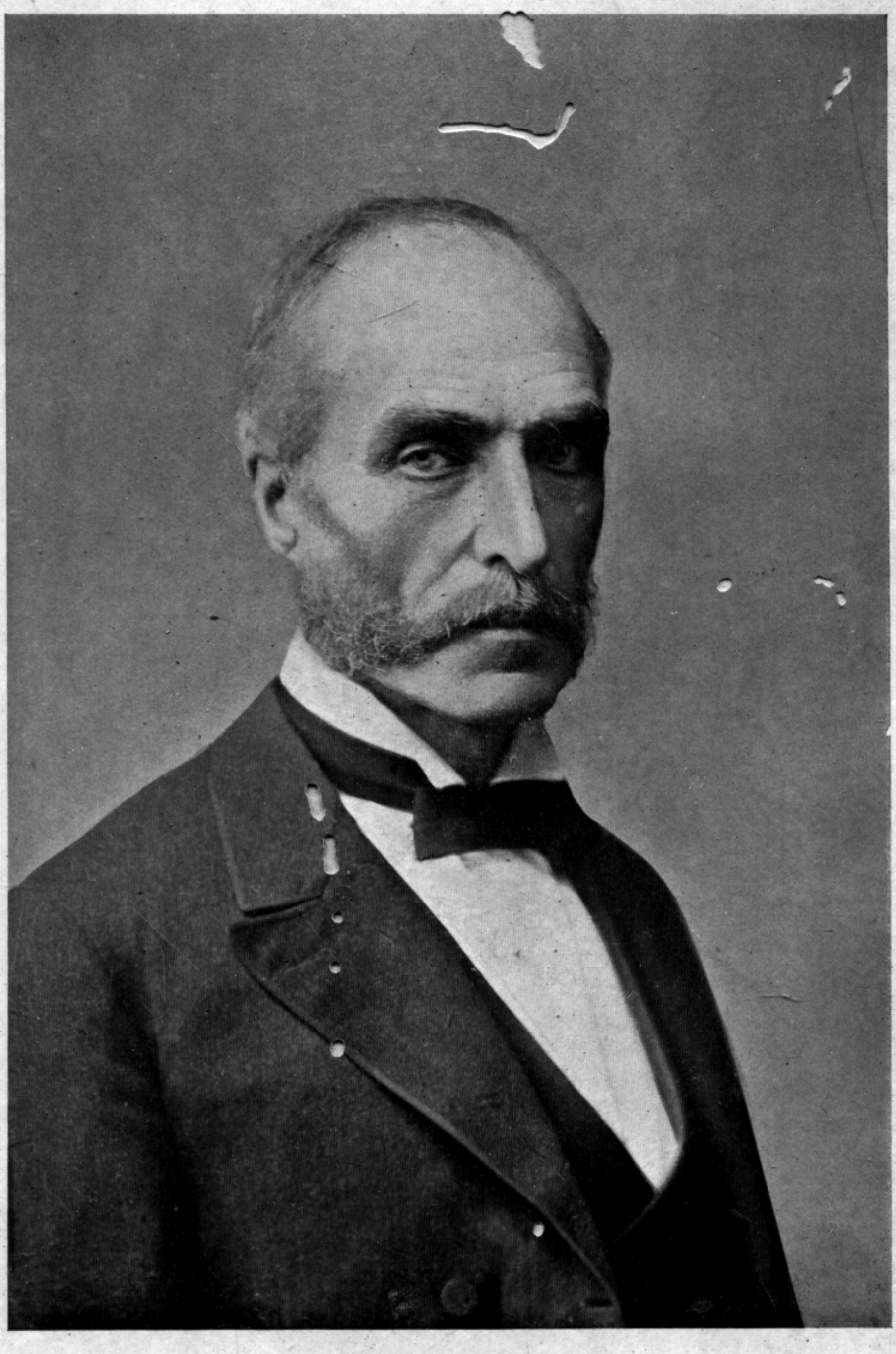
CONTENTS

OF

THE SECOND VOLUME

CHAPTER		PAGE
X.	King Cotton	1
XI.	Russell's Mediation Plan	33
XII.	The Emancipation Proclamation	75
XIII.	The Laird Rams	116
XIV.	Roebuck's Motion	152
XV.	The Southern Independence Association	186
XVI.	British Confidence in the South	219
XVII.	The End of the War	247
XVIII.	The Key-note of British Attitude	274
	Index	307

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PROFESSOR GOLDWIN SMITH

(From a photograph by Elliott & Fry, Ltd.)

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XVIII.	The Key-note of British Attitude	274
	Index	307

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

VOL. II

PROFESSOR GOLDWIN SMITH - - - - - - - - - *Frontispiece*
From a photograph by Elliott & Fry, Ltd.

JOHN SLIDELL - - - - - - - - - - - - - *facing p.* 24
From Nicolay and Hay's "Life of Abraham Lincoln," by permission of the Century Co., New York.

"ABE LINCOLN'S LAST CARD" - - - - - - - - ,, 102
Reproduced by permission of the Proprietors of "Punch"

WILLIAM EDWARD FORSTER (1851) - - - - - - - ,, 134
From Reid's "Life of Forster" (Chapman & Hall, Ltd.)

"THE AMERICAN GLADIATORS—HABET!" - - - - - - ,, 248
Reproduced by permission of the Proprietors of "Punch"

"BRITANNIA SYMPATHIZES WITH COLUMBIA" - - - - - ,, 262
Reproduced by permission of the Proprietors of "Punch"

JOHN BRIGHT - - - - - - - - - - - - - - ,, 294
From Trevelyan's "Life of John Bright" (Constable & Co., Ltd.)

GREAT BRITAIN AND THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR

CHAPTER X

KING COTTON

For two weeks there was no lightening of Southern depression in England. But on June 28 McClellan had been turned back from his advance on Richmond by Lee, the new commander of the Army of Virginia, and the much heralded Peninsular compaign was recognized to have been a disastrous failure. Earlier Northern victories were forgotten and the campaigns in the West, still progressing favourably for the North, were ignored or their significance not understood. Again, to English eyes, the war in America approached a stalemate. The time had come with the near adjournment of Parliament when, if ever, a strong Southern effort must be made, and the time seemed propitious. Moreover by July, 1862, it was hoped that soon, in the cotton districts, the depression steadily increasing since the beginning of the war, would bring an ally to the Southern cause. Before continuing the story of Parliamentary and private efforts by the friends of the South it is here necessary to review the cotton situation—now rapidly becoming a matter of anxious concern to both friend and foe of the North and in less degree to the Ministry itself.

" King Cotton " had long been a boast with the South. " Perhaps no great revolution," says Bancroft, " was ever begun with such convenient and soothing theories as those

that were expounded and believed at the time of the organization of the Confederacy. . . . In any case, hostilities could not last long, for France and Great Britain must have what the Confederacy alone could supply, and therefore they could be forced to aid the South, as a condition precedent to relief from the terrible distress that was sure to follow a blockade." [1] This confidence was no new development. For ten years past whenever Southern threats of secession had been indulged in, the writers and politicians of that section had expanded upon cotton as the one great wealth-producing industry of America and as the one product which would compel European acquiescence in American policy, whether of the Union, before 1860, or of the South if she should secede. In the financial depression that swept the Northern States in 1857 *De Bow's Review*, the leading financial journal of the South, declared: "The wealth of the South is permanent and real, that of the North fugitive and fictitious. Events now transpiring expose the fiction, as humbug after humbug explodes."[2] On March 4, 1858, Senator Hammond of South Carolina, asked in a speech, "What would happen if no cotton was furnished for three years? I will not stop to depict what everyone can imagine, but this is certain: England would topple headlong and carry the whole civilized world with her save the South. No, you dare not make war on cotton. No power on earth dares make war upon it. Cotton *is* King."[3] Two years later, writing before the elections of 1860 in which the main question was that of the territorial expansion of slavery, this same Southern statesman expressed himself as believing that "the slave-holding South is now the controlling power of the world. . . . Cotton, rice, tobacco and naval stores command the world; and we have sense enough to know

[1] Bancroft, *Seward*, II, p. 204.
[2] *De Bow's Review*, Dec., 1857. p. 592.
[3] Cited in Adams, *Trans-Atlantic Historical Solidarity*, p. 66.

it, and are sufficiently Teutonic to carry it out successfully." [1]

These quotations indicative of Southern faith in cotton might be amplified and repeated from a hundred sources.

Moreover this faith in the possession of ultimate power went hand in hand with the conviction that the South, more than any other quarter of the world, produced to the benefit of mankind. "In the three million bags of cotton," said a writer in *De Bow's Review*, "the slave-labour annually throws upon the world for the poor and naked, we are doing more to advance civilization . . . than all the canting philanthropists of New England and Old England will do in centuries. Slavery is the backbone of the Northern commercial as it is of the British manufacturing system. . . ." [2] Nor was this idea unfamiliar to Englishmen. Before the Civil War was under way Charles Greville wrote to Clarendon:

"Any war will be almost sure to interfere with the cotton crops, and this is really what affects us and what we care about. With all our virulent abuse of slavery and slave-owners, and our continual self-laudation on that subject, we are just as anxious for, and as much interested in, the prosperity of the slavery interest in the Southern States as the Carolinan and Georgian planters themselves, and all Lancashire would deplore a successful insurrection of the slaves, if such a thing were possible." [3]

On December 20, 1860, South Carolina led the march in

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 64.

[2] Cited in Smith, *Parties and Slavery*, 68. A remarkable exposition of the "power of cotton" and the righteousness of slavery was published in Augusta, Georgia, in 1860, in the shape of a volume of nine hundred pages, entitled *Cotton is King, and Pro-Slavery Arguments*. This reproduced seven separate works by distinguished Southern writers analysing Slavery from the point of view of political economy, moral and political philosophy, social ethics, political science, ethnology, international law, and the Bible. The purpose of this united publication was to prove the rightfulness, in every aspect, of slavery, the prosperity of America as based on cotton, and the power of the United States as dependent on its control of the cotton supply. The editor was E. N. Elliot, President of Planters' College, Mississippi.

[3] Jan. 26, 1861. Cited in Maxwell, *Clarendon*, II, p. 237.

secession. Fifteen days earlier the British consul at Charleston, Bunch, reported a conversation with Rhett, long a leader of the Southern cause and now a consistent advocate of secession, in which Rhett developed a plan of close commercial alliance with England as the most favoured nation, postulating the dependence of Great Britain on the South for cotton—" upon which supposed axiom, I would remark," wrote Bunch, " all their calculations are based."[1] Such was, indeed, Southern calculation. In January, 1861, *De Bow's Review* contained an article declaring that " the first demonstration of blockade of the Southern ports would be swept away by the English fleets of observation hovering on the Southern coasts, to protect English commerce, and especially the free flow of cotton to English and French factories. . . . A stoppage of the raw material . . . would produce the most disastrous political results—if not a revolution in England. This is the language of English statesmen, manufacturers, and merchants, in Parliament and at cotton associations' debates, and it discloses the truth."[2]

The historical student will find but few such British utterances at the moment, and these few not by men of great weight either in politics or in commerce. The South was labouring under an obsession and prophesied results accordingly. So strong was this obsession that governmental foreign policy neglected all other considerations and the first Commission to Europe had no initial instructions save to demand recognition.[3] The failure of that Com-

[1] *Am. Hist. Rev.*, XVIII, p. 785. Bunch to Russell. No. 51. Confidential. Dec. 5, 1860. As here printed this letter shows two dates, Dec. 5 and Dec. 15, but the original in the Public Record Office is dated Dec. 5.

[2] pp. 94-5. Article by W. H. Chase of Florida.

[3] Rhett, who advocated commercial treaties, learned from Toombs that this was the case. " Rhett hastened to Yancey. Had he been instructed to negotiate commercial treaties with European powers? Mr. Yancey had received no intimation from any source that authority to negotiate commercial treaties would devolve upon the Commission. ' What then ' exclaimed Rhett, ' can be your instructions? ' The Presi-

mission, the prompt British acquiescence in the blockade, were harsh blows to Southern confidence but did not for a long time destroy the faith in the power of cotton. In June, 1861, Bunch wrote that there was still a firm belief that "Great Britain will make any sacrifice, even of principle or of honour, to prevent the stoppage of the supply of cotton," and he enclosed a copy of an article in the *Charleston Mercury* of June 4, proclaiming: "The cards are in our hands, and we intend to play them out to *the bankruptcy of every cotton factory in Great Britain and France, or the acknowledgment of our independence.*"[1] As late as March, 1862, Bunch was still writing of this Southern faith in cotton and described the newly-made appointment of Benjamin as Secretary of State as partly due to the fact that he was the leader of the "King Cotton" theory of diplomacy.[2] It was not until the war was well nigh over that British persistence in neutrality, in spite of undoubted hardships caused by the lack of cotton, opened Southern eyes. Pollard, editor of a leading Richmond newspaper, and soon unfriendly to the administration of Jefferson Davis, summed up in *The Lost Cause* his earlier criticisms of Confederate foreign policy:

> "'Cotton,' said the Charleston *Mercury*, 'would bring England to her knees.' The idea was ludicrous enough that England and France would instinctively or readily fling themselves into a convulsion, which their great politicians

dent, Mr. Yancey said, seemed to be impressed with the importance of the cotton crop. A considerable part of the crop of last year was yet on hand and a full crop will soon be planted. The justice of the cause and the cotton, so far as he knew, he regretted to say, would be the basis of diplomacy expected of the Commission" (Du Bose, *Life and Times of Yancey*, 599).

[1] F. O., Am., Vol. 780. No. 69. Bunch to Russell, June 5, 1861. Italics by Bunch. The complete lack of the South in industries other than its staple products is well illustrated by a request from Col. Gorgas, Chief of Ordnance to the Confederacy, to Mason, urging him to secure *three* ironworkers in England and send them over. He wrote, "The reduction of ores with coke seems not to be understood here" (Mason Papers. Gorgas to Mason, Oct. 13, 1861).

[2] F. O., Am., Vol. 843. No. 48. Confidential. Bunch to Russell, March 19, 1862.

> saw was the most tremendous one of modern times. But the puerile argument, which even President Davis did not hesitate to adopt, about the power of 'King Cotton,' amounted to this absurdity: that the great and illustrious power of England would submit to the ineffable humiliation of acknowledging its dependency on the infant Confederacy of the South, and the subserviency of its empire, its political interests and its pride, to a single article of trade that was grown in America!" [1]

But irrespective of the extremes to which Southern confidence in cotton extended the actual hardships of England were in all truth serious enough to cause grave anxiety and to supply an argument to Southern sympathizers. The facts of the "Lancashire Cotton Famine" have frequently been treated by historians at much length[2] and need here but a general review. More needed is an examination of some of the erroneous deductions drawn from the facts and especially an examination of the extent to which the question of cotton supply affected or determined British governmental policy toward America.

English cotton manufacturing in 1861 held a position of importance equalled by no other one industry. Estimates based on varying statistics diverge as to exact proportions, but all agree in emphasizing the pre-eminent place of Lancashire in determining the general prosperity of the nation. Surveying the English, not the whole British, situation it is estimated that there were 2,650 factories of which 2,195 were in Lancashire and two adjacent counties. These employed 500,000 operatives and consumed a thousand million pounds of cotton each year.[3] An editorial in the

[1] p. 130.

[2] The two principal British works are: Arnold, *The History of the Cotton Famine*, London, 1864; and Watts, *The Facts of the Cotton Famine*, Manchester, 1866. A remarkable statistical analysis of the world cotton trade was printed in London in 1863, by a Southerner seeking to use his study as an argument for British mediation. George McHenry, *The Cotton Trade*.

[3] Scherer, *Cotton as a World Power*, pp. 263-4.

Times, September 19, 1861, stated that one-fifth of the entire English population was held to be dependent, either directly or indirectly, on the prosperity of the cotton districts,[1] and therefore also dependent on the source of supply, the Confederate South, since statistics, though varying, showed that the raw cotton supplied from America constituted anywhere from 78 to 84 per cent. of the total English importation.[2]

The American crop of 1860 was the largest on record, nearly 4,000,000 bales, and the foreign shipments, without question hurried because of the storm-cloud rising at home, had been practically completed by April, 1861. Of the 3,500,000 bales sent abroad, Liverpool, as usual, received the larger portion.[3] There was, then, no immediate shortage of supply when war came in America, rather an unusual accumulation of raw stocks, even permitting some reshipment to the Northern manufacturing centres of America where the scarcity then brought high prices. In addition, from December, 1860, to at least April, 1861, there had been somewhat of a slump in demand for raw cotton by British manufacturers due to an over-production of goods in the two previous years. There had been a temporary depression in 1856-57 caused by a general financial crisis, but early in 1858 restored confidence and a tremendous demand from the Far East—India especially—set the mills running again on full time, while many new mills were brought into operation. But by May, 1860, the mills had caught up with the heavy demands and the rest of the year saw uncertainty of operations and brought expressions of fear that the

[1] Lack of authentic statistics on indirect interests make this a guess by the *Times*. Other estimates run from one-seventh to one-fourth.

[2] Schmidt, "Wheat and Cotton During the Civil War," p. 408 (in *Iowa Journal of History and Politics*, Vol. 16), 78.8 per cent. (Hereafter cited as Schmidt, *Wheat and Cotton*.) Scherer, *Cotton as a World Power*, p. 264, states 84 per cent. for 1860. Arnold, *Cotton Famine*, pp. 36-39, estimates 83 per cent.

[3] Great Britain ordinarily ran more than twice as many spindles as all the other European nations combined. Schmidt, *Wheat and Cotton*, p. 407, *note*.

"plunge" to produce had been overdone. Manufactured stocks began to accumulate, and money was not easy since 1860 brought also a combination of events—deficient grain harvest at home, withdrawal of gold from England to France for investment in French public works, demand of America for gold in place of goods, due to political uncertainties there —which rapidly raised the discount rate from two and one half per cent. in January, 1860, to six in December. By the end of April, 1861, the Board of Trade Returns indicated that the cotton trade was in a dangerous situation, with large imports of raw cotton and decreased exports of goods.[1] The news of war actually begun in America came as a temporary relief to the English cotton trade and in the prospect of decreased supply prices rose, saving many manufacturers from impending difficulties. A few mills had already begun to work on part-time because of trade depression. The *immediate* effect of Lincoln's blockade proclamation was to check this movement, but by October it had again begun and this time because of the rapid increase in the price of raw cotton as compared with the slower advance of the price of goods.[2]

In substance the principal effect of the War on the English cotton trade for the first seven or eight months was felt, not in the manufacturing districts but in the Liverpool speculative and importing markets of raw cotton. Prices rose steadily to over a shilling a pound in October, 1861. On November 23 there was a near panic caused by rumours of British intervention. These were denounced as false and in five days the price was back above its previous

[1] This Return for April is noteworthy as the first differentiating commerce with the North and the South.

[2] These facts are drawn from Board of Trade Reports, and from the files of the *Economist*, London, and *Hunt's Merchants Magazine*, New York. I am also indebted to a manuscript thesis by T. P. Martin, "The Effects of the Civil War Blockade on the Cotton Trade of the United Kingdom," Stanford University. Mr. Martin in 1921 presented at Harvard University a thesis for the Ph.D degree, entitled "The Influence of Trade (in Cotton and Wheat) on Anglo-American Relations, 1829-1846," but

figure. Then on November 27 came the news of the *Trent* and the market was thrown into confusion, not because of hopes that cotton would come more freely but in fear that war with America would cause it to do so. The Liverpool speculators breathed freely again only when peace was assured. This speculative British interest was no cause for serious governmental concern and could not affect policy. But the manufacturing trade was, presumably, a more serious anxiety and if cotton became hard, or even impossible to obtain, a serious situation would demand consideration.

In the generally accepted view of a "short war," there was at first no great anticipation of real danger. But beginning with December, 1861, there was almost complete stoppage of supply from America. In the six months to the end of May, 1862, but 11,500 bales were received, less than one per cent. of the amount for the same six months of the previous year.[1] The blockade was making itself felt and not merely in shipments from the South but in prospects of Southern production, for the news came that the negroes were being withdrawn by their masters from the rich sea islands along the coast in fear of their capture by the Northern blockading squadrons.[2] Such a situation seemed bound in the end to result in pressure by the manufacturers for governmental action to secure cotton. That it did not immediately do so is explained by Arnold, whose dictum has been quite generally accepted, as follows:

> "The immediate result of the American war was, at this time, to relieve the English cotton trade, including the dealers in the raw material and the producers and dealers in manufactures, from a serious and impending difficulty.

[1] Adams, *Trans-Atlantic Historical Solidarity*, p. 89.

[2] F. O., Am., Vol. 843. No. 10. Bunch to Russell, Jan. 8, 1862. Bunch also reported that inland fields were being transformed to corn production and that even the cotton on hand was deteriorating because of the lack of bagging, shut off by the blockade.

> They had in hand a stock of goods sufficient for the consumption of two-thirds of a year, therefore a rise in the price of the raw material and the partial closing of their establishments, with a curtailment of their working expenses, was obviously to their advantage. But to make their success complete, this rise in the price of cotton was upon the largest stock ever collected in the country at this season. To the cotton trade there came in these days an unlooked-for accession of wealth, such as even it had never known before. In place of the hard times which had been anticipated, and perhaps deserved, there came a shower of riches." [1]

This was written of the situation in December, 1861. A similar analysis, no doubt on the explanations offered by his English friends, of "the question of cotton supply, which we had supposed would speedily have disturbed the level of their neutral policy" was made by Mason in March, 1862. "Thus," he concluded, "it is that even in Lancashire and other manufacturing districts no open demonstration has been made against the blockade."[2] Manufactures other than cotton were greatly prospering, in particular those of woollen, flax, and iron. And the theory that the cotton lords were not, in reality, hit by the blockade—perhaps profited by it—was bruited even during the war. *Blackwood's Magazine*, October, 1864, held this view, while the *Morning Post* of May 16, 1864, went to the extent of describing the "glut" of goods in 1861, relieved just in the nick of time by the War, preventing a financial crash, "which must sooner or later have caused great suffering in Lancashire."

Arnold's generalization has been taken to prove that the *immediate* effect of the Civil War was to save the cotton industry from great disaster and that there *immediately* resulted large profits to the manufacturers from the increased price of stocks on hand. In fact his description of the

[1] Arnold, *Cotton Famine*, p. 81.

situation in December, 1861, as his own later pages show, was not applicable, so far as manufacturers' profits are concerned, until the later months of 1862 and the first of 1863. For though prices might be put up, as they were, goods were not sold in any large quantities before the fall of 1862. There were almost no transactions for shipments to America, China, or the Indies.[1] Foreign purchasers as always, and especially when their needs had just been abundantly supplied by the great output of 1858-60, were not keen to place new orders in a rising and uncertain market. The English producers raised their prices, but they held their goods, lacking an effective market. The importance of this in British foreign policy is that at no time, until the accumulated goods were disposed of, was there likely to be any trade eagerness for a British intervention in America. Their only fear, says Arnold, was the sudden opening of Southern ports and a rush of raw cotton,[2] a sneer called out by the alleged great losses incurred and patriotically borne in silence. Certainly in Parliament the members from Lancashire gave no sign of discontent with the Government policy of neutrality for in the various debates on blockade, mediation, and cotton supply but one Member from Lancashire, Hopwood, ever spoke in favour of a departure from neutrality, or referred to the distress in the manufacturing districts as due to any other cause than the shortage in cotton caused by the war.[3]

But it was far otherwise with the operatives of Lancashire. Whatever the causes of short-time operation in the mills or of total cessation of work the situation was such that

[1] Parliamentary Returns, 1861 and 1862. *Monthly Accounts of Trade and Navigation* (in *Parliamentary Papers*, 1862, *Commons*. Vol. LV, and 1863, *Commons*, Vol. LXV).

[2] Arnold, *Cotton Famine*, pp. 174 and 215.

[3] In 1861 there were 26 Members from Lancashire in the Commons, representing 14 boroughs and 2 counties. The suffrage was such that only 1 in every 27 of the population had the vote. For all England the proportion was 1 in 23 (Rhodes, IV, 359). *Parliamentary Papers*, 1867-8, *Lords*, Vol. XXXII, "Report on Boundaries of Boroughs and Counties of England."

from October, 1861, more and more operatives were thrown out of employment. As their little savings disappeared they were put upon public poor relief or upon private charity for subsistence. The governmental statistics do not cover, accurately, the relief offered by private charity, but those of public aid well indicate the loss of wage-earning opportunity. In the so-called "Distressed Districts" of Lancashire and the adjoining counties it appears that poor relief was given to 48,000 persons in normal times, out of a total population of 2,300,000. In the first week of November, 1861, it was 61,207, and for the first week of December, 71,593; thereafter mounting steadily until March, 1862, when a temporary peak of 113,000 was reached. From March until the first week in June there was a slight decrease, but from the second week of June poor relief resumed an upward trend, increasing rapidly until December, 1862, when it reached its highest point of 284,418. In this same first week of December private relief, now thoroughly organized in a great national effort, was extended to 236,000 people, making a grand total at high tide of distress of over 550,000 persons, if private relief was not extended to those receiving public funds. But of this differentiation there is no surety—indeed there are evidences of much duplication of effort in certain districts. In general, however, these statistics do exhibit the great lack of employment in a one-industry district heretofore enjoying unusual prosperity.[1]

[1] The figures are drawn from (1) Farnall's "Reports on Distress in the Manufacturing Districts," 1862. *Parliamentary Papers, Commons*, Vol. XLIX, Pt. I, 1863. *Ibid.*, Vol. LII, 1864; and (2) from "Summary of the Number of Paupers in the Distressed Districts," from November, 1861, to December, 1863. *Commons*, Vol. LII. Farnall's reports are less exact than the *Summary* since at times Liverpool is included, at times not, as also six small poor-law unions which do not appear in his reports until 1864. The *Summary* consistently includes Liverpool, and fluctuates violently for that city whenever weather conditions interfered with the ordinary business of the port. It is a striking illustration of the narrow margin of living wages among the dockers of Liverpool that an annotation at the foot of a column of statistics should explain an increase in one week of 21,000 persons thrown on poor relief to the "prevalence of a strong east wind," which prevented vessels from getting up to the docks.

The manufacturing operative population of the district was estimated at between 500,000 and 600,000. At the time of greatest distress some 412,000 of these were receiving either public or private aid, though many were working part-time in the mills or were engaged on public enterprises set on foot to ease the crisis. But there was no starvation and it is absurd to compare the crisis to the Irish famine of the 'forties. This was a *cotton* famine in the shortage of that commodity, but it was not a *human* famine. The country, wrote John Bright, was passing through a terrible crisis, but "our people will be kept alive by the contributions of the country."[1] Nevertheless a rapid change from a condition of adequate wage-earning to one of dependence on charity—a change ultimately felt by the great bulk of those either directly or indirectly dependent upon the cotton industry—might have been expected to arouse popular demonstrations to force governmental action directed to securing cotton that trade might revive. That no such popular effect was made demands careful analysis—to be offered in a later chapter—but here the *fact* is alone important, and the fact was that the operatives sympathized with the North and put no pressure on the Cabinet. Thus at no time during the war was there any attempt from Lancashire, whether of manufacturers or operatives, to force a change of governmental policy.[2]

[1] Trevelyan, *Bright*, p. 309. To Sumner, Dec. 6, 1862.

[2] The historians who see only economic causes have misinterpreted the effects on policy of the "cotton famine." Recently, also, there has been advanced an argument that "wheat defeated cotton"—an idea put forward indeed in England itself during the war by pro-Northern friends who pointed to the great flow of wheat from the North as essential in a short-crop situation in Great Britain. Mr. Schmidt in "The Influence of Wheat and Cotton on Anglo-American Relations during the Civil War," a paper read before the American Historical Association, Dec. 1917, and since published in the *Iowa Journal of History and Politics*, July, 1918, presents with much care all the important statistics for both commodities, but his conclusions seem to me wholly erroneous. He states that "Great Britain's dependence on Northern wheat . . . operated as a contributing influence in keeping the British government officially neutral . . ." (p. 423), a cautious statement soon transformed to the positive one that "this fact did not escape the attention of the English government,"

As the lack of employment developed in Lancashire public discussion and consideration were inevitably aroused. But there was little talk of governmental interference and such as did appear was promptly met with opposition by the leading trade journals. July 13, 1861, the *Economist* viewed the cotton shortage as "a *temporary* and an *immediate* one. . . . We have—on our hypothesis—to provide against the stoppage of our supply for *one* year, and that the very *next* year." Would it *pay*, asked Bright, to break the blockade? "I don't think myself it would be cheap . . . at the cost of a war with the United States."[1] This was also the notion of the London *Shipping Gazette* which, while acknowledging that the mill-owners of England and France were about to be greatly embarrassed, continued: "*But we are not going to add to the difficulty by involving ourselves in a naval war with the Northern States. . . .*"[2]

The *Times* commented in substance in several issues in September, 1861, on the "wise policy of working short-

since leading journals referred to it (p. 431). Progressively, it is asserted: "But it was Northern wheat that may well be regarded as the decisive factor, counterbalancing the influence of cotton, in keeping the British government from recognizing the Confederacy" (p. 437). "That the wheat situation must have exerted a profound influence on the government . . ." (p. 438). And finally: "In this contest wheat won, demonstrating its importance as a world power of greater significance than cotton" (p. 439). This interesting thesis has been accepted by William Trimble in "Historical Aspects of the Surplus Food Production of the United States, 1862-1902" (*Am. Hist. Assoc. Reports*, 1918, Vol. 1, p. 224). I think Mr. Schmidt's errors are: (1) a mistake as to the time when recognition of the South was in governmental consideration. He places it in midsummer, 1863, when in fact the danger had passed by January of that year. (2) A mistake in placing cotton and wheat supply on a parity, since the former could not be obtained in quantity from *any* source before 1864, while wheat, though coming from the United States, could have been obtained from interior Russia, as well as from the maritime provinces, in increased supply if Britain had been willing to pay the added price of inland transport. There was a real "famine" of cotton; there would have been none of wheat, merely a higher cost. (This fact, a vital one in determining influence, was brought out by George McHenry in the columns of *The Index*, Sept. 18, 1862.) (3) The fact, in spite of all Mr. Schmidt's suppositions, that while cotton was frequently a subject of governmental concern in *memoranda* and in private notes between members of the Cabinet, I have failed to find one single case of the mention of wheat. This last seems conclusive in negation of Mr. Schmidt's thesis.

[1] Speech at Rochdale, Sept. 1, 1861. Cited in *Hunt's Merchants Magazine*, Vol. 45, pp. 326-7.

time as a precaution against the contingencies of the cotton supply, and of the glutted state of distant markets for manufactured goods."[1] October 12, the *Economist* acknowledged that the impatience of some mill-owners was quite understandable as was talk of a European compulsion on America to stop an "objectless and hopeless" quarrel, but then entered upon an elaborate discussion of the principles involved and demonstrated why England ought not to intervene. In November Bright could write: "The notion of getting cotton by interfering with the blockade is abandoned apparently by the simpletons who once entertained it, and it is accepted now as a fixed policy that we are to take no part in your difficulties."[2] Throughout the fall of 1861 the *Economist* was doing its best to quiet apprehensions, urging that due to the "glut" of manufactured goods short-time must have ensued anyway, pointing out that now an advanced price was possible, and arguing that here was a situation likely to result in the development of other sources of supply with an escape from the former dependence on America. In view of the actual conditions of the trade, already recounted, these were appealing arguments to the larger manufacturers, but the small mills, running on short order supplies and with few stocks of goods on hand were less easily convinced. They were, however, without parliamentary influence and hence negligible as affecting public policy. At the opening of the new year, 1862, Bright declared that "with the spinners and manufacturers and merchants, I think generally there is no wish for any *immediate* change."[3]

Bright's letter of November, 1861, was written before news of the *Trent* reached England: that of January, 1862, just after that controversy had been amicably settled. The *Trent* had both diverted attention from cotton and in

[1] e.g., The *Times*, Sept. 19, 1861.
[2] To Sumner, Nov. 20, 1861. Mass Hist. Soc. *Proceedings*, XLVI, p. 97.
[3] *Ibid.* Jan. 11, 1862. Vol. XLV, p. 157.

its immediate result created a general determination to preserve neutrality. It is evident that even without this threat of war there was no real cotton pressure upon the Government. With Northern successes in the spring of 1862 hopes were aroused that the war would soon end or that at least some cotton districts would be captured to the relief of England. Seward held out big promises based on the capture of New Orleans, and these for a time calmed governmental apprehensions, though by midsummer it was clear that the inability to secure the country back of the city, together with the Southern determination to burn their cotton rather than see it fall into the hands of the enemy, would prevent any great supply from the Mississippi valley.[1] This was still not a matter of *immediate* concern, for the Government and the manufacturers both held the opinion that it was not lack of cotton alone that was responsible for the distress and the manufacturers were just beginning to unload their stocks.[2] But in considering and judging the attitude of the British public on this question of cotton it should always be remembered that the great mass of the people sincerely believed that America was responsible for the distress in Lancashire. The error in understanding was more important than the truth.

In judging governmental policy, however, the truth as regards the causes of distress in England is the more important element. The " Cotton Lords " did not choose to reveal it. One must believe that they intentionally dwelt upon the war as the sole responsible cause. In the first important parliamentary debate on cotton, May 9, 1862, not a word

[1] F. O., Am., Vol. 843. No. 85. Bunch to Russell, June 25, 1862. He reported a general burning of cotton estimating the amount so destroyed as nearly one million bales.

[2] Rhodes, III, p. 503, leaves the impression that England was at first unanimous in attributing the cotton disaster to the War. Also, IV, p. 77. I think this an error. It was the general public belief but not that of the well informed. Rhodes, Vol. IV, p. 364, says that it was not until January, 1863, that it was " begun to be understood " that famine was not wholly caused by the War, but partly by glut.

was said of any other element in the situation, and, it is to be noted, not a word advocating a change in British neutral policy.[1] It is to be noted also that this debate occurred when for two months past, the numbers on poor relief in Lancashire were temporarily decreasing,[2] and the general tone of the speakers was that while the distress was serious it was not beyond the power of the local communities to meet it. There was not, then, in May, any reason for grave concern and Russell expressed governmental conviction when he wrote to Gladstone, May 18, "We must, I believe, get thro' the cotton crisis as we can, and promote inland works and railroads in India."[3] Moreover the Southern orders to destroy cotton rather than permit its capture and export by the North disagreeably affected British officials.[4] Up to the end of August, 1862, Russell, while writing much to Lyons on England's necessity for cotton, did not do so in a vein indicative of criticism of Northern policy nor in the sense that British distress demanded special official consideration. Such demands on America as were made up to this time came wholly from France.[5]

It was not then cotton, primarily, which brought a revival in July of the Southern attack on the Government through Parliament.[6] June had seen the collapse of Lindsay's

[1] Hansard, 3d. Ser., CLXVI, pp. 1490-1520. Debate on "The Distress in the Manufacturing Districts." The principal speakers were Egerton, Potter, Villiers and Bright. Another debate on "The Cotton Supply" took place June 19, 1862, with no criticism of America. *Ibid.* CLXVII, pp. 754-93.

[2] See *ante*, p. 12.

[3] Gladstone Papers.

[4] F. O., Am., Vol. 843. No. 73. Bunch to Russell, May 12, 1862. A description of these orders as inclusive of "foreign owned" cotton of which Bunch asserted a great stock had been purchased and stored, waiting export, by British citizens. Molyneaux at Savannah made a similar report. *Ibid.*, Vol. 849. No. 16. To Russell, May 10, 1862.

[5] Bancroft, *Seward*, II, pp. 214-18.

[6] Arnold, *Cotton Famine*, p. 228, quotes a song in the "improvised schoolrooms" of Ashton where operatives were being given a leisure-time education. One verse was:

"Our mules and looms have now ceased work, the Yankees are the cause.
But we will let them fight it out and stand by English laws;
No recognizing shall take place, until the war is o'er;
Our wants are now attended to, we cannot ask for more."

initial move, and Palmerston's answer to Hopwood, June 13, that there was no intention, at present, to offer mediation, appeared final. It was not cotton, but McClellan's defeat, that produced a quick renewal of Lindsay's activities. June 30, Hopwood had withdrawn his motion favouring recognition but in doing so asked whether, "considering the great and increasing distress in the country, the patient manner in which it has hitherto been borne, and the hopelessness of the termination of hostilities, the Government intend to take any steps whatever, either as parties to intervention or otherwise, to endeavour to put an end to the Civil War in America?" This was differently worded, yet contained little variation from his former question of June 13, and this time Palmerston replied briefly that the Government certainly would like to mediate if it saw any hope of success but that at present "both parties would probably reject it. If a different situation should arise the Government would be glad to act."[1] This admission was now seized upon by Lindsay who, on July 11, introduced a motion demanding consideration of "the propriety of offering mediation with the view of terminating hostilities," and insisted upon a debate.

Thus while the first week of June seemed to have quieted rumours of British mediation, the end of the month saw them revived. Adams was keenly aware of the changing temper of opinion and on June 20 presented to Russell a strong representation by Seward who wrote "under the President's instructions" that such recurrent rumours were highly injurious to the North since upon hopes of foreign aid the South has been encouraged and sustained from the first day of secession. Having developed this complaint at some length Seward went on to a brief threat, containing the real meat of the despatch, that if foreign nations did venture to intervene or mediate in favour of the South, the

[1] Hansard, 3rd. Ser., CLXVII, p. 1213.

North would be forced to have recourse to a weapon hitherto not used, namely to aid in a rising of the slaves against their masters. This was clearly a threat of a "servile war" if Great Britain aided the South—a war which would place Britain in a very uncomfortable position in view of her anti-slavery sentiments in the past. It is evidence of Adams' discretion that this despatch, written May 28, was held back from presentation to Russell until revived rumours of mediation made the American Minister anxious.[1] No answer was given by Russell for over a month, a fact in itself indicative of some hesitancy on policy. Soon the indirect diplomacy of Napoleon III was renewed in the hope of British concurrence. July 11, Slidell informed Mason that Persigny in conversation had assured him "that this Government is now more anxious than ever to take prompt and decided action in our favour." Slidell asked if it was impossible to stir Parliament but acknowledged that everything depended on Palmerston: "that august body seems to be as afraid of him as the urchins of a village school of the birch of their pedagogue."[2]

Unquestionably Persigny here gave Slidell a hint of private instructions now being sent by Napoleon to Thouvenel who was on a visit to London. The Emperor telegraphed "Demandez au gouvernement anglais s'il ne croit pas le moment venu de reconnaître le Sud."[3] Palmerston had already answered this question in Parliament and Thouvenel was personally very much opposed to the Emperor's suggestion. There were press rumours that he was in London

[1] *Parliamentary Papers*, 1862, *Lords*, Vol. XXV. "Further Correspondence relating to the Civil War in the United States." No. 1. Recd. June 21, 1862.

[2] Mason Papers.

[3] Thouvenel, *Le Secret de l'Empereur*, II, 352. The exact length of Thouvenel's stay in London is uncertain, but he had arrived by July 10 and was back in Paris by July 21. The text of the telegram is in a letter to Flahault of July 26, in which Thouvenel shows himself very averse to any move which may lead to war with America, "an adventure more serious than that of Mexico" (*Ibid.*, p. 353).

to bring the matter to a head, but his report to Mercier was that interference in America was a very dangerous matter and that he would have been "badly received" by Palmerston and Russell if he had suggested any change in neutral policy.[1]

In spite of this decided opposition by the French Minister of Foreign Affairs it is evident that one ground for renewed Southern hopes was the knowledge of the Emperor's private desires. Lindsay chose his time well for on July 16 the first thorough report on Lancashire was laid before Parliament,[2] revealing an extremity of distress not previously officially authenticated, and during this week the papers were full of an impending disaster to McClellan's army. Lyons, now in London, on his vacation trip, was concerned for the future mainly because of cotton, but did not believe there was much danger of an immediate clash with America.[3] But the great Southern argument of the moment was the Northern military failure, the ability of the South to resist indefinitely and the hopelessness of the war. On the morning of July 18 all London was in excitement over press statements that the latest news from America was not of McClellan's retreat but of the capture of his entire army.

Lindsay's motion was set for debate on this same July 18. Adams thought the story of McClellan's surrender had been set afloat "to carry the House of Commons off

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 349. July 24, 1862. See also résumé in Walpole, *History of Twenty-five Years*, II, 55.

[2] Farnall's First Report. *Parliamentary Papers*, 1862, *Commons*, Vol. XLIX.

[3] Lyons Papers. Lyons to Stuart, July 5, 1862.

"Public opinion will not allow the Government to do more for the North than maintain a strict neutrality, and it may not be easy to do that if there comes any strong provocation from the U.S. . . ."

"However, the real question of the day is cotton. . . ."

"The problem is of how to get over *this next* winter. The prospects of the manufacturing districts are very gloomy."

". . . If you can manage in any way to get a supply of cotton for England before the winter, you will have done a greater service than has been effected by Diplomacy for a century; but nobody expects it."

their feet in its debate to-night."[1] The debate itself may be regarded as a serious attempt to push the Ministry into a position more favourable to the South, and the arguments advanced surveyed the entire ground of the causes of secession and the inevitability of the final separation of North and South. They need but brief summary. Lindsay, refusing to accede to appeals for postponement because "the South was winning anyway," argued that slavery was no element in the conflict, that the Southern cause was just, and that England, because of her own difficulties, should mediate and bring to a conclusion a hopeless war. He claimed the time was opportune since mediation would be welcomed by a great majority in the North, and he quoted from a letter by a labouring man in Lancashire, stating, "We think it high time to give the Southern States the recognition they so richly deserve."

Other pro-Southern speakers emphasized Lancashire distress. Gregory said: "We should remember what is impending over Lancashire—what want, what woe, what humiliation—and that not caused by the decree of God, but by the perversity of man. I leave the statistics of the pauperism that is, and that is to be, to my honourable friends, the representatives of manufacturing England." No statistics were forthcoming from this quarter for not a representative from Lancashire participated in the debate save Hopwood who at the very end upbraided his fellow members from the district for their silence and was interrupted by cries of "Divide, Divide." Lindsay's quoted letter was met by opponents of mediation with the assertion that the operatives were well known to be united against

[1] *A Cycle of Adams' Letters*, I, 166. To his son, July 18, 1862. He noted that the news had come by the *Glasgow* which had sailed for England on July 5, whereas the papers contained also a telegram from McClellan's head-quarters, dated July 7, but "the people here are fully ready to credit anything that is not favourable." Newspaper headings were "Capitulation of McClellan's Army. Flight of McClellan on a steamer." *Ibid.*, 167. Henry Adams to C. F. Adams, Jr., July 19.

any action and that they could be sustained "in luxury" from the public purse for far less a cost than that of a war with America.

But cotton did not play the part expected of it in this debate. Forster in a very able speech cleverly keeping close to a consideration of the effect of mediation on *England*, advanced the idea that such a step would not end the war but would merely intensify it and so prolong English commercial distress. He did state, however, that intervention (as distinct from mediation) would bring on a "servile war" in America, thus giving evidence of his close touch with Adams and his knowledge of Seward's despatch of May 28. In the main the friends of the North were content to be silent and leave it to the Government to answer Lindsay. This was good tactics and they were no doubt encouraged to silence by evidence early given in the debate that there would be no positive result from the motion. Gregory showed that this was a real *attack* on the Government by his bitter criticisms of Russell's "three months" speech.[1]

At the conclusion of Gregory's speech Lindsay and his friends, their immediate purpose accomplished and fearing a vote, wished to adjourn the debate indefinitely. Palmerston objected. He agreed that everyone earnestly wished the war in America to end, but he declared that such debates were a great mistake unless something definite was to follow since they only served to create irritation in America, both North and South. He concluded with a vigorous assertion that if the Ministry were to administer the affairs of the nation it ought to be trusted in foreign affairs and not have its hands tied by parliamentary expressions of opinion at inopportune moments. Finally, the South had

[1] Gregory introduced a ridiculous extract from the *Dubuque Sun*, an Iowa paper, humorously advocating a repudiation of all debts to England, and solemnly held this up as evidence of the lack of financial morality in America. If he knew of this the editor of the small-town American paper must have been tickled at the reverberations of his humour.

not yet securely established its independence and hence could not be recognized. This motion, if carried, would place England on a definite side and thus be fatal to any hope of successful mediation or intervention in the future. Having now made clear the policy of the Government Palmerston did not insist upon a division and the motion was withdrawn.[1]

On the surface Lindsay's effort of July 18 had resulted in ignominious failure. Lyons called it "ill-timed. . . . I do not think we know here sufficiently the extent of the disaster [to McClellan] to be able to come to any conclusion as to what the European Powers should do." But the impression left by the debate that there was a strong parliamentary opinion in favour of mediation made Lyons add: "I suppose Mercier will open full cry on the scent, and be all for mediation. I am still afraid of any attempt of the kind."[2] Very much the same opinion was held by Henry Adams who wrote, "the pinch has again passed by for the moment and we breathe more freely. But I think I wrote to you some time ago that if July found us still in Virginia, we could no longer escape interference. I think now that it is inevitable." A definite stand taken by the North on slavery would bring "the greatest strength in this running battle."[3]

In spite of surface appearances that the debate was "ill-timed" the "pinch" was not in fact passed as the activities of Slidell and Mason and their friends soon indicated. For a fortnight the Cabinet, reacting to the repeated suggestions of Napoleon, the Northern defeats, and the distress in Lancashire, was seriously considering the possibility of taking some step toward mediation. On July 16, two days before the debate in the Commons,

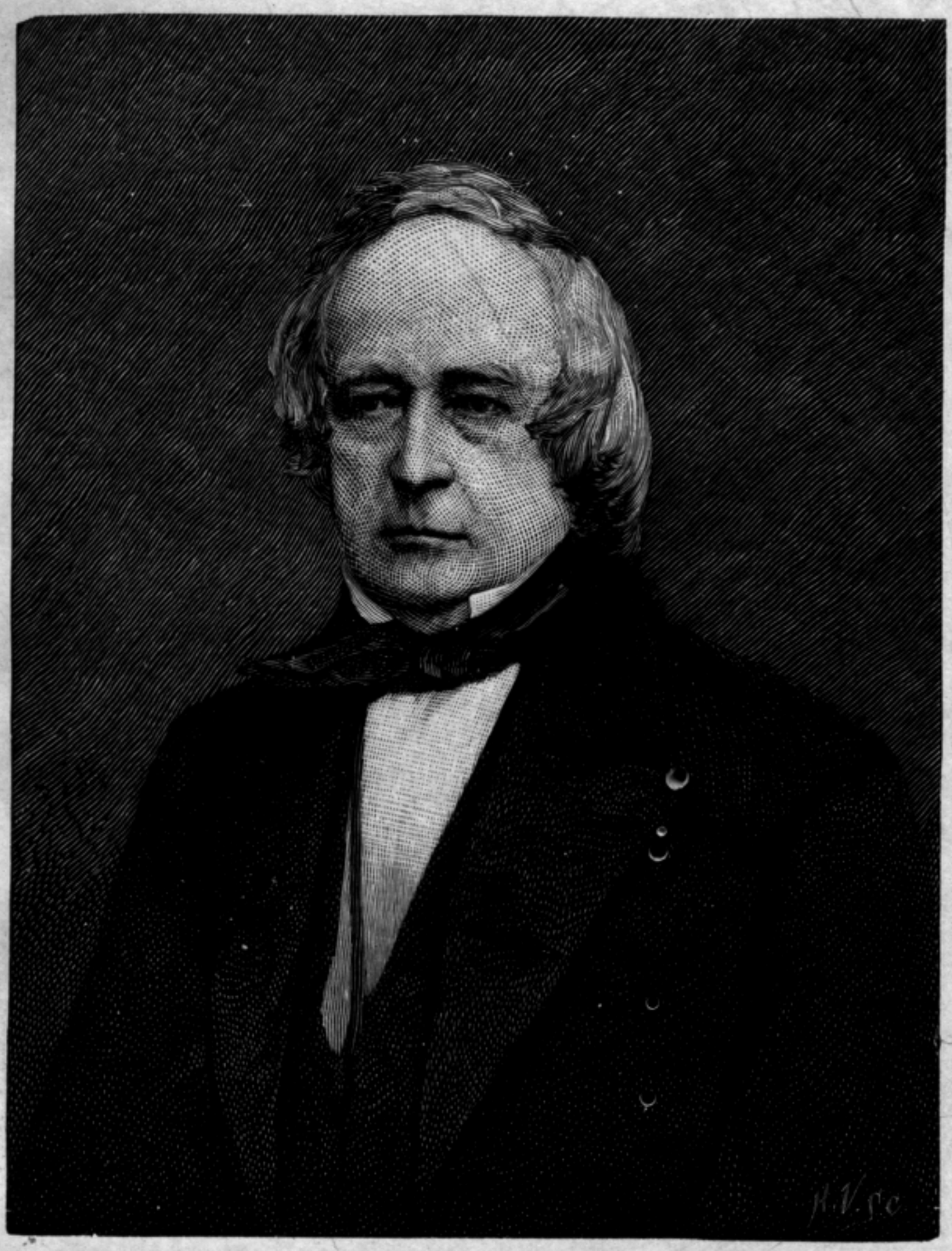
[1] Hansard, 3rd. Ser. CLXVIII, pp. 511-549, for the entire debate.
[2] Lyons Papers. Lyons to Stuart, July 19, 1862.
[3] *A Cycle of Adams' Letters*, I, pp. 168-9. To Charles Francis Adams, Jr., July 19, 1862.

Slidell at last had his first personal contact with Napoleon, and came away from the interview with the conviction that "if England long persists in her inaction he [Napoleon] would be disposed to act without her." This was communicated to Mason on July 20,[1] but Slidell did *not* as yet see fit to reveal to Mason that in the interview with Napoleon he had made a definite push for separate action by France, offering inducements on cotton, a special commercial treaty, and "alliances, defensive, and offensive, for Mexican affairs," this last without any authority from Benjamin, the Confederate Secretary of State. On July 23 Slidell made a similar offer to Thouvenel and left with him a full memorandum of the Southern proposal.[2] He was cautioned that it was undesirable his special offer to France should reach the ears of the British Government—a caution which he transmitted to Mason on July 30, when sending copies of Benjamin's instructions, but still without revealing the full extent of his own overtures to Napoleon.

In all this Slidell was still exhibiting that hankering to

[1] Mason Papers. The larger part of Slidell's letter to Mason is printed in Sears, "A Confederate Diplomat at the Court of Napoleon III," *Am. Hist. Rev.*, Jan., 1921, p. 263. C. F. Adams, "A Crisis in Downing Street," Mass. Hist. Soc. *Proceedings*, May, 1914, p. 379, is in error in dating this letter April 21, an error for which the present writer is responsible, having misread Slidell's difficult hand-writing.

[2] Richardson, II, pp. 268-289. Slidell to Benjamin, July 25, 1862. It is uncertain just when Mason learned the details of Slidell's offer to France. Slidell, in his letter of July 20, wrote: "There is an important part of our conversation that I will give you through Mr. Mann," who, apparently, was to proceed at once to London to enlighten Mason. But the Mason Papers show that Mann did not go to London, and that Mason was left in the dark except in so far as he could guess at what Slidell had done by reading Benjamin's instructions, sent to him by Slidell, on July 30. These did *not* include anything on Mexico, but made clear the plan of a "special commercial advantage" to France. In C. F. Adams, "A Crisis in Downing Street," p. 381, it is stated that Benjamin's instructions were written "at the time of Mercier's visit to Richmond"—with the inference that they were a result of Mercier's conversation at that time. This is an error. Benjamin's instructions were written on April 12, and were sent on April 14, while it was not until April 16 that Mercier reached Richmond. To some it will no doubt seem inconceivable that Benjamin should not have informed Mercier of his plans for France, just formulated. But here, as in Chapter IX, I prefer to accept Mercier's positive assurances to Lyons at their face value. Lyons certainly so accepted them and there is nothing in French documents yet published to cast doubt on Mercier's honour, while the chronology of the Confederate documents supports it.



JOHN SLIDELL

(*From Nicolay and Hay's "Life of Abraham Lincoln": The Century Co. New York*)

pull off a special diplomatic achievement, characteristic of the man, and in line, also, with a persistent theory that the policy most likely to secure results was that of inducing France to act alone. But he was repeatedly running against advice that France must follow Great Britain, and the burden of his July 20 letter to Mason was an urging that a demand for recognition be now made simultaneously in Paris and London. Thouvenel, not at all enthusiastic over Slidell's proposals, told him that this was at least a prerequisite, and on July 23, Slidell wrote Mason the demand should be made at once.[1] Mason, on the advice of Lindsay, Fitzgerald, and Lord Malmesbury, had already prepared a request for recognition, but had deferred making it after listening to the debate of July 18.[2] Now, on July 24, he addressed Russell referring to their interview of February, 1862, in which he had urged the claims of the Confederacy to recognition and again presented them, asserting that the subsequent failure of Northern campaigns had demonstrated the power of the South to maintain its independence. The South, he wrote, asked neither aid nor intervention; it merely desired recognition and continuation of British neutrality.[3] On the same day Mason also asked for an interview,[4] but received no reply until July 31, when Russell wrote that no definite answer could be sent until "after a Cabinet" and that an interview did not seem necessary.[5]

This answer clearly indicates that the Government was in uncertainty. It is significant that Russell took this moment to reply at last to Seward's protestations of May 28,[6] which had been presented to him by Adams on June 20. He instructed Stuart at Washington that his delay had

[1] Mason Papers.
[2] *Ibid.*, Mason to Slidell, July 18 and 19.
[3] *Parliamentary Papers*, 1863, *Lords*, Vol. XXIX. "Correspondence with Mr. Mason respecting Blockade and Recognition." No. 7.
[4] *Ibid.*, No. 8.
[5] *Ibid.*, No. 9.
[6] See *ante*, p. 18.

been due to a "waiting for military events," but that these had been indecisive. He gave a résumé of all the sins of the North as a belligerent and wrote in a distinctly captious spirit. Yet these sins had not "induced Her Majesty's Government to swerve an inch from an impartial neutrality."[1] Here was no promise of a continuance of neutrality—rather a hint of some coming change. At least one member of the Cabinet was very ready for it. Gladstone wrote privately:

> "It is indeed much to be desired that this bloody and purposeless conflict should cease. From the first it has been plain enough that the whole question was whether the South was earnest and united. That has now for some months been demonstrated; and the fact thus established at once places the question beyond the region even of the most brilliant military successes. . . ."[2]

Gladstone was primarily influenced by the British commercial situation. Lyons, still in England, and a consistent opponent of a change of policy, feared this commercial influence. He wrote to Stuart:

> ". . . I can hardly anticipate any circumstances under which I should think the intervention of England in the quarrel between the North and South advisable. . . .
>
> "But it is very unfortunate that no result whatever is apparent from the nominal re-opening of New Orleans and other ports. And the distress in the manufacturing districts threatens to be so great that a pressure may be put upon the Government which they will find it difficult to resist."[3]

In Parliament sneers were indulged in by Palmerston at the expense of the silent cotton manufacturers of Lancashire, much to the fury of Cobden.[4] Of this period Arnold

[1] *Parliamentary Papers*, 1862, *Lords*, Vol. XXV. "Further Correspondence relating to the Civil War in the United States." No. 2. Russell to Stuart, July 28, 1862.

[2] Gladstone Papers. To Col. Neville, July 26, 1862.

[3] Lyons Papers. July 29, 1862.

[4] Malmesbury, *Memoirs of an Ex-Minister*, II, p. 276. July 31, 1862.

later sarcastically remarked that, "The representatives of Lancashire in the Houses of Parliament did not permit the gaieties of the Exhibition season wholly to divert their attention from the distress which prevailed in the home county."[1]

Being refused an interview, Mason transmitted to Russell on August 1 a long appeal, rather than a demand, for recognition, using exactly those arguments advanced by Lindsay in debate.[2] The answer, evidently given after that "Cabinet" for whose decision Russell had been waiting, was dated August 2. In it Russell, as in his reply to Seward on July 28, called attention to the wholly contradictory statements of North and South on the status of the war, which, in British opinion, had not yet reached a stage positively indicative of the permanence of Southern independence. Great Britain, therefore, still "waited," but the time might come when Southern firmness in resistance would bring recognition.[3] The tone was more friendly than any expressions hitherto used by Russell to Southern representatives. The reply does not reveal the decision actually arrived at by the Ministry. Gladstone wrote to Argyll on August 3 that "yesterday" a Cabinet had been held on the question "to move or not to move, in the matter of the American Civil War. . . ." He had come away before a decision when it became evident the prevailing sentiment would be "nothing shall be done until both parties are desirous of it." Gladstone thought this very foolish; he would have England approach France and Russia, but if they were not ready, wait until they were. "Something, I trust, will be done before the hot weather is over to stop these frightful horrors."[4]

[1] Arnold, *Cotton Famine*, p. 175.

[2] *Parliamentary Papers*, 1863, *Lords*, Vol. XXIX. "Correspondence with Mr. Mason respecting Blockade and Recognition." No. 10.

[3] *Ibid.*, No. 11.

[4] Gladstone Papers. Also Argyll, *Autobiography*, II, p. 191.

All parties had been waiting since the debate of July 18 for the Cabinet decision. It was at once generally known as "no step at present" and wisdom would have decreed quiet acquiescence. Apparently one Southern friend, on his own initiative, felt the need to splutter. On the next day, August 4, Lord Campbell in the Lords moved for the production of Russell's correspondence with Mason, making a very confused speech. "Society and Parliament" were convinced the war ought to end in separation. At one time Campbell argued that reconquest of the South was impossible; at another that England should interfere to prevent such reconquest. Again he urged that the North was in a situation where she could not stop the war without aid from Europe in extricating her. Probably the motion was made merely to draw from Russell an official statement. Production of the papers was refused. Russell stated that the Government still maintained its policy of strict neutrality, that if any action was to be taken it should be by all the maritime powers and that if, in the parliamentary recess, any new policy seemed advisable he would first communicate with those powers. He also declared very positively that as yet no proposal had been received from any foreign power in regard to America, laying stress upon the "perfect accord" between Great Britain and France.[1]

Mason commented on this speech that someone was evidently lying and naturally believed that someone to be Russell. He hoped that France would promptly make this clear.[2] But France gave no sign of lack of "perfect accord." On the contrary Thouvenel even discouraged Slidell from following Mason's example of demanding recognition and the formal communication was withheld, Mason acquiescing.[3] Slidell thought new disturbances in

[1] Hansard, 3rd. Ser., CLXVIII, p. 1177 *seq.*
[2] Mason Papers. Mason to Slidell, Aug. 5, 1862.
[3] F. O., France, Vol. 1443. No. 964. Cowley to Russell, Aug. 8, 1862. Mason Papers. Slidell to Mason, Aug. 20, 1862. Mason to Slidell, Aug. 21.

Italy responsible for this sudden lessening of French interest in the South, but he was gloomy, seeing again the frustration of high hopes. August 24 he wrote Benjamin :

> " You will find by my official correspondence that we are still hard and fast aground here. Nothing will float us off but a strong and continued current of important successes in the field.
>
> I have no hope from England, because I am satisfied that she desires an indefinite prolongation of the war, until the North shall be entirely exhausted and broken down.
>
> Nothing can exceed the selfishness of English statesmen except their wretched hypocrisy. They are continually casting about their disinterested magnaminity and objection of all other considerations than those dictated by a high-toned morality, while their entire policy is marked by egotism and duplicity. I am getting to be heartily tired of Paris." [1]

On August 7 Parliament adjourned, having passed on the last day of the session an Act for the relief of the distress in Lancashire by authorizing an extension of powers to the Poor Law Guardians. Like Slidell and Mason pro-Northern circles in London thought that in August there had come to a disastrous end the Southern push for a change in British policy, and were jubilant. To be sure, Russell had merely declared that the time for action was " not yet " come, but this was regarded as a sop thrown to the South. Neither in informed Southern nor Northern circles outside the Cabinet was there any suspicion, *except by Adams*, that in the six months elapsed since Lindsay had begun his movement the Ministry had been slowly progressing in thoughts of mediation.

In fact the sentiment of the Cabinet as stated by Gladstone had been *favourable* to mediation when " both parties were ready for it " and that such readiness would come soon most Members were convinced. This was a

[1] Richardson, II, p. 315.

convenient and reasonable ground for postponing action but did not imply that if the conviction were unrealized no mediation would be attempted. McClellan, driven out of the Peninsula, had been removed, and August saw the Northern army pressed back from Virginia soil. It was now Washington and not Richmond that seemed in danger of capture. Surely the North must soon realize the futility of further effort, and the reports early in July from Washington dilated upon the rapid emergence of a strong peace party.

But the first panic of dismay once past Stuart sent word of enormous new Northern levies of men and of renewed courage.[1] By mid-August, writing of cotton, he thought the prospect of obtaining any quantity of it "seems hopeless," and at the same time reported the peace party fast losing ground in the face of the great energy of the Administration.[2] As to recognition, Stuart believed: "There is nothing to be done in the presence of these enormous fresh levies, but to wait and see what the next two months will bring forth."[3] The hopes of the British Ministry based on a supposed Northern weariness of the war were being shattered. Argyll, having received from Sumner a letter describing the enthusiasm and determination of the North, wrote to Gladstone:

> "It is evident, whatever may be our opinion of the prospects of 'the North' that they do not yet, at least, feel any approach to such exhaustion as will lead them to admit of mediation. . . ." [4]

To this Gladstone replied:

> "I agree that this is not a state of mind favourable to mediation; and I admit it to be a matter of great difficulty

[1] Russell Papers. Stuart to Russell, July 7, 1862.

[2] *Ibid.* To Russell, Aug. 18, 1862.

[3] *Ibid.* Aug. 26. Stuart's "nothing to be done" refers, not to mediation, but to his idea in June-July that the time was ripe for recognition. He was wholly at variance with Lyons on British policy.

[4] Gladstone Papers. Aug. 26, 1862.

> to determine when the first step ought to be taken; but I cannot subscribe to the opinion of those who think that Europe is to stand silent without limit of time and witness these horrors and absurdities, which will soon have consumed more men, and done ten times more mischief than the Crimean War; but with the difference that there the end was uncertain, here it is certain in the opinion of the whole world except one of the parties. I should be puzzled to point out a single case of dismemberment which has been settled by the voluntary concession of the stronger party without any interference or warning from third powers, and as far as principle goes there never was a case in which warning was so proper and becoming, because of the frightful misery which this civil conflict has brought upon other countries, and because of the unanimity with which it is condemned by the civilized world." [1]

The renewal of Northern energy, first reports of which were known to Russell early in August, came as a surprise to the British Ministry. Their progress toward mediation had been slow but steady. Lindsay's initial steps, resented as an effort in indirect diplomacy and not supported by France officially, had received prompt rejection accompanied by no indication of a desire to depart from strict neutrality. With the cessation in late June of the Northern victorious progress in arms and in the face of increasing distress in Lancashire, the second answer to Lindsay was less dogmatic. As given by Palmerston the Government desired to offer mediation, but saw no present hope of doing so successfully. Finally the Government asked for a free hand, making no pledges. Mason might be gloomy, Adams exultant, but when August dawned plans were already on foot for a decided change. The secret was well kept. Four days after the Cabinet decision to wait on events, two days after Russell's refusal to produce the correspondence with Mason, Russell, on the eve of departure for the Continent, was writing to Palmerston:

[1] *Ibid.* Aug. 29, 1862.

"Mercier's notion that we should make some move in October agrees very well with yours. I shall be back in England before October, and we could then have a Cabinet upon it. Of course the war may flag before that.

"I quite agree with you that a proposal for an armistice should be the first step; but we must be prepared to answer the question on what basis are we to negotiate?" [1]

The next movement to put an end to the war in America was to come, not from Napoleon III, nor from the British friends of the South, but from the British Ministry itself.

[1] Palmerston MS. Aug. 6, 1862.

CHAPTER XI

RUSSELL'S MEDIATION PLAN

THE adjournment of Parliament on August 7 without hint of governmental inclination to act in the American Civil War was accepted by most of the British public as evidence that the Ministry had no intentions in that direction. But keen observers were not so confident. Motley, at Vienna, was keeping close touch with the situation in England through private correspondence. In March, 1862, he thought that "France and England have made their minds up to await the issue of the present campaign"—meaning McClellan's advance on Richmond.[1] With the failure of that campaign he wrote: "Thus far the English Government have resisted his [Napoleon's] importunities. But their resistance will not last long."[2] Meanwhile the recently established pro-Southern weekly, *The Index*, from its first issue, steadily insisted on the wisdom and necessity of British action to end the war.[3] France was declared rapidly to be winning the goodwill of the South at the expense of England; the British aristocracy were appealed to on grounds of close sympathy with a "Southern Aristocracy"; mediation, at first objected to, in view of the more reasonable demand for recognition, was in the end the chief object of *The Index*, after mid-July, when simple recognition seemed impossible of attainment.[4] Especially British

[1] Motley, *Correspondence*, II, 71. To his mother, March 16, 1862.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 81. Aug. 18, 1862.
[3] *The Index* first appeared on May 1, 1862. Nominally a purely British weekly it was soon recognized as the mouthpiece of the Confederacy.
[4] *The Index*, May 15, 29, June 19 and July 31, 1862.

humiliation because of the timidity of her statesmen, was harped upon and any public manifestation of Southern sympathy was printed in great detail.[1]

The speculations of Motley, the persistent agitation of *The Index* are, however, no indication that either Northern fears or Southern hopes were based on authoritative information as to governmental purpose. The plan now in the minds of Palmerston and Russell and their steps in furthering it have been the subject of much historical study and writing. It is here proposed to review them in the light of all available important materials, both old and new, using a chronological order and with more citation than is customary, in the belief that such citations best tell the story of this, the most critical period in the entire course of British attitude toward the Civil War. Here, and here only, Great Britain voluntarily approached the danger of becoming involved in the American conflict.[2]

Among the few who thought the withdrawal of Lindsay's motion, July 18, and the Prime Minister's comments did *not* indicate safety for the North stood Adams, the American Minister. Of Palmerston's speech he wrote the next day in his diary: "It was cautious and wise, but enough could be gathered from it to show that mischief to us in some shape will only be averted by the favour of Divine Providence or

[1] e.g., the issue of Aug. 14, 1862, contained a long report of a banquet in Sheffield attended by Palmerston and Roebuck. In his speech Roebuck asserted: "A divided America will be a benefit to England." He appealed to Palmerston to consider whether the time had not come to recognize the South. "The North will never be our friends. (Cheers.) Of the South you can make friends. They are Englishmen; they are not the scum and refuse of Europe. (The Mayor of Manchester: 'Don't say that; don't say that.') (Cheers and disapprobation.) I know what I am saying. They are Englishmen, and we must make them our friends."

[2] All American histories treat this incident at much length. The historian who has most thoroughly discussed it is C. F. Adams, with changing interpretation as new facts came to light. See his *Life of C. F. Adams*, Ch. XV; *Studies, Military and Diplomatic*, pp. 400-412; *Trans-Atlantic Historical Solidarity*, pp. 97-106; *A Crisis in Downing Street*, Mass. Hist. Soc. *Proceedings*, May, 1914, pp. 372-424. It will be made clear in a later chapter why Roebuck's motion of midsummer, 1863, was

our own efforts. The anxiety attending my responsibility is only postponed."[1] At this very moment Adams was much disturbed by his failure to secure governmental seizure of a war vessel being built at Liverpool for the South—the famous *Alabama*—which was soon completed and put to sea but ten days later, July 29. Russell's delay in enforcing British neutrality, as Adams saw it, in this matter, reinforcing the latter's fears of a change in policy, had led him to explain his alarm to Seward. On August 16 Adams received an instruction, written August 2, outlining the exact steps to be taken in case the feared change in British policy should occur. As printed in the diplomatic documents later presented to Congress this despatch is merely a very interesting if somewhat discursive essay on the inevitability of European ruminations on the possibility of interference to end the war and argues the unwisdom of such interference, especially for Great Britain's own interests. It does not read as if Seward were alarmed or, indeed, as if he had given serious consideration to the supposed danger.[2] But this conveys a very erroneous impression. An unprinted portion of the despatch very specifically and in a very serious tone, instructs Adams that if approached by the British Government with propositions implying a purpose:

> "To dictate, or to mediate, or to advise, or even to solicit or persuade, you will answer that you are forbidden to debate, to hear, or in any way receive, entertain or transmit, any communication of the kind. . . . If you are asked an opinion what reception the President would give to such a proposition, if made here, you will reply that you are not instructed, but you have no reason for supposing that it would be entertained."

This was to apply either to Great Britain alone or acting in conjunction with other Powers. Further, if the South

[1] Adams, *A Crisis in Downing Street*, p. 388.
[2] *U. S. Messages and Documents*, 1862-3. Pt. I, pp. 165-168.

should be "acknowledged" Adams was immediately to suspend his functions. "You will perceive," wrote Seward, "that we have approached the contemplation of that crisis with the caution which great reluctance has inspired. But I trust that you will also have perceived that the crisis has not appalled us."[1]

This serious and definite determination by the North to resent any intervention by Europe makes evident that Seward and Lincoln were fully committed to forcible resistance of foreign meddling. Briefly, if the need arose, the North would go to war with Europe. Adams at least now knew where he stood and could but await the result. The instruction he held in reserve, nor was it ever officially communicated to Russell. He did, however, state its tenor to Forster who had contacts with the Cabinet through Milner-Gibson and though no proof has been found that the American determination was communicated to the Ministry, the presumption is that this occurred.[2] Such communication could not have taken place before the end of August and possibly was not then made owing to the fact that the Cabinet was scattered in the long vacation and that, apparently, the plan to move *soon* in the American War was as yet unknown save to Palmerston and to Russell.

Russell's letter to Palmerston of August 6, sets the date of their determination.[3] Meanwhile they were depending much upon advices from Washington for the exact moment. Stuart was suggesting, with Mercier, that October should be selected,[4] and continued his urgings even though his immediate chief, Lyons, was writing to him from London strong personal objections to any European intervention whatever and especially any by Great Britain.[5] Lyons

[1] Adams, *A Crisis in Downing Street*, p. 389. First printed in Rhodes, VI, pp. 342-3, in 1899.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 390.
[3] See *ante*, p. 32.
[4] Russell Papers. Stuart to Russell, July 21, 1862.
[5] Lyons Papers. Lyons to Stuart, July 25, 1862.

explained his objections to Russell as well, but Stuart, having gone to the extent of consulting also with Stoeckl, the Russian Minister at Washington, was now in favour of straight-out recognition of the Confederacy as the better measure. This, thought Stoeckl, was less likely to bring on war with the North than an attempt at mediation.[1] Soon Stuart was able to give notice, a full month in advance of the event, of Lincoln's plan to issue an emancipation proclamation, postponed temporarily on the insistence of Seward,[2] but he attached no importance to this, regarding it as at best a measure of pretence intended to frighten the South and to influence foreign governments.[3] Russell was not impressed with Stuart's shift from mediation to recognition. "I think," he wrote, "we must allow the President to spend his second batch of 600,000 men before we can hope that he and his democracy will listen to reason."[4] But this did not imply that Russell was wavering in the idea that October would be a "ripe time." Soon he was journeying to the Continent in attendance on the Queen and using his leisure to perfect his great plan.[5]

Russell's first positive step was taken on September 13.

[1] Russell Papers. Stuart to Russell, Aug. 8, 1862. Stoeckl's own report hardly agrees with this. He wrote that the newspapers were full of rumours of European mediation but, on consultation with Seward, advised that any offer at present would only make matters worse. It would be best to wait and see what the next spring would bring forth (Russian Archives, Stoeckl to F. O., Aug. 9-21, 1862. No. 1566). Three weeks later Stoeckl was more emphatic; an offer of mediation would accomplish nothing unless backed up by force to open the Southern ports; this had always been Lyons' opinion also; before leaving for England, Lyons had told him "we ought not to venture on mediation unless we are ready to go to war." Mercier, however, was eager for action and believed that if France came forward, supported by the other Powers, especially Russia, the United States would be compelled to yield. To this Stoeckl did not agree. He believed Lyons was right (*Ibid.* Sept. 16-28, 1862. No. 1776).

[2] *Ibid.* Aug. 22, 1862. Sumner was Stuart's informant.

[3] *Ibid.* Sept. 26, 1862. When issued on September 22, Stuart found no "humanity" in it. "It is cold, vindictive and entirely political."

[4] Palmerston MS. Russell to Palmerston, Aug. 24, 1862.

[5] The ignorance of other Cabinet members is shown by a letter from Argyll to Gladstone, September 2, 1862, stating as if an accepted conclusion, that there should be no interference and that the war should be allowed to reach its "natural issue" (Gladstone Papers).

On that date he wrote to Cowley in Paris instructing him to sound Thouvenel, *privately*,[1] and the day following he wrote to Palmerston commenting on the news just received of the exploits of Stonewall Jackson in Virginia, "it really looks as if he might end the war. In October the hour will be ripe for the Cabinet."[2] Similar reactions were expressed by Palmerston at the same moment and for the same reasons. Palmerston also wrote on September 14:

> "The Federals . . . got a very complete smashing . . . even Washington or Baltimore may fall into the hands of the Confederates."
>
> "If this should happen, would it not be time for us to consider whether in such a state of things England and France might not address the contending parties and recommend an arrangement upon the basis of separation?"[3]

Russell replied:

> ". . . I agree with you that the time is come for offering mediation to the United States Government, with a view to the recognition of the independence of the Confederates. I agree further that, in case of failure, we ought ourselves to recognize the Southern States as an independent State. For the purpose of taking so important a step, I think we must have a meeting of the Cabinet. The 23rd or 30th would suit me for the meeting."[4]

The two elder statesmen being in such complete accord the result of the unofficial overture to France was now awaited with interest. This, considering the similar unofficial suggestions previously made by Napoleon, was surprisingly lukewarm. Cowley reported that he had held a long and serious conversation with Thouvenel on the subject of mediation as instructed by Russell on the thirteenth and found a disposition "to wait to see the result

[1] Russell Papers. Cowley to Russell. Sept. 18, 1862, fixes the date of Russell's letter.
[2] Palmerston MS.
[3] Walpole, *Russell*, II, p. 360.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 361. Sept. 17, 1862.

of the elections" in the North. Mercier apparently had been writing that Southern successes would strengthen the Northern peace party. Thouvenel's idea was that "if the peace party gains the ascendant," Lincoln and Seward, both of whom were too far committed to listen to foreign suggestions, would "probably be set aside." He also emphasized the "serious consequences" England and France might expect if they recognized the South.

> "I said that we might propose an armistice without mediation, and that if the other Powers joined with us in doing so, and let it be seen that a refusal would be followed by the recognition of the Southern States, the certainty of such recognition by all Europe must carry weight with it."
>
> Thouvenel saw some difficulties, especially Russia.
>
> ". . . the French Government had some time back sounded that of Russia as to her joining France and England in an offer of mediation and had been met by an almost scornful refusal. . . ."
>
> "It appears also that there is less public pressure here for the recognition of the South than there is in England."[1]

Thouvenel's lack of enthusiasm might have operated as a check to Russell had he not been aware of two circumstances causing less weight than formerly to be attached to the opinions of the French Secretary for Foreign Affairs. The first was the well-known difference on American policy between Thouvenel and Napoleon III and the well-grounded conviction that the Emperor was at any moment ready to impose his will, if only England would give the signal. The second circumstance was still more important. It was already known through the French press that a sharp conflict had arisen in the Government as to Italian policy and all signs pointed to a reorganization of the Ministry which would exclude Thouvenel. Under these

[1] Russell Papers. Cowley to Russell, Sept. 18, 1862. This is the first reference by Cowley in over three months to mediation—evidence that Russell's instructions took him by surprise.

circumstances Russell could well afford to discount Thouvenel's opinion. The extent to which he was ready to go—much beyond either the offer of mediation, or of armistice evidently in Cowley's mind—is shown by a letter to Gladstone, September 26.

> "I am inclined to think that October 16 may be soon enough for a Cabinet, if I am free to communicate the views which Palmerston and I entertain to France and Russia in the interval between this time and the middle of next month. These views had the offer of mediation to both parties in the first place, and in the case of refusal by the North, to recognition of the South. Mediation on the basis of separation and recognition accompanied by a declaration of neutrality." [1]

The perfected plan, thus outlined, had resulted from a communication to Palmerston of Cowley's report together with a memorandum, proposed to be sent to Cowley, but again *privately*,[2] addressed to France alone. Russell here also stated that he had explained his ideas to the Queen. "She only wishes Austria, Prussia and Russia to be consulted. I said that should be done, but we must consult France first." Also enclosed was a letter from Stuart of September 9, reporting Mercier as just returned from New York and convinced that if advantage were not taken of the present time to do exactly that which was in Russell's mind, Europe would have to wait for the "complete exhaustion" of the North.[3] Russell was now at home again and the next day Palmerston approved the plans as "excellent"; but he asked whether it would not be well to include Russia in the invitation as a compliment, even though "she might probably decline." As to the other European powers the matter could wait for an "after communication." Yet that Palmerston still wished to go

[1] Gladstone Papers.
[2] Palmerston MS. Russell to Palmerston, Sept. 22, 1862.
[3] Russell Papers.

slowly is shown by a comment on the military situation in America :

> " It is evident that a great conflict is taking place to the north-west of Washington, and its issue must have a great effect on the state of affairs. If the Federals sustain a great defeat, they may be at once ready for mediation, and the iron should be struck while it is hot. If, on the other hand, they should have the best of it, we may wait awhile and see what may follow. . . . " [1]

Thus through Palmerston's caution Russia had been added to France in Russell's proposed memorandum and the communication to Cowley had not been sent off immediately—as the letter to Gladstone of September 26 indicates. But the plan was regarded as so far determined upon that on September 24 Russell requested Lyons not to fix, as yet, upon a date for his departure for America, writing, " M. Mercier is again looking out for an opportunity to offer mediation, and this time he is not so much out in his reckoning."[2] Curiously Mercier had again changed his mind and now thought a proposal of an armistice was the best move, being " particularly anxious that there should be no mention of the word *separation*," but of this Russell had, as yet, no inkling.[3] With full approval of the plan as now outlined, Palmerston wrote to Gladstone, September 24, that he and Russell were in complete agreement that an offer of mediation should be made by the three maritime powers, but that " no actual step would be taken without the sanction of the Cabinet."[4] Two days later Russell explained to Gladstone the exact nature of the proposal,[5] but that there was even now no thoroughly worked out agreement on the sequence of steps necessary is shown by

[1] Walpole, *Russell*, II, p. 362. Sept. 23, 1862.
[2] Lyons Papers.
[3] Lyons Papers. Stuart to Lyons, Sept. 23, 1862.
[4] Morley, *Gladstone*, II, p. 76.
[5] See *ante*, p. 40.

Palmerston's letter to Gladstone of the twenty-fourth, in which is outlined a preliminary proposal of an armistice, cessation of blockade, and negotiation on the basis of separation. [1]

Other members of the Cabinet were likewise informed of the proposed overture to France and Russia and soon it was clear that there would be opposition. Granville had replaced Russell in attendance upon the Queen at Gotha. He now addressed a long and careful argument to Russell opposing the adventure, as he thought it, summing up his opinion in this wise:

> "... I doubt, if the war continues long after our recognition of the South, whether it will be possible for us to avoid drifting into it."
>
> "... I have come to the conclusion that it is premature to depart from the policy which has hitherto been adopted by you and Lord Palmerston, and which, notwithstanding the strong antipathy to the North, the strong sympathy with the South, and the passionate wish to have cotton, has met with such general approval from Parliament, the press, and the public." [2]

But Granville had little hope his views would prevail. A few days later he wrote to Lord Stanley of Alderley:

> "I have written to Johnny my reasons for thinking it decidedly premature. I, however, suspect you will settle to do so! Pam, Johnny, and Gladstone would be in favour of it; and probably Newcastle. I do not know about the others. It appears to me a great mistake." [3]

Opportunely giving added effect to Granville's letter

[1] Adams, *A Crisis in Downing Street*, p. 393, giving the exact text paraphrased by Morley.

[2] Fitzmaurice, *Granville*, I, pp. 442-44, gives the entire letter. Sept. 27, 1862.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 442. Oct. 1, 1862. Fitzmaurice attributes much influence to Granville in the final decision and presumes that the Queen, also, was opposed to the plan. There is no evidence to show that she otherwise expressed herself than as in the acquiescent suggestion to Russell. As for

there now arrived confused accounts from America of the battles about Washington and of a check to the Southern advance. On September 17 there had been fought the battle of Antietam and two days later Lee, giving up his Maryland campaign, began a retreat through the Shenandoah valley toward the old defensive Southern lines before Richmond. There was no pursuit, for McClellan, again briefly in command, thought his army too shattered for an advance. Palmerston had been counting on a great Southern victory and was now doubtful whether the time had come after all for European overtures to the contestants. October 2 he wrote Russell:

"MY DEAR RUSSELL,

"I return you Granville's letter which contains much deserving of serious consideration. There is no doubt that the offer of Mediation upon the basis of Separation would be accepted by the South. Why should it not be accepted? It would give the South in principle the points for which they are fighting. The refusal, if refusal there was, would come from the North, who would be unwilling to give up the principle for which they have been fighting so long as they had a reasonable expectation that by going on fighting they could carry their point. The condition of things therefore which would be favourable to an offer of mediation would be great success of the South against the North. That state of things seemed ten days ago to be approaching. Its advance has been lately checked, but we do not yet know the real course of recent events, and still less can we foresee what is about to follow. Ten days or a fortnight more may throw a clearer light upon future prospects.

"As regards possible resentment on the part of the Northerns following upon an acknowledgment of the Independence of the South, it is quite true that we should have less to care about that resentment in the spring when communication with Canada was open, and when our naval force could more easily operate upon the American coast,

"But if the acknowledgment were made at one and the same time by England, France and some other Powers, the Yankees would probably not seek a quarrel with us alone, and would not like one against a European Confederation. Such a quarrel would render certain and permanent that Southern Independence the acknowledgment of which would have caused it.

"The first communication to be made by England and France to the contending parties might be, not an absolute offer of mediation but a friendly suggestion whether the time was not come when it might be well for the two parties to consider whether the war, however long continued, could lead to any other result than separation; and whether it might not therefore be best to avoid the great evils which must necessarily flow from a prolongation of hostilities by at once coming to an agreement to treat upon that principle of separation which must apparently be the inevitable result of the contest, however long it may last.

"The best thing would be that the two parties should settle details by direct negotiation with each other, though perhaps with the rancorous hatred now existing between them this might be difficult. But their quarrels in negotiation would do us no harm if they did not lead to a renewal of war. An armistice, if not accompanied by a cessation of blockades, would be all in favour of the North, especially if New Orleans remained in the hands of the North.

"The whole matter is full of difficulty, and can only be cleared up by some more decided events between the contending armies. . . ."

PALMERSTON."[1]

Very evidently Palmerston was experiencing doubts and was all in favour of cautious delay. American military events more than Granville's arguments influenced him, but almost immediately there appeared a much more vigorous and determined opponent within the Cabinet. Cornewall Lewis was prompt to express objections. October 2, Russell transmitted to Palmerston a letter of disapproval

[1] Russell Papers. A brief extract from this letter is printed in Walpole, *Russell*, II, p. 362.

from Lewis. Russell also, momentarily, was hesitating. He wrote:

> "This American question must be well sifted. I send you a letter of G. Lewis who is against moving . . ."
>
> "My only doubt is whether we and France should stir if Russia holds back. Her separation from our move would ensure the rejection of our proposals. But we shall know more by the 16th. I have desired a cabinet to be summoned for that day, but the summons will not go out till Saturday. So if you wish to stop it, write to Hammond." [1]

From this it would appear that Russia had been approached[2] but that Russell's chief concern was the attitude of France, that his proposed private communication to Cowley had been despatched and that he was waiting an answer which might be expected before the sixteenth. If so his expectations were negatived by that crisis now on in the French Ministry over the Italian question prohibiting consideration of any other matter. On October 15 Thouvenel was dismissed, but his formal retirement from office did not take place until October 24. Several Ministers abroad, among them Flahault, at London, followed him into retirement and foreign affairs were temporarily in confusion.[3] The Emperor was away

[1] Palmerston MS.

[2] Brunow reported Russell's plan October 1, as, summarized, (1) an invitation to France and Russia to join with England in offering good services to the United States looking towards peace. (2) Much importance attached to the adhesion of Russia. (3) Excellent chance of success. (4) Nevertheless a possible refusal by the United States, in which case, (5) recognition by Great Britain of the South if it seemed likely that this could be done without giving the United States a just ground of quarrel. Brunow commented that this would be "eventually" the action of Great Britain, but that meanwhile circumstances might delay it. Especially he was impressed that the Cabinet felt the political necessity of "doing something" before Parliament re-assembled (Russian Archives, Brunow to F. O., London, Oct. 1, 1862 (N. S.). No. 1698. Gortchakoff promptly transmitted this to Stoeckl, together with a letter from Brunow, dated Bristol, Oct. 1, 1862 (N. S.), in which Brunow expressed the opinion that one object of the British Government was to introduce at Washington a topic which would serve to accentuate the differences that were understood to exist in Lincoln's Cabinet. (This seems very far-fetched.) Gortchakoff's comment in sending all this to Stoeckl was that Russia had no intention of changing her policy of extreme friendship to the United States (*Ibid.* F. O. to Stoeckl, Oct. 3, 1862 (O. S.).

[3] Thouvenel, *Le Secret de l'Empereur*, II, pp. 438-9.

from Paris and all that Cowley reported was that the last time he had seen Thouvenel the latter had merely remarked that " as soon as the Emperor came back the two Governments ought to enter into a serious consideration of the whole question. . . ."[1] Cowley himself was more concerned that it was now becoming clear France, in spite of previous protestations, was planning " colonizing " Mexico.[2]

Up to the end of September, therefore, the British Government, while wholly confident that France would agree in any effort whatsoever that England might wish to make, had no recent assurances, either official or private, to this effect. This did not disturb Russell, who took for granted French approval, and soon he cast aside the hesitation caused by the doubts of Granville, the opposition of Lewis, and the caution of Palmerston. Public opinion was certainly turning toward a demand for Ministerial action.[3] Two days of further consideration caused him to return to the attack; October 4 he wrote Palmerston:

> " I think unless some miracle takes place this will be the very time for offering mediation, or as you suggest, proposing to North and South to come to terms.
>
> " Two things however must be made clear:
>
> (i) That we propose separation.
>
> (ii) That we shall take no part in the war unless attacked ourselves."[4]

How Russell proposed to evade a war with an angry North was not made clear, but in this same letter notice was given that he was preparing a memorandum for the Cabinet. Russell was still for a mediation on lines of separation, but his uncertainty, even confusion, of mind became evident

[1] Russell Papers. Cowley to Russell, Sept. 30, 1862.

[2] *Ibid.* Cowley to Russell, Oct. 3, 1862.

[3] Even the *Edinburgh Review* for October, 1862, discussed recognition of the South as possibly near, though on the whole against such action.

[4] Palmerston MS. Walpole makes Palmerston responsible for the original plan and Russell acquiescent and readily agreeing to postpone. This study reverses the rôles.

but another two days later on receipt of a letter from Stuart, written September 23, in which he and Mercier were now all for a suggestion of armistice, with no mention of separation.[1] Russell now thought:

> "If no fresh battles occur, I think the suggestion might be adopted, tho' I am far from thinking with Mercier that the North would accept it. But it would be a fair and defensible course, leaving it open to us to hasten or defer recognition if the proposal is declined. Lord Lyons might carry it over on the 25th." [2]

British policy, as represented by the inclinations of the Foreign Secretary, having started out on a course portending positive and vigorous action, was now evidently in danger of veering far to one side, if not turning completely about. But the day after Russell seemed to be considering such an attenuation of the earlier plan as to be content with a mere suggestion of armistice, a bomb was thrown into the already troubled waters further and violently disturbing them. This was Gladstone's speech at Newcastle, October 7, a good third of which was devoted to the Civil War and in which he asserted that Jefferson Davis had made an army, was making a navy, and had created something still greater—a nation.[3] The chronology of shifts in opinion would, at first glance, indicate that Gladstone made this speech with the intention of forcing Palmerston and Russell to continue in the line earlier adopted, thus hoping to bolster up a cause now losing ground. His declaration, coming from a leading member of of the Cabinet, was certain to be accepted by the public as a foreshadowing of governmental action. If Jefferson Davis

[1] Russell Papers. Also see *ante* p. 41. Stuart to Lyons. The letter to Russell was of exactly the same tenor.

[2] Palmerston MS. Russell to Palmerston, Oct. 6, 1862. Lyons' departure had been altered from October 11 to October 25.

[3] Morley, *Gladstone*, II, p. 79. Morley calls this utterance a great error which was long to embarrass Gladstone, who himself later so characterized it.

had in truth created a nation then early recognition must be given it. But this surmise of intentional pressure is not borne out by any discovered evidence. On the contrary, the truth is, seemingly, that Gladstone, in the north and out of touch, was in complete ignorance that the two weeks elapsed since his letters from Palmerston and Russell had produced any alteration of plan or even any hesitation. Himself long convinced of the wisdom of British intervention in some form Gladstone evidently could not resist the temptation to make the good news known. His declaration, foreshadowing a policy that did not pertain to his own department, and, more especially, that had not yet received Cabinet approval was in itself an offence against the traditions of British Cabinet organization. He had spoken without authorization and "off his own bat."

The speculative market, sensitive barometer of governmental policy, immediately underwent such violent fluctuations as to indicate a general belief that Gladstone's speech meant action in the war. The price of raw cotton dropped so abruptly as to alarm Southern friends and cause them to give assurances that even if the blockade were broken there would be no immediate outpouring of cotton from Southern ports.[1] On the other hand, Bright, staunch friend of the North, *hoped* that Gladstone was merely seeking to overcome a half-hearted reluctance of Palmerston and Russell to move. He was sore at heart over the "vile speech" of "your old acquaintance and friend."[2] The leading newspapers while at first accepting the Newcastle speech as an authoritative statement and generally, though mildly, approving, were quick to feel that there was still uncertainty of policy and became silent

[1] Adams, *A Crisis in Downing Street*, p. 402.

[2] Bright to Sumner, October 10, 1862. Mass. Hist. Soc. *Proceedings*, XLVI, p. 108. Bright was wholly in the dark as to a Ministerial project. Much of this letter is devoted to the emancipation proclamation which did not at first greatly appeal to Bright as a wise measure.

until it should be made clear just what was in the wind.[1] Within the Cabinet it is to be supposed that Gladstone had caused no small stir, both by reason of his unusual procedure and by his sentiments. On Russell, however much disliked was the incursion into his own province, the effect was reinvigoration of a desire to carry through at least some portion of the plan and he determined to go on with the proposal of an armistice. Six days after Gladstone's speech Russell circulated, October 13, a memorandum on America.[2]

This memorandum asserted that the South had shown, conclusively, its power to resist—had maintained a successful defensive; that the notion of a strong pro-Northern element in the South had been shown to be wholly delusive; that the emancipation proclamation, promising a freeing of the slaves in the sections still in rebellion on January 1, 1863, was no humanitarian or idealistic measure (since it left slavery in the loyal or recognized districts) and was but an incitement to servile war—a most "terrible" plan. For these reasons Russell urged that the Great Powers ought seriously to consider whether it was not their duty to propose a "suspension of arms" for the purpose of "weighing calmly the advantages of peace."[3] This was a far cry from mediation and recognition, nor did Russell

[1] The *Times*, October 9 and 10, while surprised that Gladstone and not Palmerston, was the spokesman, accepted the speech as equivalent to a governmental pronouncement. Then the *Times* makes no further comment of moment until November 13. The *Morning Post* (regarded as Palmerston's organ) reported the speech in full on October 9, but did not comment editorially until October 13, and then with much laudation of Gladstone's northern tour but *with no mention whatever* of his utterances on America.

[2] Gladstone wrote to Russell, October 17, explaining that he had intended no "official utterance," and pleaded that Spence, whom he had seen in Liverpool, did not put that construction on his words (Gladstone Papers). Russell replied, October 20. ". . . Still you must allow me to say that I think you went beyond the latitude which all speakers must be allowed when you said that Jeff Davis had made a nation. Negotiations would seem to follow, and for that step I think the Cabinet is not prepared. However we shall soon meet to discuss this very topic" (*Ibid.*).

[3] Palmerston MS. Appended to the Memorandum were the texts of the emancipation proclamation, Seward's circular letter of September 22, and an extract from the *National Intelligencer* of September 26, giving Lincoln's answer to Chicago abolitionists.

indicate either the proposed terms of an armistice or the exact steps to be taken by Europe in bringing it about and making it of value. But the memorandum of October 13 does clearly negative what has been the accepted British political tradition which is to the effect that Palmerston, angered at Gladstone's presumption and now determined against action, had "put up" Cornewall Lewis to reply in a public speech, thereby permitting public information that no Cabinet decision had as yet been reached. Lewis' speech was made at Hereford on October 14. Such were the relations between Palmerston and Russell that it is impossible the former would have so used Lewis without notifying Russell, in which case there would have been no Foreign Office memorandum of the thirteenth.[1] Lewis was, in fact, vigorously maintaining his objections, already made known to Russell, to *any* plan of departure from the hitherto accepted policy of neutrality and his speech at Hereford was the opening gun of active opposition.

Lewis did not in any sense pose as a friend of the North. Rather he treated the whole matter, in his speech at Hereford and later in the Cabinet as one requiring cool judgment and decision on the sole ground of British interests. This was the line best suited to sustain his arguments, but does not prove, as some have thought, that his Cabinet acknowledgment of the impossibility of Northern complete victory, was his private conviction.[2] At Hereford Lewis argued that everyone must acknowledge a great war was in

[1] Morley, *Gladstone*, II, 80, narrates the "tradition." Walpole, *Twenty-five Years*, II, 57, states it as a fact. Also *Education of Henry Adams*, pp. 136, 140. Over forty years later an anonymous writer in the *Daily Telegraph*, Oct. 24, 1908, gave exact details of the "instruction" to Lewis, and of those present. (Cited in Adams, *A Crisis in Downing Street*, pp. 404-5.) C. F. Adams, *Trans-Atlantic Historical Solidarity*, Ch. III, repeats the tradition, but in *A Crisis in Downing Street* he completely refutes his earlier opinion and the entire tradition. The further narrative in this chapter, especially the letters of Clarendon to Lewis, show that Lewis acted solely on his own initiative.

[2] Anonymously, in the *Edinburgh*, for April, 1861, Lewis had written of the Civil War in a pro-Northern sense, and appears never to have accepted fully the theory that it was impossible to reconquer the South.

progress and must admit it "to be undecided. Under such circumstances, the time had not yet arrived when it could be asserted in accordance with the established doctrines of international law that the independence of the Southern States had been established."[1] In effect Lewis gave public notice that no Cabinet decision had yet been reached, a step equally opposed to Cabinet traditions with Gladstone's speech, since equally unauthorized, but excusable in the view that the first offence against tradition had forced a rejoinder.[2] For the public Lewis accomplished his purpose and the press refrained from comment, awaiting results.[3] Meanwhile Palmerston, who must finally determine policy, was remaining in uncertainty and in this situation thought it wise to consult, indirectly, Derby, the leader of the opposition in Parliament. This was done through Clarendon, who wrote to Palmerston on October 16 that Derby was averse to action.

> "He said that he had been constantly urged to *go in for* recognition and mediation, but had always refused on the ground that recognition would merely irritate the North without advancing the cause of the South or procuring a single bale of cotton, and that mediation in the present temper of the Belligerents *must* be rejected even if the mediating Powers themselves knew what to propose as a fair basis of compromise; for as each party insisted upon having that which the other declared was vitally essential to its existence, it was clear that the war had not yet marked

[1] Cited in Adams, *A Crisis in Downing Street*, p. 407.

[2] Derby, in conversation with Clarendon, had characterized Gladstone's speech as an offence against tradition and best practice. Palmerston agreed, but added that the same objection could be made to Lewis' speech. Maxwell, *Clarendon*, II, 267. Palmerston to Clarendon, Oct. 20, 1862. Clarendon wrote Lewis, Oct. 24, that he did not think this called for any explanation by Lewis to Palmerston, further proof of the falsity of Palmerston's initiative. *Ibid.*, p. 267.

[3] *The Index*, Oct. 16, 1862, warned against acceptance of Gladstone's Newcastle utterances as indicating Government policy, asserted that the bulk of English opinion was with him, but ignorantly interpreted Cabinet hesitation to the "favour of the North and bitter enmity to the South, which has animated the diplomatic career of Lord Russell. . . ." Throughout the war, Russell, to *The Index*, was the evil genius of the Government.

> out the stipulations of a treaty of peace. . . . The recognition of the South could be of no benefit to England unless we meant to sweep away the blockade, which would be an act of hostility towards the North." [1]

More than any other member of the Cabinet Lewis was able to guess, fairly accurately, what was in the Premier's mind for Lewis was Clarendon's brother-in-law, and "the most intimate and esteemed of his male friends."[2] They were in constant communication as the Cabinet crisis developed, and Lewis' next step was taken immediately after Palmerston's consultation of Derby through Clarendon. October 17, Lewis circulated a memorandum in reply to that of Russell's of October 13. He agreed with Russell's statement of the facts of the situation in America, but added with sarcasm:

> "A dispassionate bystander might be expected to concur in the historical view of Lord Russell, and to desire that the war should be speedily terminated by a pacific agreement between the contending parties. But, unhappily, the decision upon any proposal of the English Government will be made, not by dispassionate bystanders, but by heated and violent partisans; and we have to consider, not how the proposal indicated in the Memorandum ought to be received, or how it would be received by a conclave of philosophers, but how it is likely to be received by the persons to whom it would be addressed."

Lincoln's emancipation proclamation, Lewis admitted, presumably was intended to incite servile war, but that very fact was an argument against, not for, British action, since it revealed an intensity of bitterness prohibitory of any "calm consideration" of issues by the belligerents. And suppose the North did acquiesce in an armistice the only peaceful solution would be an independent slave-holding South for the establishment of which Great Britain

[1] Palmerston MS.
[2] Maxwell, *Clarendon*, II, 279.

would have become intermediary and sponsor. Any policy except that of the continuance of strict neutrality was full of dangers, some evident, some but dimly visible as yet. Statesmanship required great caution; " . . . looking to the probable consequences," Lewis concluded, " of this philanthropic proposition, we may doubt whether the chances of evil do not preponderate over the chances of good, and whether it is not—

> ' Better to endure the ills we have
> Than fly to others which we know not of.' "[1]

At the exact time when Lewis thus voiced his objections, basing them on the lack of any sentiment toward peace in America, there were received at the Foreign Office and read with interest the reports of a British special agent sent out from Washington on a tour of the Western States. Anderson's reports emphasized three points:

(1) Emancipation was purely a war measure with no thought of ameliorating the condition of the slaves once freed;

(2) Even if the war should stop there was no likelihood of securing cotton for a long time to come;

(3) The Western States, even more then the Eastern, were in favour of vigorous prosecution of the war and the new call for men was being met with enthusiasm.[2]

This was unpromising either for relief to a distressed England or for Northern acceptance of an armistice, yet Russell, commenting on Clarendon's letter to Palmerston, containing Derby's advice, still argued that even if declined a suggestion of armistice could do no harm and might open

[1] Palmerston MS.

[2] *Parliamentary Papers*, 1863. *Commons*, Vol. I XII. " Correspondence relating to the Civil War in the United States of North America." Nos. 33 and 37. Two reports received Oct. 13 and 18, 1862. Anderson's mission was to report on the alleged drafting of British subjects into the Northern Army.

the way for a later move, but he agreed that recognition "would certainly be premature at present."[1] Russell himself now heard from Clarendon and learned that Derby "had been constantly urged to press for recognition and mediation but he had always refused on the ground that the neutral policy hitherto pursued by the Government was the right one and that if we departed from it we should only meet with an insolent rejection of our offer."[2] A long conference with Lyons gave cause for further thought and Russell committed himself to the extent that he acknowledged "we ought not to move *at present* without Russia. . . ."[3] Finally, October 22, Palmerston reached a decision for the immediate present, writing to Russell:

> "Your description of the state of things between the two parties is most comprehensive and just. I am, however, much inclined to agree with Lewis that at present we could take no step nor make any communication of a distinct proposition with any advantage."
>
> . . . . . .
>
> "All that we could possibly do without injury to our position would be to ask the two Parties not whether they would agree to an armistice but whether they might not turn their thoughts towards an arrangement between themselves. But the answer of each might be written by us beforehand. The Northerns would say that the only condition of arrangement would be the restoration of the Union; the South would say their only condition would be an acknowledgment by the North of Southern Independence —we should not be more advanced and should only have pledged each party more strongly to the object for which they are fighting. I am therefore inclined to change the opinion on which I wrote to you when the Confederates seemed to be carrying all before them, and I am very much come back to our original view of the matter, that we must

[1] Palmerston MS. Russell to Palmerston, Oct. 18, 1862.
[2] Russell Papers. Clarendon to Russell, Oct. 19, 1862.
[3] Palmerston MS. Russell to Palmerston, Oct. 20, 1862.

> continue merely to be lookers-on till the war shall have taken a more decided turn."[1]

By previous arrangement the date October 23 had been set for a Cabinet to consider the American question but Russell now postponed it, though a few members appeared and held an informal discussion in which Russell still justified his "armistice" policy and was opposed by Lewis and the majority of those present. Palmerston did not attend, no action was possible and technically no Cabinet was held.[2] It soon appeared that Russell, vexed at the turn matters had taken, was reluctant in yielding and did not regard the question as finally settled. Yet on the afternoon of this same day Adams, much disturbed by the rumours attendant upon the speeches of Gladstone and Lewis, sought an explanation from Russell and was informed that the Government was not inclined at present to change its policy but could make no promises for the future.[3] This appeared to Adams to be an assurance against *any* effort by Great Britain and has been interpreted as disingenuous on Russell's part. Certainly Adams' confidence was restored by the interview. But Russell was apparently unconvinced as yet that a suggestion of armistice would necessarily lead to the evil consequences prophesied by Lewis, or would, indeed, require any departure from a policy of strict neutrality. On the one side Russell was being berated by pro-Southerners as weakly continuing an outworn policy and as having "made himself the laughing-stock of Europe and of America;"[4] on the other he was regarded, for the

[1] Russell Papers. It is significant that Palmerston's organ, the *Morning Post*, after a long silence came out on Oct. 21 with a sharp attack on Gladstone for his presumption. Lewis was also reflected upon, but less severely.

[2] Maxwell, *Clarendon*, II, 265.

[3] *U.S. Messages and Documents*, 1862-3, Pt. I, p. 223. Adams to Seward, Oct. 24, 1862. C. F. Adams in *A Crisis in Downing Street*, p. 417, makes Russell state that the Government's intention was "to adhere to the rule of perfect neutrality"—seemingly a more positive assurance, and so

moment, as insisting, through pique, on a line of action highly dangerous to the preservation of peace with the North. October 23 Palmerston wrote his approval of the Cabinet postponement, but declared Lewis' doctrine of "no recognition of Southern independence until the North had admitted it" was unsound.[1] The next day he again wrote: ". . . to talk to the belligerents about peace at present would be as useless as asking the winds during the last week to let the waters remain calm."[2]

This expression by Palmerston on the day after the question apparently had come to a conclusion was the result of the unexpected persistence of Russell and Gladstone. Replying to Palmerston's letter of the twenty-third, Russell wrote: "As no good could come of a Cabinet, I put it off. But tho' I am quite ready to agree to your conclusions for the present, I cannot do so for G. Lewis' reasons. . . ."

> "G. Lewis besides has made a proposition for me which I never thought of making. He says I propose that England and France and perhaps some one Continental power should ask America to suspend the war. I never thought of making such a proposal.
>
> "I think if Russia agreed Prussia would. And if France and England agreed Austria would. Less than the whole five would not do. I thought it right towards the Cabinet to reserve any specific proposition. I am not at all inclined to adopt G. Lewis' invention.
>
> "I have sent off Lyons without instructions, at which he is much pleased."[3]

Russell was shifting ground; first the proposal was to have been made by England and France; then Russia was

no idea, no intention to do anything but fold their hands, talk of strict neutrality, spare the excited feelings of the North, and wait, like Mr. Micawber, for something to turn up."

[1] Russell Papers. To Russell.

[2] *Ibid.* To Russell, Oct. 24, 1862.

[3] Palmerston MS. Russell to Palmerston, Oct. 24, 1862.

necessary; now "less than five powers would not do." But whatever the number required he still desired a proposal of armistice. On October 23, presumably subsequent to the informal meeting of Cabinet members, he drew up a brief memorandum in answer to that of Lewis on October 17, denying that Lewis had correctly interpreted his plan, and declaring that he had always had "in contemplation" a step by the five great powers of Europe. The advisability of trying to secure such joint action, Russell asserted, was all he had had in mind. *If* the Cabinet had approved this advisability, and the powers were acquiescent, *then* (in answer to Lewis' accusation of "no look ahead") he would be ready with definite plans for the negotiation of peace between North and South.[1] Thus by letter to Palmerston and by circulation of a new memorandum Russell gave notice that all was not yet decided. On October 24, Gladstone also circulated a memorandum in reply to Lewis, urging action by England, France and Russia.[2]

Russell's second memorandum was not at first taken seriously by his Cabinet opponents. They believed the issue closed and Russell merely putting out a denial of alleged purposes. Clarendon, though not a member of the Cabinet, was keeping close touch with the situation and on October 24 wrote to Lewis:

> "Thanks for sending me your memorandum on the American question, which I have read with great satisfaction.

[1] Palmerston MS. Marked: "Printed Oct. 24, 1862."

[2] Morley, *Gladstone*, II, 84. Morley was the first to make clear that no final decision was reached on October 23, a date hitherto accepted as the end of the Cabinet crisis. Rhodes, IV, 337-348, gives a résumé of talk and correspondence on mediation, etc., and places October 23 as the date when "the policy of non-intervention was informally agreed upon" (p. 343), Russell's "change of opinion" being also "complete" (p. 342). Curiously the dictum of Rhodes and others depends in some degree on a mistake in copying a date. Slidell had an important interview with Napoleon on October 28 bearing on an armistice, but this was copied as October 22 in Bigelow's *France and the Confederate Navy*, p. 126, and so came to be written into narratives of mediation proposals. Richardson, II, 345, gives the correct date. Rhodes' supposition that Seward's instructions of August 2 became known to Russell and were the deter-

Johnny [Russell] always loves to do something when to do nothing is prudent, and I have no doubt that he hoped to get support in his meddling proclivities when he called a Cabinet for yesterday; but its postponement *sine die* is probably due to your memorandum. You have made so clear the idiotic position we should occupy, either in having presented our face gratuitously to the Yankee slap we should receive, or in being asked what practical solution we had to propose after an armistice had been agreed to at our suggestion, that no discussion on the subject would have been possible, and the Foreign Secretary probably thought it would be pleasanter to draw in his horns at Woburn than in Downing Street." [1]

On October 26, having received from Lewis a copy of Russell's newly-circulated paper, Clarendon wrote again:

"The Foreign Secretary's *blatt* exhibits considerable soreness, for which you are specially bound to make allowance, as it was you who procured abortion for him. He had thought to make a great deal of his colt by Meddler out of Vanity, and you have shown his backers that the animal was not fit to start and would not run a yard if he did. He is therefore taken back to the country, where he must have a deal more training before he can appear in public again."

. . . . . .

"I should say that your speech at Hereford was nearly as effective in checking the alarm and speculation caused by Gladstone's speech, as your memorandum was in smashing the Foreign Secretary's proposed intervention, and that you did so without in the smallest degree committing either the Government or yourself with respect to the future." [2]

In effect Clarendon was advising Lewis to pay no attention to Russell's complaining rejoinder since the object desired had been secured, but there was still one element of strength for Russell and Gladstone which, if obtained, might easily cause a re-opening of the whole question.

[1] Maxwell, *Clarendon*, II, 265.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 266.

This was the desire of France, still unexpressed in spite of indirect overtures, a silence in part responsible for the expression of an opinion by Palmerston that Napoleon's words could not be depended upon as an indication of what he intended to do.[1] On the day this was written the French ministerial crisis—the real cause of Napoleon's silence—came to an end with the retirement of Thouvenel and the succession of Drouyn de Lhuys. Russell's reply to Palmerston's assertion of the folly of appealing now to the belligerents was that "recognition" was certainly out of the question for the present and that "it should not take place till May or June next year, when circumstances may show pretty clearly whether Gladstone was right."[2] But this yielding to the Premier's decision was quickly withdrawn when, at last, Napoleon and his new Minister could turn their attention to the American question.

On October 27 Cowley reported a conversation with the Emperor in which American affairs were discussed. Napoleon hoped that England, France and Russia would join in an offer of mediation. Cowley replied that he had no instructions and Napoleon then modified his ideas by suggesting a proposal of armistice for six months "in order to give time for the present excitement to calm down. . . ."[3] The next day Cowley reported that Drouyn de Lhuys stated the Emperor to be very anxious to "put an end to the War," but that he was himself doubtful whether it would not be better to "wait a little longer," and in any case if overtures to America were rejected Russia probably would not join Great Britain and France in going on to a recognition of the South.[4] All this was exactly in line with that plan to which

[1] Russell Papers. Palmerston to Russell, Oct. 24, 1862. Palmerston was here writing of Italian and American affairs.

[2] Palmerston MS. Oct. 25, 1862.

[3] Russell Papers. To Russell.

[4] F.O., France, Vol. 1446. Cowley to Russell, Oct. 28, 1862. Cowley, like Lyons, was against action. He approved Drouyn de Lhuys' "hesitation." It appears from the Russian archives that France

Russell had finally come and if officially notified to the British Government would require a renewed consideration by the Cabinet. Presumably Napoleon knew what had been going on in London and he now hastened to give the needed French push. October 28, Slidell was summoned to an audience and told of the Emperor's purpose, acting with England, to bring about an armistice.[1] Three days later, October 31, Cowley wrote that he had now been officially informed by Drouyn de Lhuys, " by the Emperor's orders " that a despatch was about to be sent to the French Ministers in England and Russia instructing them to request joint action by the three powers in suggesting an armistice of six months *including a suspension of the blockade*, thus throwing open Southern ports to European commerce.[2]

Napoleon's proposal evidently took Palmerston by surprise and was not regarded with favour. He wrote to Russell :

> " As to the French scheme of proposals to the United States, we had better keep that question till the Cabinet meets, which would be either on Monday 11th, or Wednesday 12th, as would be most convenient to you and our colleagues.

approached Russia. On October 31, D'Oubril, at Paris, was instructed that while Russia had always been anxious to forward peace in America, she stood in peculiarly friendly relations with the United States, and was against any appearance of pressure. It would have the contrary effect from that hoped for. If England and France should offer mediation Russia, " being too far away," would not join, but might give her moral support. (Russian Archives, F.O. to D'Oubril, Oct. 27, 1862 (O.S.). No. 320.) On the same date Stoeckl was informed of the French overtures, and was instructed not to take a stand with France and Great Britain, but to limit his efforts to approval of any *agreement* by the North and South to end the war. Yet Stoeckl was given liberty of action if (as Gortchakoff did not believe) the time had assuredly come when both North and South were ready for peace, and it needed but the influence of some friendly hand to soothe raging passions and to lead the contending parties themselves to begin direct negotiations (*Ibid.*, F.O. to Stoeckl, Oct. 27, 1862 (O.S.).

[1] Mason Papers. Slidell to Mason, Oct. 29, 1862. Slidell's full report to Benjamin is in Richardson, II, 345.

[2] F. O., France, Vol. 1446, No. 1236. Cowley thought neither party would consent unless it saw some military advantage. (Russell Papers. Cowley to Russell, Oct. 31, 1862.) Morley, *Gladstone*, II, 84-5, speaks of the French offer as " renewed proposals of mediation." There was no renewal for this was the *first* proposal, and it was not one of mediation though that was an implied result.

But is it likely that the Federals would consent to an armistice to be accompanied by a cessation of Blockades, and which would give the Confederates means of getting all the supplies they may want ? "

. . . . . .

" Then comes the difficulty about slavery and the giving up of runaway slaves, about which we could hardly frame a proposal which the Southerns would agree to, and people of England would approve of. The French Government are more free from the shackles of principle and of right and wrong on these matters, as on all others than we are. At all events it would be wiser to wait till the elections in North America are over before any proposal is made. As the Emperor is so anxious to put a stop to bloodshed he might try his hand as a beginning by putting down the stream of ruffians which rolls out from that never-failing fountain at Rome." [1]

But Russell was more optimistic, or at least in favour of some sort of proposal to America. He replied to Palmerston :

> " My notion is that as there is little chance of our good offices being accepted in America we should make them such as would be creditable to us in Europe. I should propose to answer the French proposal therefore by saying,
>
> " That in offering our good offices we ought to require both parties to consent to examine, first, whether there are any terms upon which North and South would consent to restore the Union ; and secondly, failing any such terms, whether there are any terms upon which both would consent to separate.
>
> " We should also say that if the Union is to be restored it would be essential in our view, that after what has taken place all the slaves should be emancipated, compensation being granted by Congress at the rate at which Great Britain emancipated her slaves in 1833.
>
> " If separation takes place we must be silent on the trend of slavery, as we are with regard to Spain and Brazil.

[1] Russell Papers, Nov. 2, 1862. Monday, November 1862, was the 10th not the 11th as Palmerston wrote.

"This is a rough sketch, but I will expand it for the Cabinet.

"It will be an honourable proposal to make, but the North and probably the South will refuse it." [1]

Here were several ideas quite impossible of acceptance by North and South in their then frame of mind and Russell himself believed them certain to be refused by the North in any case. But he was eager to present the question for Cabinet discussion hoping for a reversal of the previous decision. Whether from pique or from conviction of the wisdom of a change in British policy, he proposed to press for acceptance of the French plan, with modifications. The news of Napoleon's offer and of Russell's attitude, with some uncertainty as to that of Palmerston, again brought Lewis into action and on November 7 he circulated another memorandum, this time a very long one of some fifteen thousand words. This was in the main an historical résumé of past British policy in relation to revolted peoples, stating the international law of such cases, and pointing out that Great Britain had never recognized a revolted people so long as a *bona fide* struggle was still going on. Peace was no doubt greatly to be desired. "If England could, by legitimate means, and without unduly sacrificing or imperilling her own interests, accelerate this consummation, she would, in my opinion, earn the just gratitude of the civilized world." But the question, as he had previously asserted, was full of grave dangers. The very suggestion of a concert of Powers was itself one to be avoided. "A conference of the five great Powers is an imposing force, but it is a dangerous body to set in motion. A single intervening Power may possibly contrive to satisfy both the adverse parties; but five intervening Powers have first to satisfy one another." Who could tell what divergence might arise on the question

[1] Palmerston MS. Nov. 3, 1862.

of slavery, or on boundaries, or how far England might find her ideals or her vital interests compromised ?[1]

Here was vigorous resistance to Russell, especially effective for its appeal to past British policy, and to correct practice in international law. On the same day that Lewis' memorandum was circulated, there appeared a communication in the *Times* by " Historicus," on " The International Doctrine of Recognition," outlining in briefer form exactly those international law arguments presented by Lewis, and advocating a continuation of the policy of strict neutrality. " Historicus " was William Vernon Harcourt, husband of Lewis' stepdaughter who was also the niece of Clarendon. Evidently the family guns were all trained on Russell.[2] " Historicus " drove home the fact that premature action by a neutral was a " hostile act " and ought to be resented by the " Sovereign State " as a " breach of neutrality and friendship."[3]

Thus on receipt of the news of Napoleon's proposal the Cabinet crisis was renewed and even more sharply than on October 23. The French offer was not actually presented until November 10.[4] On the next two days the answer to be made received long discussion in the Cabinet. Lewis described this to Clarendon, prefacing his account by stating that Russell had heard by telegram from Napier at St. Petersburg to the effect that Russia would not join but would support English-French proposals through her Minister at Washington, " provided it would not cause irritation."[5]

[1] Gladstone Papers. The memorandum here preserved has the additional interest of frequent marginal comments by Gladstone.

[2] The letters of " Historicus " early attracted, in the case of the *Trent*, favourable attention and respect. As early as 1863 they were put out in book form to satisfy a public demand: *Letters by Historicus on some questions of International Law*, London, 1863.

[3] The *Times*, Nov. 7, 1862. The letter was dated Nov. 4.

[4] *Parliamentary Papers*, 1863, Lords, Vol. XXIX. " Despatch respecting the Civil War in North America." Russell to Cowley, Nov. 13, 1862.

[5] For substance of the Russian answer to France see *ante*, p. 59, *note* 4. D'Oubril reported Drouyn de Lhuys as unconvinced that the time

"Having made this statement, Lord John proceeded to explain his views on the question. These were, briefly, that the recent successes of the Democrats afforded a most favourable opportunity of intervention, because we should strengthen their hands, and that if we refused the invitation of France, Russia would reconsider her decision, act directly with France, and thus accomplish her favourite purpose of separating France and England. He therefore advised that the proposal of France should be accepted. Palmerston followed Lord John, and supported him, but did not say a great deal. His principal argument was the necessity for showing sympathy with Lancashire, and of not throwing away any chance of mitigating it [*sic*].

"The proposal was now thrown before the Cabinet, who proceeded to pick it to pieces. Everybody present threw a stone at it of greater or less size, except Gladstone, who supported it, and the Chancellor [Westbury] and Cardwell, who expressed no opinion. The principal objection was that the proposed armistice of six months by sea and land, involving a suspension of the commercial blockade, was so grossly unequal—so decidedly in favour of the South, that there was no chance of the North agreeing to it. After a time, Palmerston saw that the general feeling of the Cabinet was against being a party to the representation, and he capitulated. 'I do not think his support was very sincere: it certainly was not hearty . . . I ought to add that, after the Cabinet had come to a decision and the outline of a draft had been discussed, the Chancellor uttered a few oracular sentences on the danger of refusing the French invitation, and gave a strong support to Lord John. His support came rather late . . . I proposed that we should *tater le terrain* at Washington and ascertain whether there was any chance of the proposal being accepted. Lord John refused this. He admitted there was no chance of an affirmative answer from Washington. I think his principal motive was a fear of displeasing France, and that Palmerston's principal motive was a wish to seem to support him. There is a useful

was inopportune but as stating he had not expected Russia to join. The French Minister of Foreign Affairs was irritated at an article on his overtures that had appeared in the *Journal de Petersbourg*, and thought himself unfairly treated by the Russian Government. (Russian Archives. D'Oubril to F. O., Nov. 15, 1862 (N.S.), Nos. 1908 and 1912.)

> article in to-day's *Times* throwing cold water on the invitation. I take for granted that Delane was informed of the result of the Cabinet." [1]

Gladstone, writing to his wife, gave a similar though more brief account :

> "Nov. 11. We have had our Cabinet to-day and meet again to-morrow. I am afraid we shall do little or nothing in the business of America. But I will send you definite intelligence. Both Lords Palmerston and Russell are *right*. Nov. 12. The United States affair has ended and not well. Lord Russell rather turned tail. He gave way without resolutely fighting out his battle. However, though we decline for the moment, the answer is put upon grounds and in terms which leave the matter very open for the future. Nov. 13. I think the French will make our answer about America public ; at least it is very possible. But I hope they may not take it as a positive refusal, or at any rate that they may themselves act in the matter. It will be clear that we concur with them, that the war should cease. Palmerston gave to Russell's proposal a feeble and half-hearted support." [2]

The reply to France was in fact immediately made public both in France and in England. It was complimentary to the Emperor's "benevolent views and humane intentions," agreed that "if the steps proposed were to be taken, the concurrence of Russia would be extremely desirable" but remarked that as yet Great Britain had not been informed that Russia wished to co-operate, and concluded that since there was no ground to hope the North was ready for the proposal it seemed best to postpone any overture until there was a "greater prospect than now exists of its being accepted

[1] Maxwell, *Clarendon*, II, 268. The letter, as printed, is dated Nov. 11, and speaks of the Cabinet of "yesterday." This appears to be an error. Gladstone's account is of a two-days' discussion on Nov. 11 and 12, with the decision reached and draft of reply to France outlined on the latter date. The article in the *Times*, referred to by Lewis, appeared on Nov. 13.

[2] Morley, *Gladstone*, II, 85.

by the two contending parties."[1] The argument of Russell in the Cabinet had been for acceptance without Russia though earlier he had stipulated her assistance as essential. This was due to the knowledge already at hand through a telegram from Napier at St. Petersburg, November 8, that Russia would refuse.[2] But in the answer to France it is the attitude of Russia that becomes an important reason for British refusal as, indeed, it was the basis for harmonious decision within the British Cabinet. This is not to say that had Russia acceded England also would have done so, for the weight of Cabinet opinion, adroitly encouraged by Palmerston, was against Russell and the result reached was that which the Premier wished. More important in his view than any other matter was the preservation of a united Ministry and at the conclusion of the American debate even Gladstone could write : " As to the state of matters generally in the Cabinet, I have never seen it smoother."[3]

Public opinion in England in the main heartily supported the Cabinet decision. Hammond described it as " almost universal in this country against interference,"[4] an estimate justified if the more important journals are taken into

[1] *Parliamentary Papers*, 1863, *Lords*, Vol. XXIX. " Despatch respecting the Civil War in North America." Russell to Cowley, Nov. 13, 1862.

[2] F. O., Russia, Vol. 609, No. 407. Napier to Russell. The same day Napier wrote giving an account of an interview between the French Minister and Prince Gortchakoff in which the latter stated Russia would take no chances of offending the North. *Ibid.*, No. 408.

[3] Morley, *Gladstone*, II, 85. To his wife, Nov. 13, 1862. Even after the answer to France there was some agitation in the Ministry due to the receipt from Stuart of a letter dated Oct. 31, in which it was urged that this was the most opportune moment for mediation because of Democratic successes in the elections. He enclosed also an account of a " horrible military reprisal " by the Federals in Missouri alleging that *ten* Southerners had been executed because of *one* Northerner seized by Southern guerillas. (Russell Papers.) The Russell Papers contain a series of signed or initialled notes in comment, all dated Nov. 14. " W." (Westbury?) refers to the " horrible atrocities," and urges that, if Russia will join, the French offer should be accepted. Gladstone wrote, " I had supposed the question to be closed." " C. W." (Charles Wood), " This is horrible ; but does not change my opinion of the course to be pursued." " C. P. V. " (C. P. Villiers) wrote against accepting the French proposal, and commented that Stuart had always been a strong partisan of the South.

[4] Lyons Papers. Hammond to Lyons, Nov. 15, 1862.

account but not true of all. The *Times* of November 13 declared:

> "We are convinced that the present is not the moment for these strong measures. There is now great reason to hope that by means of their own internal action the Americans may themselves settle their own affairs even sooner than Europe could settle them for them. We have waited so long that it would be unpardonable in us to lose the merit of our self-denial at such a moment as this. . . . We quite agree with Mr. Cobden that it would be cheaper to keep all Lancashire on turtle and venison than to plunge into a desperate war with the Northern States of America, even with all Europe at our back. In a good cause, and as a necessity forced upon us in defence of our honour, or of our rightful interests, we are as ready to fight as we ever were; but we do not see our duty or our interest in going blindfold into an adventure such as this. We very much doubt, moreover, whether, if Virginia belonged to France as Canada belongs to England, the Emperor of the French would be so active in beating up for recruits in this American mediation league."

This was followed up two days later by an assertion that no English statesman had at any time contemplated an offer of mediation made in such a way as to lead to actual conflict with the United States.[1] On the other hand the *Herald*, always intense in its pro-Southern utterances, and strongly anti-Palmerston in politics, professed itself unable to credit the rumoured Cabinet decision. "Until we are positively informed that our Ministers are guilty of the great crime attributed to them," the *Herald* declared, "we must hope against hope that they are innocent." If guilty they were responsible for the misery of Lancashire (depicted in lurid colours):

> "A clear, a sacred, an all-important duty was imposed upon them; to perform that duty would have been the pride and delight of almost any other Englishmen; and they,

[1] The *Times*, Nov. 15, 1862.

with the task before them and the power to perform it in their hands—can it be that they have shrunk back in craven cowardice, deserted their ally, betrayed their country, dishonoured their own names to all eternity, that they might do the bidding of John Bright, and sustain for a while the infamous tyranny of a Butler, a Seward, and a Lincoln? "[1]

In the non-political *Army and Navy Gazette* the returned editor, W. H. Russell, but lately the *Times* correspondent in America, jeered at the American uproar that might now be expected against France instead of England: "Let the Emperor beware. The scarred veteran of the New York Scarrons of Plum Gut has set his sinister or dexter eye upon him, and threatens him with the loss of his throne," but the British public must expect no lasting change of Northern attitude toward England and must be ready for a war if the North were victorious.[2] *Blackwood's* for November, 1862, strongly censured the Government for its failure to act. The *Edinburgh* for January, 1863, as strongly supported the Ministry and expanded on the fixed determination of Great Britain to keep out of the war. *The Index* naturally frothed in angry disappointment, continuing its attacks, as if in hopes of a reversal of Ministerial decision, even into the next year. "Has it come to this? Is England, or the English Cabinet, afraid of the Northern States? Lord Russell might contrive so to choose his excuses as not to insult at once both his country and her ally."[3] An editorial from the *Richmond* (Virginia) *Whig* was quoted with approval characterizing Russell and Palmerston as "two old painted mummies," who secretly were rejoiced at the war in America as "threatening the complete annihilation" of both sides,

[1] The *Herald*, Nov. 14, 1862. This paper was listed by Hotze of *The Index*, as on his "pay roll." Someone evidently was trying to earn his salary.

[2] Nov. 15, 1862. It is difficult to reconcile Russell's editorials either with his later protestations of early conviction that the North would win or with the belief expressed by Americans that he was *constantly* pro-Northern in sentiment, e.g., Henry Adams, in *A Cycle of Adams' Letters*, I, 141.

[3] *The Index*, Nov. 20, 1862, p. 56.

and expressing the conviction that if the old Union were restored both North and South would eagerly turn on Great Britain.[1] The explanation, said *The Index*, of British supineness was simply the pusillanimous fear of war—and of a war that would not take place in spite of the bluster of Lincoln's "hangers-on."[2] Even as late as May of the year following, this explanation was still harped upon and Russell "a statesman" who belonged "rather to the past than to the present" was primarily responsible for British inaction. "The nominal conduct of Foreign Affairs is in the hands of a diplomatic Malaprop, who has never shown vigour, activity, or determination, except where the display of these qualities was singularly unneeded, or even worse than useless."[3]

The Index never wavered from its assumption that in the Cabinet Russell was the chief enemy of the South. Slidell, better informed, wrote: "Who would have believed that Earl Russell would have been the only member of the Cabinet besides Gladstone in favour of accepting the Emperor's proposition?"[4] He had information that Napoleon had been led to expect his proposal would be accepted and was much irritated—so much so that France would now probably act alone.[5] Gladstone's attitude was a sorrow to many of his friends. Bright believed he was at last weaned from desires for mediation and sympathetic with the answer to France,[6] but Goldwin Smith in correspondence with Gladstone on American affairs knew that the wild idea now in the statesman's mind was of offering

[1] *Ibid.*, Jan. 15, 1863, p. 191.
[2] *Ibid.*, Jan. 22, 1863, p. 201.
[3] *Ibid.*, May 28, 1863, p. 72.
[4] Mason Papers. To Mason, Nov. 28, 1862.
[5] Pickett Papers. Slidell to Benjamin, Nov. 29, 1862. This despatch is not in Richardson, *Messages and Papers of the Confederacy*, and illustrates the gaps in that publication.
[6] Rhodes, IV, 347. Bright to Sumner, Dec. 6, 1862.

Canada to the North if she would let the South go[1]—a plan unknown, fortunately for Gladstone's reputation for good judgment, save to his correspondent.

In general, as the weeks passed, the satisfaction grew both with the public and in the Government that England had made no adventure of new policy towards America. This satisfaction was strongly reinforced when the first reports were received from Lyons on his arrival in America. Reaching New York on November 8 he found that even the "Conservatives" were much opposed to an offer of mediation at present and thought it would only do harm until there was a change of Government in Washington—an event still remote. Lyons himself believed mediation useless unless intended to be followed by recognition of the South and that such recognition was likewise of no value without a raising of the blockade for which he thought the British Cabinet not prepared.[2] Lyons flatly contradicted Stuart's reports, his cool judgment of conditions nowhere more clearly manifested than at this juncture in comparison with his subordinate's excited and eager pro-Southern arguments. Again on November 28 Lyons wrote that he could not find a single Northern paper that did not repudiate

[1] Goldwin Smith told of this plan in 1904, in a speech at a banquet in Ottawa. He had destroyed Gladstone's letter outlining it. *The Ottawa Sun*, Nov. 16, 1904.

[2] Almost immediately after Lyons' return to Washington, Stoeckl learned from him, and from Mercier, also, that England and France planned to offer mediation and that if this were refused the South would be recognized. Stoeckl commented to the Foreign Office: "What good will this do?" It would not procure cotton unless the ports were forced open and a clear rupture made with the North. He thought England understood this, and still hesitated. Stoeckl went on to urge that if all European Powers joined England and France they would be merely tails to the kite and that Russia would be one of the tails. This would weaken the Russian position in Europe as well as forfeit her special relationship with the United States. He was against any *joint* European action. (Russian Archives, Stoeckl to F. O., Nov. 5-17, 1862, No. 2002.) Gortchakoff wrote on the margin of this despatch: "Je trouve son opinion très sage." If Stoeckl understood Lyons correctly then the latter had left England still believing that his arguments with Russell had been of no effect. When the news reached Washington of England's refusal of the French offer, Stoeckl reported Lyons as much surprised (*Ibid.*, to F. O., Nov. 19–Dec. 1, 1862, No. 2170).

foreign intervention.[1] In the South, when it was learned that France had offered to act and England had refused, there was an outburst of bitter anti-British feeling.[2]

The Northern press, as Lyons had reported, was unanimous in rejection of European offers of aid, however friendly, in settling the war. It expressed no gratitude to England, devoting its energy rather to animadversions on Napoleon III who was held to be personally responsible. Since there had been no European offer made there was no cause for governmental action. Seward had given Adams specific instructions in case the emergency arose but there had been no reason to present these or to act upon them and the crisis once past Seward believed all danger of European meddling was over and permanently. He wrote to Bigelow: "We are no longer to be disturbed by Secession intrigues in Europe. They have had their day. We propose to forget them."[3] This was a wise and statesmanlike attitude and was shared by Adams in London. Whatever either man knew or guessed of the prelude to the answer to France, November 13, they were careful to accept that answer as fulfilment of Russell's declaration to Adams, October 23, that Great Britain intended no change of policy.[4]

[1] *Parliamentary Papers*, 1832, *Commons*, Vol. LXXII, "Correspondence relating to the Civil War in the United States of North America." Nos. 47 and 50. Received Nov. 30 and Dec. 11. Mercier, who had been Stuart's informant about political conditions in New York, felt that he had been deceived by the Democrats. F. O., Am., Vol. 784, No. 38. Confidential, Lyons to Russell, Jan. 13, 1863.

[2] F. O., Am., Vol. 840, No. 518. Moore (Richmond) to Lyons, Dec. 4, 1862. Also F. O., Am., Vol. 844, No. 135. Bunch (Charleston) to Russell, Dec. 13, 1862. Bunch wrote of the "Constitutional hatred and jealousy of England, which are as strongly developed here as at the North. Indeed, our known antipathy to Slavery adds another element to Southern dislike."

[3] Bigelow, *Retrospections*, I, 579, Dec. 2, 1862. Bigelow was Consul-General at Paris, and was the most active of the Northern confidential agents abroad. A journalist himself, he had close contacts with the foreign press. It is interesting that he reported the Continental press as largely dependent for its American news and judgments upon the British press which specialized in that field, so that Continental tone was but a reflection of the British tone. *Ibid.*, p. 443. Bigelow to Seward, Jan. 7, 1862.

[4] Lyons placed a high estimate on Adams' abilities. He wrote: "Mr. Adams shows more calmness and good sense than any of the American

So far removed was Seward's attitude toward England from that ascribed to him in 1861, so calm was his treatment of questions now up for immediate consideration, so friendly was he personally toward Lyons, that the British Minister became greatly alarmed when, shortly after his return to Washington, there developed a Cabinet controversy threatening the retirement of the Secretary of State. This was a quarrel brought on by the personal sensibilities of Chase, Secretary of the Treasury, and directed at Seward's conduct of foreign affairs. It was quieted by the tact and authority of Lincoln, who, when Seward handed in his resignation, secured from Chase a similar offer of resignation, refused both and in the result read to Chase that lesson of Presidential control which Seward had learned in May, 1861. Lyons wrote of this controversy "I shall be sorry if it ends in the removal of Mr. Seward. We are much more likely to have a man less disposed to keep the peace than a man more disposed to do so. I should hardly have said this two years ago."[1] After the event of Seward's retention of office Russell wrote: "I see Seward stays in. I am very glad of it."[2] This is a remarkable reversal of former opinion. A better understanding of Seward had come, somewhat slowly, to British diplomats, but since his action in the *Trent* affair former suspicion had steadily waned; his "high tone" being regarded as for home consumption, until now there was both belief in Seward's basic friendliness and respect for his abilities.

Thus Russell's ambitious mediation projects having finally dwindled to a polite refusal of the French offer to join in a mere suggestion of armistice left no open sores in the British relations with America. The projects were unknown; the refusal seemed final to Seward and was indeed destined to prove so. But of this there was no clear

[1] Russell Papers. Lyons to Russell, Dec. 22, 1862.
[2] Lyons Papers. Russell to Lyons, Jan. 3, 1863.

conception in the British Cabinet. Hardly anyone yet believed that reconquest of the South was even a remote possibility and this foretold that the day must some time come when European recognition would have to be given the Confederacy. It is this unanimity of opinion on the ultimate result of the war in America that should always be kept in mind in judging the attitude of British Government and people in the fall of 1862. Their sympathies were of minor concern at the moment, nor were they much in evidence during the Cabinet crisis. All argument was based upon the expediency and wisdom of the present proposal. Could European nations *now* act in such a way as to bring to an early end a war whose result in separation was inevitable? It was the hope that such action promised good results which led Russell to enter upon his policy even though personally his sympathies were unquestionably with the North. It was, in the end, the conviction that *now* was not a favourable time which determined Palmerston, though sympathetic with the South, to withdraw his support when Russell, through pique, insisted on going on. Moreover both statesmen were determined not to become involved in the war and as the possible consequences of even the "most friendly" offers were brought out in discussion it became clear that Great Britain's true policy was to await a return of sanity in the contestants.[1]

For America Russell's mediation plan constitutes the most dangerous crisis in the war for the restoration of the Union. Had that plan been adopted, no matter how friendly in intent, there is little question that Lewis' forebodings

[1] December 1, Brunow related an interview in which Russell expressed his "satisfaction" that England and Russia were in agreement that the moment was not opportune for a joint offer to the United States. Russell also stated that it was unfortunate France had pressed her proposal without a preliminary confidential sounding and understanding between the Powers; the British Government saw no reason for changing its attitude. (Russian Archives. Brunow to F. O., Dec. 1, 1862 (N.S.), No. 1998.) There is no evidence in the despatch that Brunow knew of Russell's preliminary "soundings" of France.

would have been realized and war would have ensued between England and the North. But also whatever its results in other respects the independence of the South would have been established. Slavery, hated of Great Britain, would have received a new lease of life—and by British action. In the Cabinet argument all parties agreed that Lincoln's emancipation proclamation was but an incitement to servile war and it played no part in the final decision. Soon that proclamation was to erect a positive barrier of public opinion against any future efforts to secure British intervention. Never again was there serious governmental consideration of meddling in the American Civil War.[1]

[1] Various writers have treated Roebuck's motion in 1863 as the "crisis" of intervention. In Chapter XIV the error of this will be shown.

CHAPTER XII

THE EMANCIPATION PROCLAMATION

THE finality of the British Cabinet decision in November, 1862, relative to proposals of mediation or intervention was not accepted at the moment though time was to prove its permanence. The British press was full of suggestions that the first trial might more gracefully come from France since that country was presumed to be on more friendly terms with the United States.[1] Others, notably Slidell at Paris, held the same view, and on January 8, 1863, Slidell addressed a memorandum to Napoleon III, asking separate recognition of the South. The next day, Napoleon dictated an instruction to Mercier offering friendly mediation in courteous terms but with no hint of an armistice or of an intended recognition of the South.[2] Meanwhile, Mercier had again approached Lyons alleging that he had been urged by Greeley, editor of the *New York Tribune*, to make an isolated French offer, but that he felt this would be contrary to the close harmony hitherto maintained in French-British relations. But Mercier added that if Lyons was disinclined to a proposal of mediation, he intended to advise his Government to give him authority to act alone.[3] Lyons made no comment to Mercier but wrote to Russell, " I certainly desire that the Settlement of the

[1] *Punch*, Nov. 22, 1862, has a cartoon picturing Palmerston as presenting this view to Napoleon III.

[2] Rhodes, IV, p. 348.

[3] F. O., Am., Vol. 875. No. 80. Confidential. Lyons to Russell, Jan. 27, 1863. This date would have permitted Mercier to be already in receipt of Napoleon's instructions, though he gave no hint of it in the interview with Lyons.

Contest should be made without the intervention of England."

A week later the Russian Minister, Stoeckl, also came to Lyons desiring to discover what would be England's attitude if Russia should act alone, or perhaps with France, leaving England out of a proposal to the North.[1] This was based on the supposition that the North, weary of war, might ask the good offices of Russia. Lyons replied that he did not think that contingency near and otherwise evaded Stoeckl's questions; but he was somewhat suspicious, concluding his report, "I cannot quite forget that Monsieur Mercier and Monsieur de Stoeckl had agreed to go to Richmond together last Spring."[2] The day after this despatch was written Mercier presented, February 3, the isolated French offer and on February 6 received Seward's reply couched in argumentative, yet polite language, but positively declining the proposal.[3] Evidently Lyons was a bit disquieted by the incident; but in London, Napoleon's overture to America was officially stated to be unobjectionable, as indeed was required by the implications of the reply of November 13, to France. Russell, on February 14, answered Lyons' communications in a letter marked "Seen by Lord Palmerston and the Queen":

"Her Majesty's Government have no wish to interfere at present in any way in the Civil War. If France were to offer good offices or mediation, Her Majesty's Government would feel no jealousy or repugnance to such a course on the part of France alone."[4]

[1] Mercier had in fact approached Stoeckl on a joint offer of mediation without England. Evidently Stoeckl had asked instructions and those received made clear that Russia did not wish to be compelled to face such a question. She did not wish to offend France, and an offer without England had no chance of acceptance (Russian Archives, F. O. to Stoeckl, Feb. 16, 1863 (O.S.)).

[2] F. O. Am., Vol. 876. No. 108. Confidential. Lyons to Russell, Feb. 2, 1863.

[3] Rhodes, IV, p. 348.

The writing of this despatch antedated the knowledge that France had already acted at Washington, and does not necessarily indicate any governmental feeling of a break in previous close relations with France on the American question. Yet this was indubitably the case and became increasingly evident as time passed. Russell's despatch to Lyons of February 14 appears rather to be evidence of the effect of the debates in Parliament when its sessions were resumed on February 5, for in both Lords and Commons there was given a hearty and nearly unanimous support of the Government's decision to make no overture for a cessation of the conflict in America. Derby clearly outlined the two possible conditions of mediation; first, when efforts by the North to subdue the South had practically ceased; and second, if humane interests required action by neutral states, in which case the intervening parties must be fully prepared to use force. Neither condition had arrived and strict neutrality was the wise course. Disraeli also approved strict neutrality but caustically referred to Gladstone's Newcastle speech and sharply attacked the Cabinet's uncertain and changeable policy—merely a party speech. Russell upheld the Government's decision but went out of his way to assert that the entire subjugation of the South would be a calamity to the United States itself, since it would require an unending use of force to hold the South in submission.[1] Later, when news of the French offer at Washington had been received, the Government was attacked in the Lords by an undaunted friend of the South, Lord Campbell, on the ground of a British divergence from close relations with France. Russell, in a brief reply, reasserted old arguments that the time had "not yet" come, but now declared that events seemed to show the possibility of a complete Northern victory and added with emphasis that recognition of the South

[1] Hansard, 3rd. Ser., CLXIX, pp. 5-53, and 69-152.

could justly be regarded by the North as an "unfriendly act."[1]

Thus Parliament and Cabinet were united against meddling in America, basing this attitude on neutral duty and national interests, and with barely a reference to the new policy of the North toward slavery, declared in the emancipation proclamations of September 22, 1862, and January 1, 1863, Had these great documents then no favourable influence on British opinion and action? Was the Northern determination to root out the institution of slavery, now clearly announced, of no effect in winning the favour of a people and Government long committed to a world policy against that institution? It is here necessary to review early British opinion, the facts preceding the first emancipation proclamation, and to examine its purpose in the mind of Lincoln.

Before the opening of actual military operations, while there was still hope of some peaceful solution, British opinion had been with the North on the alleged ground of sympathy with a free as against a slave-owning society. But war once begun the disturbance to British trade interests and Lincoln's repeated declarations that the North had no intention of destroying slavery combined to offer an excuse and a reason for an almost complete shift of British opinion. The abolitionists of the North and the extreme anti-slavery friends in England, relatively few in number in both countries, still sounded the note of "slavery the cause of the war," but got little hearing. Nevertheless it was seen by thoughtful minds that slavery was certain to have a distinct bearing on the position of Great Britain when the war was concluded. In May, 1861, Palmerston declared that it would be a happy day when "we could succeed in putting an end to this unnatural war between the two sections of our North American cousins," but

[1] *Ibid.*, pp. 1714-41. March 23, 1863.

added that the difficulty for England was that "*We* could not well mix ourselves up with the acknowledgment of slavery. . . ."[1]

Great Britain's long-asserted abhorrence of slavery caused, indeed, a perplexity in governmental attitude. But this looked to the final outcome of an independent South—an outcome long taken for granted. Debate on the existing moralities of the war very soon largely disappeared from British discussion and in its place there cropped out, here and there, expressions indicative of anxiety as to whether the war could long continue without a "servile insurrection," with all its attendant horrors.

On July 6, 1861, the *Economist*, reviewing the progress of the war preparations to date, asserted that it was universally agreed no restoration of the Union was possible and answered British fears by declaring it was impossible to believe that even the American madness could contemplate a servile insurrection. The friendly *Spectator* also discussed the matter and repeatedly. It was a mistaken idea, said this journal, that there could be no enfranchisement without a slave rising, but should this occur, "the right of the slave to regain his freedom, even if the effort involve slaughter, is as clear as any other application of the right of self-defence."[2] Yet English abolitionists should not urge the slave to act for himself, since "as war goes on and all compromise fails the American mind will harden under the white heat and determine that the *cause* of all conflict must cease." That slavery, in spite of any declaration by Lincoln or Northern denial of a purpose to attack it—denials which disgusted Harriet Martineau—was in real fact the basic cause of the war, seemed to her as clear as anything in reason.[3] She had no patience with English

[1] Ashley, *Palmerston*, II, 208-9. To Ellice, May 5, 1861.
[2] July 13, 1861.
[3] Harriet Martineau, *Autobiography*, p. 508. To Mrs. Chapman, Aug. 8, 1861.

anti-slavery people who believed Northern protestations, and she did not express concern over the horrors of a possible servile insurrection. Nevertheless this spectre was constantly appearing. Again the *Spectator* sought to allay such fears; but yet again also proclaimed that even such a contingency was less fearful than the consolidation of the slave-power in the South.[1]

Thus a servile insurrection was early and frequently an argument which pro-Northern friends were compelled to meet. In truth the bulk of the British press was constant in holding up this bogie to its readers, even going to the point of weakening its argument of the impossibility of a Northern conquest of the South by appealing to history to show that England in her two wars with America had had a comparatively easy time in the South, thus postulating the real danger of some "negro Garibaldi calling his countrymen to arms."[2] Nor was this fear merely a pretended one. It affected all classes and partisans of both sides. Even official England shared in it; January 20, 1862, Lyons wrote, "The question is rapidly tending towards the issue either of peace and a recognition of the separation, or a Proclamation of Emancipation and the raising of a servile insurrection."[3] At nearly the same time Russell, returning to Gladstone a letter from Sumner to Cobden, expressed his sorrow "that the President intends a war of emancipation, meaning thereby, I fear, a war of greater desolation than has been since the revival of letters."[4] John Stuart Mill, with that clear logic which appealed to the more intelligent reader, in an able examination of the underlying causes and probable results of the American conflict, excused the Northern leaders for early denial of a purpose to attack slavery, but expressed complete confidence that even these

[1] Sept. 21, 1861.
[2] *Saturday Review*, Nov. 17, 1860.
[3] Russell Papers. To Russell.

leaders by now understood the "almost certain results of success in the present conflict" (the extinction of slavery) and prophesied that "if the writers who so severely criticize the present moderation of the Free-soilers are desirous to see the war become an abolition war, it is probable that if the war lasts long enough they will be gratified."[1] John Bright, reaching a wider public, in speech after speech, expressed faith that the people of the North were "marching on, as I believe, to its [slavery's] entire abolition."[2]

Pro-Southern Englishmen pictured the horrors of an "abolition war," and believed the picture true; strict neutrals, like Lyons, feared the same development; friends of the North pushed aside the thought of a "negro terror," yet even while hoping and declaring that the war would destroy slavery, could not escape from apprehensions of an event that appeared inevitable. Everywhere, to the British mind, it seemed that emancipation was necessarily a provocative to servile insurrection, and this belief largely affected the reception of the emancipation proclamation—a fact almost wholly lost sight of in historical writing.

Nor did the steps taken in America leading up to emancipation weaken this belief—rather they appeared to justify it. The great advocate of abolition as a weapon in the war and for its own sake was Charles Sumner, Chairman of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations. He early took the ground that a proclamation everywhere emancipating the slaves would give to the Northern cause a moral support hitherto denied it in Europe and would at the same time strike a blow at Southern resistance. This idea was presented in a public speech at Worcester, Massachusetts, in October, 1861, but even Sumner's free-soil friends thought him mistaken and his expressions "unfortunate." By December, however, he found at

[1] Article in *Fraser's Magazine*, Feb. 1862, "The Contest in America."
[2] Hansard, 3rd Ser., CXLV, p. 387, Feb. 17, 1862.

Washington a change in governmental temper and from that date Sumner was constant, through frequent private conversations with Lincoln, in pressing for action. These ideas and his personal activities for their realization were well known to English friends, as in his letters to Cobden and Bright, and to the English public in general through Sumner's speeches, for Sumner had long been a well-known figure in the British press.[1]

Lincoln, never an "Abolitionist," in spite of his famous utterance in the 'fifties that the United States could not indefinitely continue to exist "half-slave and half-free," had, in 1861, disapproved and recalled the orders of some of the military leaders, like Fremont, who without authority had sought to extend emancipation to slaves within the lines of their command. But as early as anyone he had foreseen the gradual emergence of emancipation as a war problem, at first dangerous to that wise "border state policy" which had prevented the more northern of the slave states from seceding. His first duty was to restore the Union and to that he gave all his energy, yet that emancipation, when the time was ripe, was also in Lincoln's mind is evident from the gradual approach through legislation and administrative act. In February, 1862, a Bill was under discussion in Congress, called the "Confiscation Bill," which, among other clauses, provided that all slaves of persons engaged in rebellion against the United States, who should by escape, or capture, come into the possession of the military forces of the United States, should be for ever free; but that this provision should not be operative until the expiration of sixty days, thus giving slave-owners opportunity to cease their rebellion and retain their slaves.[2] This measure did not at first have Lincoln's approval for he feared its effect on the loyalists of the border states. Nevertheless he

[1] Pierce, *Sumner*, IV, pp. 41-48, and 63-69.

[2] Raymond, *Life, Public Services and State Papers of Abraham Lincoln*,

realized the growing strength of anti-slavery sentiment in the war and fully sympathized with it where actual realization did not conflict with the one great object of his administration. Hence in March, 1862, he heartily concurred in a measure passed rapidly to Presidential approval, April 16, freeing the slaves in the District of Columbia, a territory where there was no question of the constitutional power of the national Government.

From February, 1862, until the issue of the first emancipation proclamation in September, there was, in truth, a genuine conflict between Congress and President as to methods and extent of emancipation. Congress was in a mood to punish the South ; Lincoln, looking steadily toward re-union, yet realizing the rising strength of anti-slavery in the North, advocated a gradual, voluntary, and compensated emancipation. Neither party spoke the word "servile insurrection," yet both realized its possibility, and Seward, in foreign affairs, was quick to see and use it as a threat. A brief summary of measures will indicate the contest. March 6, Lincoln sent a message to Congress recommending that a joint resolution be passed pledging the pecuniary aid of the national Government to any state voluntarily emancipating its slaves, his avowed purpose being to secure early action by the loyal border states in the hope that this might influence the Southern states.[1] Neither the House of Representatives nor the Senate were really favourable to this resolution and the border states bitterly opposed it in debate, but it passed by substantial majorities in both branches and was approved by Lincoln on April 10. In effect the extreme radical element in Congress had yielded, momentarily, to the President's insistence on an olive-branch offering of compensated emancipation. Both as regards the border states and looking to the restoration of the Union, Lincoln was determined to

[1] *Ibid.*, pp. 229-32.

give this line of policy a trial. The prevailing sentiment of Congress, however, preferred the punitive Confiscation Bill.

At this juncture General Hunter, in command of the "Department of the South," which theoretically included also the States of South Carolina, Georgia and Florida, issued an order declaring the slaves in these states free. This was May 9, 1862. Lincoln immediately countermanded Hunter's order, stating that such action "under my responsibility, I reserve to myself."[1] He renewed, in this same proclamation, earnest appeals to the border states, to embrace the opportunity offered by the Congressional resolution of April 10. In truth, border state attitude was the test of the feasibility of Lincoln's hoped-for voluntary emancipation, but these states were unwilling to accept the plan. Meanwhile pressure was being exerted for action on the Confiscation Bill; it was pushed through Congress and presented to Lincoln for his signature or veto. He signed it on July 12, *but did not notify that fact to Congress until July* 17. On this same day of signature, July 12, Lincoln sent to Congress a proposal of an Act to give pecuniary aid in voluntary state emancipation and held a conference with the congressional representatives of the border states seeking their definite approval of his policy. A minority agreed but the majority were emphatically against him. The Confiscation Bill would not affect the border states; they were not in rebellion. And they did not desire to free the slaves even if compensated.[2]

Thus Lincoln, by the stubbornness of the border states, was forced toward the Congressional point of view as expressed in the Confiscation Bill. On the day following his failure to win the border state representatives he told Seward and Welles who were driving with him, that he had

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 233, May 19, 1862.

[2] A Bill was in fact introduced July 16, 1862, on the lines of Lincoln's "pecuniary aid" proposal of July 12, but no action was taken on it.

come to the conclusion that the time was near for the issue of a proclamation of emancipation as a military measure fully within the competence of the President. This was on July 13.[1] Seward offered a few objections but apparently neither Cabinet official did more than listen to Lincoln's argument of military necessity. Congress adjourned on July 17. On July 22, the President read to the Cabinet a draft of an emancipation proclamation the text of the first paragraph of which referred to the Confiscation Act and declared that this would be rigorously executed unless rebellious subjects returned to their allegiance. But the remainder of the draft reasserted the ideal of a gradual and compensated emancipation and concluded with the warning that for states still in rebellion on January 1, 1863, a general emancipation of slaves would be proclaimed.[2] All of the Cabinet approved except Blair who expressed fears of the effect on the approaching November elections, and Seward who, while professing sympathy with the indicated purpose, argued that the time was badly chosen in view of recent military disasters and the approach of Lee's army toward Washington. The measure, Seward said, might " be viewed as the last measure of an exhausted government, a cry for help ; the government stretching forth its hands to Ethiopia, instead of Ethiopia stretching forth her hands to the government. It will be considered our last *shriek* on the retreat." He therefore urged postponement until after a Northern victory. This appealed to Lincoln and he " put the draft of the proclamation aside, waiting for victory."[3]

Victory came in September, with McClellan's defeat of Lee at Antietam, and the retreat of the Southern army toward Richmond. Five days later, September 22, Lincoln

[1] Welles, *Diary*, I, pp. 70-71.
[2] Abraham Lincoln, *Complete Works*, II, p. 213.
[3] Rhodes, IV, pp. 71-2.

issued the proclamation, expanded and altered in text from the draft of July 22, but in substance the same.[1] The loyal border states were not to be affected, but the proclamation renewed the promise of steps to be taken to persuade them to voluntary action. On January 1, 1863, a second proclamation, referring to that of September 22, was issued by Lincoln " by virtue of the power in me vested as commander-in-chief of the army and navy of the United States in time of actual armed rebellion against the authority and Government of the United States. . . ." The states affected were designated by name and all persons held as slaves within them " are, and henceforward shall be, free. . . ." " I hereby enjoin upon the people so declared to be free to abstain from all violence, unless in necessary self-defence. . . ." " And upon this act, sincerely believed to be an act of justice, warranted by the Constitution upon military necessity, I invoke the considerate judgment of mankind, and the gracious favour of Almighty God."[2]

Such were the steps, from December, 1861, when the radical Sumner began his pressure for action, to September, 1862, when Lincoln's pledge of emancipation was made. Did these steps indicate, as British opinion unquestionably held, an intention to rouse a servile insurrection ? Was the Confiscation Bill passed with that purpose in view and had Lincoln decided to carry it into effect ? The failure of the slaves to rise is, indeed, the great marvel of the Civil War and was so regarded not in England only, but in America also. It was the expectation of the North and the constant fear of the South. But was this, in truth, the *purpose* of the emancipation proclamation ?

[1] As issued September 22, the first paragraph refers to his plan of securing legislation to aid compensated voluntary emancipation, the next sets the date January 1, 1863, for completed emancipation of slaves in states still in rebellion and the remaining paragraphs concern the carrying out of the confiscation law. Lincoln, *Complete Works*, II, pp. 237-8.

This purpose has been somewhat summarily treated by American historians, largely because of lack of specific evidence as to motives at the time of issue. Two words "military necessity" are made to cover nearly the entire argument for emancipation in September, 1862, but in just what manner the military prowess of the North was to be increased was not at first indicated. In 1864, Lincoln declared that after the failure of successive efforts to persuade the border states to accept compensated emancipation he had believed there had arrived the "indispensable necessity for military emancipation and arming the blacks."[1] Repeatedly in later defence of the proclamation he urged the benefits that had come from his act and asserted that commanders in the field "believe the emancipation policy and the use of coloured troops constitute the heaviest blow yet dealt to the rebellion."[2] He added: "negroes, like other people, act upon motives. Why should they do anything for us, if we will do nothing for them? If they stake their lives for us, they must be prompted by the strongest motive, even the promise of freedom."

There is no note here of stirring a servile insurrection; nor did Lincoln ever acknowledge that such a purpose had been in his mind, though the thought of such possible result must have been present—was, indeed, present to most minds even without a proclamation of emancipation. Lincoln's alleged purpose was simply to draw away slaves, wherever possible, from their rebellious masters, thus reducing the economic powers of resistance of the South, and then to make these ex-slaves directly useful in winning the war. But after the war, even here and there during it, a theory was advanced that an impelling motive with the President had been the hope of influencing favourably

[1] Rhodes, IV, p. 214.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 410. In letter, August 26, 1863, addressed to a Springfield mass meeting of "unconditional Union men."

foreign governments and peoples by stamping the Northern cause with a high moral purpose. In popular opinion, Lincoln came to be regarded as a far-visioned statesman in anticipating that which ultimately came to pass. This has important bearing on the relations of the United States and Great Britain.

There is no doubt that nearly every Northern American had believed in 1860, that anti-slavery England would sympathize strongly with the North. The event did not prove this to be the case, nor could the North justly complain in the face of administration denials of an anti-slavery purpose. The English Government therefore was widely upheld by British opinion in regarding the struggle from the point of view of British interests. Yet any Northern step antagonistic to the institution of slavery compelled British governmental consideration. As early as December, 1860, before the war began, Bunch, at Charleston, had reported a conversation with Rhett, in which the latter frankly declared that the South would expect to revive the African Slave Trade.[1] This was limited in the constitution later adopted by the Confederacy which in substance left the matter to the individual states—a condition that Southern agents in England found it hard to explain.[2] As already noted, the ardent friends of the North continued to insist, even after Lincoln's denial, that slavery was the real cause of the American rupture.[3] By September, 1861, John Bright was writing to his friend Sumner that, all indications to the contrary, England would warmly support the North

[1] American Hist. Rev., XVIII, pp. 784-7. Bunch to Russell, Dec. 5, 1860.

[2] Southern Commissioners abroad early reported that recognition of independence and commercial treaties could not be secured unless the South would agree to " mutual right of search " treaties for the suppression of the African Slave Trade. Davis' answer was that the Confederate constitution gave him no authority to negotiate such a treaty; indeed, denied him that authority since the constitution itself prohibited the importation of negroes from Africa. For Benjamin's instructions see Bigelow, *Retrospections*, I, pp. 501-06.

if only it could be shown that emancipation was an object.[1] Again and again he urged, it is interesting to note, just those ideals of gradual and compensated emancipation which were so strongly held by Lincoln. In this same month the *Spectator* thought it was "idle to strive to ignore the very centre and spring of all disunion," and advised a "prudent audacity in striking at the cause rather than at the effect."[2] Three weeks later the *Spectator*, reviewing general British press comments, summed them up as follows:

> "If you make it a war of emancipation we shall think you madmen, and tell you so, though the ignorant instincts of Englishmen will support you. And if you follow our counsel in holding a tight rein on the Abolitionists, we shall applaud your worldly wisdom so far; but shall deem it our duty to set forth continually that you have forfeited all claim to the *popular* sympathy of England."

This, said the *Spectator*, had been stated in the most objectionable style by the *Times* in particular, which, editorially, had alleged that "the North has now lost the chance of establishing a high moral superiority by a declaration against slavery." To all this the *Spectator* declared that the North must adopt the bold course and make clear that restoration of the Union was not intended with the old canker at its roots.[3]

Official England held a different view. Russell believed that the separation of North and South would conduce to the extinction of slavery since the South, left to itself and fronted by a great and prosperous free North, with a population united in ideals, would be forced, ultimately, to abandon its "special system." He professed that he could not understand Mrs. Stowe's support of the war

[1] Sept. 6, 1861. In Mass. Hist. Soc. *Proceedings*, Vol. XLVI, p. 95.
[2] Sept. 14, 1861.
[3] October 5, 1861.

and thought she and Sumner "animated by a spirit of vengeance."[1] If the South did yield and the Union were restored *with* slavery, Russell thought that "Slavery would prevail all over the New World. For that reason I wish for separation."[2] These views were repeated frequently by Russell. He long had a fixed idea on the moral value of separation, but was careful to state, "I give you these views merely as speculations," and it is worthy of note that after midsummer of 1862 he rarely indulged in them. Against such speculations, whether by Russell or by others, Mill protested in his famous article in *Fraser's*, February, 1862.[3]

On one aspect of slavery the North was free to act and early did so. Seward proposed to Lyons a treaty giving mutual right of search off the African Coast and on the coasts of Cuba for the suppression of the African Slave Trade. Such a treaty had long been urged by Great Britain but persistently refused by the United States. It could not well be declined now by the British Government and was signed by Seward, April 8, 1862,[4] but if he expected any change in British attitude as a result he was disappointed. The renewal by the South of that trade might be a barrier to British goodwill, but the action of the North was viewed as but a weak attempt to secure British sympathy, and to mark the limits of Northern anti-slavery efforts. Indeed, the Government was not eager for the treaty on other grounds, since the Admiralty had never "felt any interest in the suppression of the slave trade . . . whatever they have done . . . they have done grudgingly and imperfectly."[5]

This was written at the exact period when Palmerston

[1] Lyons Papers. To Lyons, Oct. 26, 1861.

[2] *Ibid.* To Lyons, Nov. 2, 1861. The same ideas are officially expressed by Russell to Lyons, March 7, 1861, and May 1, 1862. (F. O., Am., Vol. 818, No. 104, Draft; and *Ibid.*, Vol. 819, No. 197, Draft.).

[3] See *ante*, p. 81.

[4] *U.S. Messages and Documents*, 1862-3, Pt. I, p. 65.

[5] Ashley, *Palmerston*, II, p. 227. Palmerston to Russell, Aug. 13, 1862.

and Russell were initiating those steps which were to result in the Cabinet crisis on mediation in October-November, 1862. Certainly the Slave Trade treaty with America had not influenced governmental attitude. At this juncture there was founded, November, 1862, the London Emancipation Society, with the avowed object of stirring anti-slavery Englishmen in protest against "favouring the South." But George Thompson, its organizer, had been engaged in the preliminary work of organization for some months and the Society is therefore to be regarded as an expression of that small group who were persistent and determined in assertion of slavery as the cause and object of the Civil War, before the issue of Lincoln's proclamation.[1] Thus for England as a whole and for official England the declarations of these few voices were regarded as expressive of a wish rather than as consistent with the facts. The moral uplift of an anti-slavery object was denied to the North.

This being so did Lincoln seek to correct the foreign view by the emancipation proclamation? There is some, but scant ground for so believing. It is true that this aspect had at various times, though rarely, been presented to the President. Carl Schurz, American Minister at Madrid, wrote to Seward as early as September 14, 1861, strongly urging the declaration of an anti-slavery purpose in the war and asserting that public opinion in Europe would then be such in favour of the North that no government would "dare to place itself, by declaration or act, upon the side of a universally condemned institution."[2] There is no evidence that Seward showed this despatch to Lincoln, but in January, 1862, Schurz returned to America and in

[1] Garrison, *Garrison*, IV, p. 66. Many distinguished names were on the roster of the Society—Mill, Bright, Cobden, Lord Houghton, Samuel Lucas, Forster, Goldwin Smith, Justin McCarthy, Thomas Hughes, Cairns, Herbert Spencer, Francis Newman, the Rev. Newman Hall, and others. Frederick W. Chesson was secretary, and very active in the work.

conversation with the President urged the "moral issue" to prevent foreign intervention. The President replied: "You may be right. Probably you are. I have been thinking so myself. I cannot imagine that any European power would dare to recognize and aid the Southern Confederacy if it became clear that the Confederacy stands for slavery and the Union for freedom."[1] No doubt others urged upon him the same view. Indeed, one sincere foreign friend, Count Gasparin, who had early written in favour of the North,[2] and whose opinions were widely read, produced a second work in the spring of 1862, in which the main theme was "slavery the issue." The author believed emancipation inevitable and urged an instant proclamation of Northern *intention* to free the slaves.[3] Presumably, Lincoln was familiar with this work. Meanwhile Sumner pressed the same idea though adding the prevalent abolition arguments which did not, necessarily, involve thought of foreign effect. On the general question of emancipation Lincoln listened, even telling Sumner that he "was ahead of himself only a month or six weeks."[4]

Yet after the enactment of the "confiscation bill" in July, 1862, when strong abolitionist pressure was brought on the President to issue a general proclamation of emancipation, he reasserted in the famous reply to Greeley, August 22, 1862, his one single purpose to restore the Union "with or without slavery."

> "If there be those who would not save the Union unless they could at the same time save slavery, I do not agree with them.
>
> "If there be those who would not save the Union unless

[1] Schurz, *Reminiscences*, II, 309.

[2] Gasparin, *The Uprising of a Great People*, 1861.

[3] Gasparin, *America before Europe*, Pt. V, Ch. III. The preface is dated March 4, 1862, and the work went through three American editions in 1862.

they could at the same time destroy slavery, I do not agree with them.

" My paramount object is to save the Union, and not either to save or to destroy slavery."[1]

Here seemed to be specific denial of raising a moral issue; yet unknown to the public at the moment there had already been drafted and discussed in Cabinet the emancipation proclamation. Greeley had presented abolitionist demands essential to cement the North. A month later, September 13, a delegation of Chicago clergymen came to Washington, had an audience with Lincoln, presented similar arguments, but also laid stress on the necessity of securing the sympathy of Europe. This was but nine days before the first proclamation was issued, but Lincoln replied much as to Greeley, though he stated, " I will also concede that Emancipation would help us in Europe, and convince them that we are incited by something more than ambition."[2] Immediately after the event, September 24, making a short speech to a serenading party, Lincoln said, " I can only trust in God I have made no mistake. . . . It is now for the country and the world to pass judgment and, maybe, take action upon it."[3] Over a year later, December 8, 1863, in his annual message to Congress, he noted a " much improved " tone in foreign countries as resulting from the emancipation proclamation, but dwelt mainly on the beneficial effects at home.[4]

Evidently there is slight ground for believing Lincoln to have been convinced that foreign relations would be improved by the proclamation. On the contrary, if he

[1] Raymond, *State Papers of Lincoln*, p. 253.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 256.

[3] Rhodes, IV, p. 162.

[4] Lincoln's *Complete Works*, II, p. 454. But the *after-comment* by Lincoln as to purpose was nearly always in line with an unfinished draft of a letter to Charles D. Robinson, Aug. 17, 1864, when the specific object was

trusted Seward's judgment he may have *feared* the effect on Europe, for such was Seward's prophecy. Here may have lain the true meaning of Lincoln's speech of September 24—that it was now for " the world to pass judgment and, maybe, take action upon it." After all foreign policy, though its main lines were subject to the President's control, was in the hands of Seward and throughout this entire period of six months since the introduction of the Confiscation Bill up to Lincoln's presentation of his draft proclamation to the Cabinet in July, Seward had been using the threat of a servile insurrection as a deterrent upon French-British talk of intervention. At times Seward connected servile insurrection with emancipation—at times not.

Seward had begun his career as Secretary of State with an appeal to Europe on lines of old friendship and had implied, though he could not state explicitly, the " noble " cause of the North. He had been met with what he considered a " cold " and premature as well as unjustifiable declaration of neutrality. From the first day of the conflict Lyons and Mercier had been constant in representing the hardships inflicted by the American war upon the economic interests of their respective countries. Both men bore down upon the interruption of the cotton trade and Seward kept repeating that Northern victories would soon release the raw cotton. He expected and promised much from the capture of New Orleans, but the results were disappointing. As time went on Seward became convinced that material interests alone would determine the attitude and action of Great Britain and France. But the stored supplies were on hand in the South, locked in by the blockade and would be available when the war was over *provided* the war did not take on an uncivilized and sanguinary character through a rising of the slaves. If that occurred cotton would be burned and destroyed and cotton supply to Europe would

be not merely a matter of temporary interruption, but one of long-continued dearth with no certainty of early resumption. Fearing the growth in England, especially, of an intention to intervene, Seward threatened a Northern appeal to the slaves, thinking of the threat not so much in terms of an uncivilized and horrible war as in terms of the material interests of Great Britain. In brief, considering foreign attitude and action in its relation to Northern advantage—to the winning of the war—he would use emancipation as a threat of servile insurrection, but did not desire emancipation itself for fear it would cause that very intervention which it was his object to prevent.

His instructions are wholly in line with this policy. In February, 1862, the Confiscation Bill had been introduced in Congress. In April, Mercier's trip to Richmond[1] had caused much speculation and started many rumours in London of plans of mediation.[2] On May 28, Seward wrote to Adams at great length and especially emphasized two points: first that while diplomats abroad had hitherto been interdicted from discussing slavery as an issue in the war, they were now authorized to state that the war was, in part at least, intended for the suppression of slavery, and secondly, that the North if interfered with by foreign nations would be forced to have recourse to a servile war. Such a war, Seward argued, would be "completely destructive of all European interests. . . ."[3] A copy of this instruction Adams gave to Russell on June 20. Eight days later Adams told Cobden in reply to a query about mediation that it would result in a servile war.[4] Evidently Adams perfectly understood Seward's policy.

[1] See *ante*, Ch. IX.

[2] *U.S. Messages and Documents*, 1862-3, Pt. I, p. 83. Adams to Seward, May 8, 1862.

[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 101-105.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 122. Adams to Seward, July 3, 1862. In his despatch Adams states the conversation to have occurred "last Saturday," and with an "unofficial person," who was sounding him on mediation. This was Cobden.

On July 13, Lincoln told Seward and Welles of the planned emancipation proclamation and that this was his first mention of it to anyone. Seward commented favourably but wished to consider the proposal in all its bearings before committing himself.[1] The day following he transmitted to agents abroad a copy of the Bill that day introduced into Congress embodying Lincoln's plan for gradual and compensated emancipation. This was prompt transmittal—and was unusual. Seward sent the Bill without material comment,[2] but it is apparent that this method and measure of emancipation would much better fit in with his theory of the slavery question in relation to foreign powers, than would an outright proclamation of emancipation.

Meanwhile American anxiety as to a possible alteration in British neutral policy was increasing. July 11, Adams reported that he had learned "from a credible source" that the British Cabinet might soon "take new ground."[3] This despatch if it reached Seward previous to the Cabinet of July 22, presumably added strength to his conviction of the inadvisability of now issuing the proclamation. In that Cabinet, Seward in fact went much beyond the customary historical statement that he advised postponement of the proclamation until the occurrence of a Northern victory; he argued, according to Secretary of War Stanton's notes of the meeting, "That foreign nations will intervene to prevent the abolition of slavery for the sake of cotton. . . . We break up our relations with foreign nations and the production of cotton for sixty years."[4] These views did not prevail; Lincoln merely postponed action. Ten days later Seward sent that long instruction to Adams covering the whole ground of feared European intervention, which,

[1] Welles, *Diary*, I, p. 70.
[2] *U.S. Messages and Documents*, 1862-3, Pt. I, p. 135.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 133. To Seward. His informant was Baring.
[4] Bancroft, *Seward*, II, p. 333.

fortunately, Adams was never called upon to carry out.[1] In it there was renewed the threat of a servile war if Europe attempted to aid the South, and again it is the materialistic view that is emphasized. Seward was clinging to his theory of correct policy.

Nor was he mistaken in his view of first reactions in governmental circles abroad—at least in England. On July 21, the day before Lincoln's proposal of emancipation in the Cabinet, Stuart in reviewing military prospects wrote: "Amongst the means relied upon for weakening the South is included a servile war."[2] To this Russell replied: ". . . I have to observe that the prospect of a servile war will only make other nations more desirous to see an end of this desolating and destructive conflict."[3] This was but brief reiteration of a more exact statement by Russell made in comment on Seward's first hint of servile war in his despatch to Adams of May 28, a copy of which had been given to Russell on June 20. On July 28, Russell reviewing Seward's arguments, commented on the fast increasing bitterness of the American conflict, disturbing and unsettling to European Governments, and wrote:

> "The approach of a servile war, so much insisted upon by Mr. Seward in his despatch, only forewarns us that another element of destruction may be added to the slaughter, loss of property, and waste of industry, which already afflict a country so lately prosperous and tranquil."[4]

In this same despatch unfavourable comment was made also on the Confiscation Bill with its punitive emancipation clauses. Stuart presented a copy of the despatch to Seward

[1] See *ante*, p. 35.

[2] *Parliamentary Papers*, 1863, *Lords*, Vol. XXIX. "Correspondence relating to the Civil War in the United States of North America." No. 8. To Russell.

[3] *Ibid.*, No. 10. Russell to Stuart, Aug. 7, 1862.

[4] *Ibid.*, 1863, *Lords*, Vol. XXV. "Further correspondence relating to the Civil War in the United States of North America." No. 2. To Stuart.

on August 16.[1] On August 22, Stuart learned of Lincoln's plan and reported it as purely a manœuvre to affect home politics and to frighten foreign governments.[2] Where did Stuart get the news if not from Seward, since he also reported the latter's success in postponing the proclamation ?

In brief both Seward and Russell were regarding emancipation in the light of an incitement to servile insurrection, and both believed such an event would add to the argument for foreign intervention. The *threat* Seward had regarded as useful ; the *event* would be highly dangerous to the North. Not so, however, did emancipation appear in prospect to American diplomats abroad. Adams was a faithful servant in attempting to carry out the ideas and plans of his chief, but as early as February, 1862, he had urged a Northern declaration in regard to slavery in order to meet in England Southern private representations that, independence won, the South would enter upon a plan of gradual emancipation to be applied "to all persons born after some specific date."[3] Motley, at Vienna, frequently after February, 1862, in private letters to his friends in America, urged some forward step on slavery,[4] but no such advice in despatches found its way into the selected correspondence annually sent to print by Seward. Far more important was the determination taken by Adams, less than a month after he had presented to Russell the " servile war " threat policy of Seward, to give advice to his chief that the chances of foreign intervention would be best met by the distinct avowal of an anti-slavery object in the

[1] *Ibid.*, 1863, *Lords*, Vol. XXIX. "Correspondence relating to the Civil War in the United States of North America," No. 20. Stuart to Russell, Aug. 16, 1862.

[2] See *ante*, p. 37.

[3] State Department, Eng., Vol. 78, No. 119. Adams to Seward, Feb. 21, 1862. This supplemented a similar representation made on Jan. 17, 1862. (*U.S. Messages and Documents*, 1862–3, Pt. I, p. 16.)

[4] e.g., Motley, *Correspondence*, II, pp. 64-5. To O. W. Holmes, Feb. 26,

war and that the North should be prepared to meet an European offer of mediation by declaring that if made to extinguish slavery such mediation would be welcome. This Adams thought would probably put an end to the mediation itself, but it would also greatly strengthen the Northern position abroad.[1]

This was no prevision of an emancipation proclamation; but it was assertion of the value of a higher "moral issue." Meanwhile, on July 24, Seward still fearful of the effects abroad of emancipation, wrote to Motley, asking whether he was "sure" that European powers would not be encouraged in interference, because of material interests, by a Northern attempt to free the slaves.[2] Motley's answer began, "A thousand times No," and Adams repeated his plea for a moral issue.[3] September 25, Adams met Seward's "material interests" argument by declaring that for Great Britain the chief difficulty in the cotton situation was not scarcity, but uncertainty, and that if English manufacturers could but know what to expect there would be little "cotton pressure" on the Government.[4] Thus leading diplomats abroad did not agree with Seward, but the later advices of Adams were not yet received when the day, September 22, arrived on which Lincoln issued the proclamation. On that day in sending the text to Adams the comment of Seward was brief. The proclamation, he said, put into effect a policy the approach of which he had "heretofore indicated to our representatives abroad," and he laid emphasis on the idea that the main purpose of the proclamation was to convince the South that its true interests were in the preservation of the Union—which is to say that the hoped-for result was the return of the South

[1] *U.S. Messages and Documents*, 1862-3, Pt. I, p. 140. Adams to Seward, July 17, 1862.

[2] Bancroft, *Seward*, II, p. 336.

[3] *U.S. Messages and Documents*, 1862-3, Pt. I, p. 191. Adams to Seward, Sept. 12, 1862.

with its slaves.[1] Certainly this was far from a truthful representation, but its purpose is evident. Seward's first thought was that having held up the threat of servile insurrection he must now remove that bogie. Four days later his judgment was improved, for he began, and thereafter maintained with vigour, the "high moral purpose" argument as evinced in the emancipation proclamation. "The interests of humanity," he wrote to Adams, "have now become identified with the cause of our country. . . ."[2]

That the material interests of Great Britain were still in Seward's thought is shown by the celerity with which under Lincoln's orders he grasped at an unexpected opening in relation to liberated slaves. Stuart wrote in mid-September that Mr. Walker, secretary of the colony of British Guiana, was coming from Demerara to Washington to secure additional labour for the British colony by offering to carry away ex-slaves.[3] This scheme was no secret and five days after the issue of the proclamation Seward proposed to Stuart a convention by which the British Government would be permitted to transport to the West Indies, or to any of its colonies, the negroes about to be emancipated. On September 30, Adams was instructed to take up the matter at London.[4] Russell was at first disinclined to consider such a convention and discussion dragged until the spring of 1864, when it was again proposed, this time by Russell, but now declined by Seward. In its immediate

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 195.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 202. Seward to Adams, Sept. 26, 1862. Lyons, on his return to Washington, wrote that he found Seward's influence much lessened, and that he had fallen in public estimation by his "signing the Abolition Proclamation, which was imposed upon him, in opposition to all his own views, by the Radical Party in the Cabinet." (Russell Papers. Lyons to Russell, Nov. 14, 1862.)

[3] Russell Papers. Stuart to Russell, Sept. 19, 1862.

[4] *U.S. Messages and Documents*, 1862-3, Pt. I, p. 202. The instruction went into great detail as to conditions and means. A similar instruction was sent to Paris, The Hague, and Copenhagen.

influence in the fall of 1862, Seward's offer had no effect on the attitude of the British Government.[1]

To Englishmen and Americans alike it has been in later years a matter for astonishment that the emancipation proclamation did not at once convince Great Britain of the high purposes of the North. But if it be remembered that in the North itself the proclamation was greeted, save by a small abolitionist faction, with doubt extending even to bitter opposition and that British governmental and public opinion had long dreaded a servile insurrection—even of late taking its cue from Seward's own prophecies—the cool reception given by the Government, the vehement and vituperative explosions of the press do not seem so surprising. "This Emancipation Proclamation," wrote Stuart on September 23, "seems a brutum fulmen."[2] One of the President's motives, he thought, was to affect public opinion in England. "But there is no pretext of humanity about the Proclamation. . . . It is merely a Confiscation Act, or perhaps worse, for it offers direct encouragement to servile insurrections."[3] Received in England during the Cabinet struggle over mediation the proclamation appears not to have affected that controversy, though Russell sought to use it as an argument for British action. In his memorandum, circulated October 13, Russell strove to show that the purpose and result would be servile war. He dwelt both on the horrors of such a war, and on its destruction of industry:

> "What will be the practical effect of declaring emancipation, not as an act of justice and beneficence, dispensed by

[1] There was much talk and correspondence on this project from Sept., 1862, to March, 1864. Stuart was suspicious of some "trap." Russell at one time thought the United States was secretly planning to colonize ex-slaves in Central America. Some of the Colonies were in favour of the plan. (Russell Papers. Stuart to Russell, Sept. 29, 1862. F. O., Am., Vol. 878, No. 177. Lyons to Russell, Feb. 24, 1863.)

[2] Lyons Papers. To Lyons.

[3] Russell Papers. Stuart to Russell, Sept. 26, 1862.

> the Supreme Power of the State, but as an act of punishment and retaliation inflicted by a belligerent upon a hostile community, it is not difficult to foresee. Wherever the arms of the United States penetrate, a premium will be given to acts of plunder, of incendiarism, and of revenge. The military and naval authorities of the United States will be bound by their orders to maintain and protect the perpetrators of such acts. Wherever the invasion of the Southern States is crowned by victory, society will be disorganized, industry suspended, large and small proprietors of land alike reduced to beggary."[1]

The London newspaper press was very nearly a unit in treating the proclamation with derision and contempt and no other one situation in the Civil War came in for such vigorous denunciation. Citations setting forth such comment have frequently been gathered together illustrative of the extent of press condemnation and of its unity in vicious editorials.[2] There is no need to repeat many of them here, but a few will indicate their tone. The *Times* greeted the news with an assertion that this was a final desperate play by Lincoln, as hope of victory waned. It was his "last card,"[3] a phrase that caught the fancy of lesser papers and was repeated by them. October 21, appeared the "strongest" of the *Times* editorials:

> ". . . We have here the history of the beginning of the end, but who can tell how the pages will be written which are yet to be filled before the inevitable separation is accomplished? Are scenes like those which we a short time since described from Dahomey yet to interpose, and is the reign of the last PRESIDENT to go out amid horrible massacres of

[1] Gladstone Papers. British agents still residing in the South believed the proclamation would have little practical effect, but added that if actually carried out the cultivation of cotton "would be as completely arrested as if an edict were pronounced against its future growth," and pictured the unfortunate results for the world at large. (F. O., Am., Vol. 846, No. 34. Cridland to Russell, Oct. 29, 1862.)

[2] See Rhodes, IV, 344, *notes*.

[3] October 6, 1862. The *Times* had used the "last card" phrase as early as Dec. 14, 1861, in speculations on the effect of Sumner's agitation for emancipation.



ABE LINCOLN'S LAST CARD; OR, ROUGE-ET-NOIR.

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white women and children, to be followed by the extermination of the black race in the South? Is LINCOLN yet a name not known to us as it will be known to posterity, and is it ultimately to be classed among that catalogue of monsters, the wholesale assassins and butchers of their kind?

"... We will attempt at present to predict nothing as to what the consequence of Mr. Lincoln's new policy may be, except that it certainly will not have the effect of restoring the Union. It will not deprive Mr. Lincoln of the distinctive affix which he will share with many, for the most part foolish and incompetent, Kings and Emperors, Caliphs and Doges, that of being LINCOLN—'the Last.'"

The *Times* led the way; other papers followed on. The *Liverpool Post* thought a slave rising inevitable,[1] as did also nearly every paper acknowledging anti-Northern sentiments, or professedly neutral, while even pro-Northern journals at first feared the same results.[2] Another striking phrase, "Brutum Fulmen," ran through many editorials. The *Edinburgh Review* talked of Lincoln's "cry of despair,"[3] which was little different from Seward's feared "last shriek." *Blackwood's* thought the proclamation "monstrous, reckless, devilish." It "justifies the South in raising the black flag, and proclaiming a war without quarter."[4] But there is no need to expand the citation of the well-nigh universal British press pouring out of the wrath of heaven upon Lincoln, and his emancipation proclamation.[5]

Even though there can be no doubt that the bulk of

[1] Oct. 6, 1862.

[2] e.g., *Dublin Nation*, Oct. 11, 1862. *Manchester Guardian*, Oct. 7. *London Morning Advertiser*, Oct. 9. *North British Review*, Oct., 1862. *London Press*, Oct. 11. *London Globe*, Oct. 6. *London Examiner*, Oct. 11, editorial: "The Black Flag," and Oct. 18: "The Instigation to Servile War." *Bell's Weekly Messenger*, Oct. 11.

[3] October, 1862.

[4] November, 1862.

[5] It is worthy of note that the French offer of joint mediation made to Britain in October specified the danger of servile war resulting from the proclamation as a reason for European action. (France, *Documents Diplomatiques*, 1862, p. 142.)

England at first expected servile war to follow the proclamation it is apparent that here and there a part of this British wrath was due to a fear that, in spite of denials of such influence, the proclamation was intended to arouse public opinion against projects of intervention and *might so arouse it.* The New York correspondent of the *Times* wrote that it was "promulgated evidently as a sop to keep England and France quiet,"[1] and on October 9, an editorial asserted that Lincoln had "a very important object. There is a presentiment in the North that recognition cannot be delayed, and this proclamation is aimed, not at the negro or the South, but at Europe." *Bell's Weekly Messenger* believed that it was now "the imperative duty of England and France to do what they can in order to prevent the possible occurrence of a crime which, if carried out, would surpass in atrocity any similar horror the world has ever seen."[2] "Historicus," on the other hand, asked: "What is that solution of the negro question to which an English Government is prepared to affix the seal of English approbation?"[3] Mason, the Confederate Agent in London, wrote home that it was generally believed the proclamation was issued "as the means of warding off recognition. . . . It was seen through at once and condemned accordingly."[4]

This interpretation of Northern purpose in no sense negatives the dictum that the proclamation exercised little influence on immediate British governmental policy, but does offer some ground for the belief that strong pro-Southern sympathizers at once saw the need of combating an argument dangerous to the carrying out of projects of mediation. Yet the new "moral purpose" of Lincoln did not immediately appeal even to his friends. The *Spectator* deplored the lack of a clean-cut declaration in

[1] The *Times*, Oct. 7, 1862.
[2] Oct. 18, 1862.
[3] Communication in the *Times*, Nov. 7, 1862.
[4] Richardson, II, 360. Mason to Benjamin, Nov. 6, 1862.

favour of the principle of human freedom: "The principle asserted is not that a human being cannot justly own another, but that he cannot own him unless he is loyal to the United States." . . . "There is no morality whatever in such a decree, and if approved at all it must be upon its merits as a political measure."[1] Two weeks later, reporting a public speech at Liverpool by ex-governor Morehead of Kentucky, in which Lincoln was accused of treachery to the border states, the *Spectator*, while taking issue with the speaker's statements, commented that it was not to be understood as fully defending a system of government which chose its executive "from the ranks of half-educated mechanics."[2]

Similarly in America the emancipation proclamation, though loudly applauded by the abolitionists, was received with misgivings. Lincoln was disappointed at the public reaction and became very despondent, though this was due, in part, to the failure of McClellan to follow up the victory of Antietam. The elections of October and November went heavily against the administration and largely on the alleged ground of the President's surrender to the radicals.[3] The army as a whole was not favourably stirred by the proclamation; it was considered at best as but a useless bit of "waste paper."[4] In England, John Bright, the most ardent public advocate of the Northern cause, was slow to applaud heartily; not until December did he give distinct approval, and even then in but half-hearted fashion, though he thought public interest was much aroused and that attention was now fixed on January 1, the date set by Lincoln for actual enforcement of emancipation.[5] In a speech at Birmingham, December 18, Bright had little to

[1] *Spectator*, Oct. 11, 1862.
[2] *Ibid.*, Oct. 25, 1862.
[3] Rhodes, IV, 162-64.
[4] Perry, *Henry Lee Higginson*, p. 175.

say of emancipation; rather he continued to use previous arguments against the South for admitting, as Vice-President Stephens had declared, that slavery was the very "corner-stone" of Southern institutions and society.[1] A few public meetings at points where favour to the North had been shown were tried in October and November with some success but with no great show of enthusiasm. It was not until late December that the wind of public opinion, finding that no faintest slave-rising had been created by the proclamation began to veer in favour of the emancipation edict.[2] By the end of the year it appeared that the Press, in holding up horrified hands and prophesying a servile war had "overshot the mark."[3]

Soon the changing wind became a gale of public favour for the cause of emancipation, nor was this lessened—rather increased—by Jefferson Davis' proclamation of December 23, 1862, in which he declared that Lincoln had approved "of the effort to excite a servile insurrection," and that therefore it was now ordered "all negro slaves captured in arms be at once delivered over to the executive authorities of the respective States to which they belong, to be dealt with according to the laws of said State." This by state laws meant death to the slave fighting for his freedom, even as a regular soldier in the Northern armies, and gave a good handle for accusations of Southern ferocity.[4]

Official opinion was not readily altered, Lyons writing in December that the promised January proclamation might still mean servile war. He hoped that neither Lincoln's proclamation nor Davis' threat of retaliation would be

[1] Rogers, *Speeches by John Bright*, I, pp. 216 ff.

[2] *Liberator*, Nov. 28, 1862, reports a meeting at Leigh, Oct. 27, expressing sympathy with the North. At Sheffield, Dec. 31, 1862, an amended resolution calling for recognition of the South was voted down and the original pro-Northern resolutions passed. There were speakers on both sides. *Liberator*, Jan. 23, 1863.

[3] Motley, *Correspondence*, II, p. 113. J. S. Mill to Motley, Jan. 26, 1863.

[4] Richardson, I, p. 273. Davis' order applied also to all Northern white officers commanding negro troops. It proved an idle threat.

carried into effect.[1] Russell regarded the January 1 proclamation as " a measure of war of a very questionable kind."[2]

But the British anti-slavery public, now recovered from its fears of an " abolition war " was of another temper. Beginning with the last week of December, 1862, and increasing in volume in each succeeding month, there took place meeting after meeting at which strong resolutions were passed enthusiastically endorsing the issue of the emancipation proclamation and pledging sympathy to the cause of the North. The *Liberator* from week to week, listed and commented on these public meetings, noting fifty-six held between December 30, 1862, and March 20, 1863. The American Minister reported even more, many of which sent to him engraved resolutions or presented them in person through selected delegations. The resolutions were much of the type of that adopted at Sheffield, January 10 :

> " *Resolved :* that this meeting being convinced that slavery is the cause of the tremendous struggle now going on in the American States, and that the object of the leaders of the rebellion is the perpetuation of the unchristian and inhuman system of chattel slavery, earnestly prays that the rebellion may be crushed, and its wicked object defeated, and that the Federal Government may be strengthened to pursue its emancipation policy till not a slave be left on the American soil." [3]

[1] Russell Papers. Lyons to Russell, Dec. 30, 1862. And again, Jan. 2, 1863. " If it do not succeed in raising a servile insurrection, it will be a very unsuccessful political move for its authors." Stoeckl in conference with Seward, expressed regret that the emancipation proclamation had been issued, since it set up a further barrier to the reconciliation of North and South—always the hope of Russia. Seward replied that in executing the proclamation, there would be, no doubt, many modifications. Stoeckl answered that then the proclamation must be regarded as but a futile menace. (Russian Archives. Stoeckl to F. O., Nov. 19–Dec. 1, 1862, No. 2171.)

[2] Rhodes, IV, p. 357.

[3] *U.S. Diplomatic Correspondence*, 1863, Pt. I, p. 55. Adams to Seward, Jan. 16, 1863, transmitting this and other resolutions presented to him. Adams by March 20 had reported meetings which sent resolutions to him,

Adams quoted the *Times* as referring to these meetings as made up of "nobodies." Adams commented:

> "They do not indeed belong to the high and noble class, but they are just those nobodies who formerly forced their most exalted countrymen to denounce the prosecution of the Slave Trade by the commercial adventurers at Liverpool and Bristol, and who at a later period overcame all their resistance to the complete emancipation of the negro slaves in the British dependencies. If they become once fully aroused to a sense of the importance of this struggle as a purely moral question, I feel safe in saying there will be an end of all effective sympathy in Great Britain with the rebellion."[1]

Adams had no doubt "that these manifestations are the genuine expression of the feelings of the religious dissenting and of the working classes," and was confident the Government would be much influenced by them.[2] The newspapers, though still editorially unfavourable to the emancipation proclamation, accepted and printed communications with increasing frequency in which were expressed the same ideas as in the public meetings. This was even more noticeable in the provincial press. Samuel A. Goddard, a merchant of Birmingham, was a prolific letter writer to the *Birmingham Post*, consistently upholding the Northern cause and he now reiterated the phrase, "Mr. Lincoln's cause is just and holy."[3] In answer to Southern sneers at the failure of the proclamation to touch slavery in the border states, Goddard made clear the fact that

Ersham, Weybridge, Bradford, Stroud, Bristol, Glasgow, Liverpool, South London, Bath, Leeds, Bromley, Middleton, Edinburgh, Birmingham, Aberdare, Oldham, Merthyr Tydfil, Paisley, Carlisle, Bury, Manchester, Pendleton, Bolton, Newcastle-on-Tyne, Huddersfield, Ashford, Ashton-under-Lyne, Mossley, Southampton, Newark, and York. See also Rhodes, IV, 348-58, for résumé of meetings and opinions expressed.

[1] State Department, Eng., Vol. 81, No. 300. Adams to Seward, Jan. 22, 1863.

[2] *U.S. Diplomatic Correspondence*, 1863, Pt. I, p. 100. Adams to Seward, Feb. 5, 1863.

[3] Goddard, *Letters on the American Rebellion*, p. 287. Goddard contributed seventy letters before 1863.

Lincoln had no constitutional "right" to apply his edict to states not in rebellion.[1] On the public platform no one equalled the old anti-slavery orator, George Thompson, in the number of meetings attended and addresses made. In less than a month he had spoken twenty-one times and often in places where opposition was in evidence. Everywhere Thompson found an aroused and encouraged anti-slavery feeling, now strongly for the North.[2]

Eight years earlier five hundred thousand English women had united in an address to America on behalf of the slaves. Harriet Beecher Stowe now replied to this and asked the renewed sympathy of her English sisters. A largely signed "round robin" letter assured her that English women were still the foes of slavery and were indignantly united against suggestions of British recognition of the South.[3] Working class Britain was making its voice heard in support of the North. To those of Manchester, Lincoln, on January 19, 1863, addressed a special letter of thanks for their earnest support while undergoing personal hardships resulting from the disruption of industry caused by the war. "I cannot" he wrote, "but regard your decisive utterances upon the question [of human slavery] as an instance of sublime Christian heroism which has not been surpassed in any age or in any country."[4] Nonconformist England now came vigorously to the support of the North. Spurgeon, in London, made his great congregation pray with him: "God bless and strengthen

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 307. Letter to *Daily Gazette*, May 2, 1863.

[2] *The Liberator*, Feb. 27, 1863. At Bristol the opposition element introduced a resolution expressing abhorrence of slavery and the hope that the war in America might end in total emancipation, but adding that "at the same time [this meeting] cannot but regard the policy of President Lincoln in relation to slavery, as partial, insincere, inhuman, revengeful and altogether opposed to those high and noble principles of State policy which alone should guide the counsels of a great people." The resolution was voted down, and one passed applauding Lincoln. The proposer of the resolution was also compelled to apologize for slurring remarks on Thompson.

[3] *Atlantic Monthly*, XI, p. 525.

[4] Lincoln, *Complete Works*, II, p. 302.

the North ; give victory to their arms."[1] Further and more general expression of Nonconformist church sympathy came as a result of a letter received February 12, 1863, from a number of French pastors and laymen, urging all the Evangelical churches to unite in an address to Lincoln. The London and Manchester Emancipation Societies combined in drawing up a document for signature by pastors and this was presented for adoption at a meeting in Manchester on June 3, 1863. In final form it was " An Address to Ministers and Pastors of All Christian Denominations throughout the States of America." There was a " noisy opposition " but the address was carried by a large majority and two representatives, Massie and Roylance, were selected to bear the message in person to the brethren across the ocean.[2] Discussion arose over the Biblical sanction of slavery. In the *Times* appeared an editorial pleading this sanction and arguing the *duty* of slaves to refuse liberty.[3] Goldwin Smith, Regius Professor of Modern History at Oxford, replied in a pamphlet, " Does the Bible sanction American Slavery ? "[4] His position and his skill in presentation made him a valuable ally to the North.

Thus British anti-slavery circles, previously on the defensive, became aroused and enthusiastic when Lincoln's January 1, 1863, proclamation made good his pledge of the previous September : other elements of opinion, and in all classes, were strengthened in like measure, and everywhere the first expression of fear of a servile insurrection largely disappeared. In truth, pro-Northern England went to such

[1] Trevelyan, *John Bright*, p. 306. Also Rhodes, IV, p. 351.

[2] Massie, *America : the Origin of Her Present Conflict*, London, 1864. This action and the tour of the two delegates in America did much to soothe wounded feelings which had been excited by a correspondence in 1862-3 between English, French and American branches of similar church organizations. See *New Englander*, April, 1863, p. 288.

lengths in its support of emancipation as to astound and alarm the *Saturday Review*, which called these demonstrations a " carnival of cant."[1] More neutral minds were perplexed over the practical difficulties and might well agree with Schleiden who wrote in January, 1863, quoting Machiavelli : " What is more difficult, to make free men slaves, or slaves free ? "[2] But by the end of January the popular approval of emancipation was in full swing. On the evening of the twenty-ninth there took place in London at Exeter Hall, a great mass meeting unprecedented in attendance and enthusiasm. The meeting had been advertised for seven o'clock, but long before the hour arrived the hall was jammed and the corridors filled. A second meeting was promptly organized for the lower hall, but even so the people seeking admission crowded Exeter Street and seriously impeded traffic in the Strand. Outdoor meetings listened to reports of what was going on in the Hall and cheered the speakers. The main address was made by the Rev. Newman Hall, of Surrey Chapel. A few Southern sympathizers who attempted to heckle the speakers were quickly shouted down.[3]

The " carnival of cant," as the *Saturday Review* termed it, was truly a popular demonstration, stirred by anti-slavery leaders, but supported by the working and non-enfranchised classes. Its first effect was to restore courage and confidence to Northern supporters in the upper classes. Bright had welcomed emancipation, yet with some mis-

[1] Rhodes, IV, p. 355.

[2] Lutz, *Notes*. Schleiden's despatch, No. 1, 1863. German opinion on the Civil War was divided ; Liberal Germany sympathized strongly with the North ; while the aristocratic and the landowning class stood for the South. The historian Karl Friedrich Neumann wrote a three-volume history of the United States wholly lacking in historical impartiality and strongly condemnatory of the South. (Geschichte der Vereinigten Staaten, Berlin, 1863-66.) This work had much influence on German public opinion. (Lutz, *Notes*.)

[3] *Liberator*, Feb. 20, 1863. Letter of J. P. Jewett to W. L. Garrison, Jan. 30, 1863. " The few oligarchs in England who may still sympathize

givings. He now joined in the movement and in a speech at Rochdale, February 3, on "Slavery and Secession," gave full approval of Lincoln's efforts.

In 1862, shortly after the appearance of Spence's *American Union*, which had been greeted with great interest in England and had influenced largely upper-class attitude in favour of the South, Cairnes had published his pamphlet, "Slave Power." This was a reasoned analysis of the basis of slavery and a direct challenge to the thesis of Spence.[1] England's "unnatural infatuation" for a slave power, Cairnes prophesied, would be short-lived. His pamphlet began to be read with more conviction by that class which until now had been coldly neutral and which wished a more reassured faith in the Northern cause than that stirred by the emotional reception given the emancipation proclamation. Yet at bottom it was emancipation that brought this reasoning public to seek in such works as that of Cairnes a logical basis for a change of heart. Even in official circles, utterances previously made in private correspondence, or in governmental conversations only, were now ventured in public by friends of the North. On April 1, 1863, at a banquet given to Palmerston in Edinburgh, the Duke of Argyll ventured to answer a reference made by Palmerston in a speech of the evening previous in which had been depicted the horrors of Civil War, by asking if Scotland were historically in a position to object to civil wars having high moral purpose. "I, for one," Argyll said, "have not learned to be ashamed of that ancient combination of the Bible and the sword. Let it be enough for us to pray and hope that the contest, whenever it may be brought to an end, shall bring with it that great blessing to the white race which shall consist in the final freedom of the black."[2]

The public meetings in England raised high the hope in America that governmental England would show some evidence of a more friendly attitude. Lincoln himself drafted a resolution embodying the ideas he thought it would be wise for the public meetings to adopt. It read:

"Whereas, while *heretofore* States, and Nations, have tolerated slavery, *recently*, for the first time in the world, an attempt has been made to construct a new Nation, upon the basis of, and with the primary, and fundamental object to maintain, enlarge, and perpetuate human slavery, therefore,

Resolved: that no such embryo State should ever be recognized by, or admitted into, the family of Christian and civilized nations; and that all Christian and civilized men everywhere should, by all lawful means, resist to the utmost, such recognition or admission." [1]

This American hope much disturbed Lyons. On his return to Washington, in November, 1862, he had regarded the emancipation proclamation as a political manœuvre purely and an unsuccessful one. The administration he thought was losing ground and the people tired of the war. This was the burden of his private letters to Russell up to March, 1863, but does not appear in his official despatches in which there was nothing to give offence to Northern statesmen. But in March, Lyons began to doubt the correctness of these judgments. He notes a renewed Northern enthusiasm leading to the conferring of extreme powers—the so-called "dictatorship measures"—upon Lincoln. Wise as Lyons ordinarily was he was bound by the social and educational traditions of his class, and had at first not the slightest conception of the force or effect of emancipation upon the public in middle-class England. He feared an American reaction against England when it was under-

[1] Trevelyan, *John Bright*. Facsimile, opp. p. 303. Copy sent by Sumner to Bright, April, 1863.

stood that popular meetings would have no influence on the British Government.

> "Mr. Seward and the whole Party calculate immensely on the effects of the anti-slavery meetings in England, and seem to fancy that public feeling in England is coming so completely round to the North that the Government will be obliged to favour the North in all ways, even if it be disinclined to do so. This notion is unlucky, as it makes those who hold it, unreasonable and presumptuous in dealing with us." [1]

. . . . . .

Lincoln's plan of emancipation and his first proclamation had little relation to American foreign policy. Seward's attitude toward emancipation was that the *threat* of it and of a possible servile war might be useful in deterring foreign nations, especially Great Britain, from intervening. But he objected to the carrying of emancipation into effect because he feared it would *induce* intervention. Servile war, in part by Seward's own efforts, in part because of earlier British newspaper speculations, was strongly associated with emancipation, in the English view. Hence the Government received the September, 1862, proclamation with disfavour, the press with contempt, and the public with apprehension—even the friends of the North. But no servile war ensued. In January, 1863, Lincoln kept his promise of wide emancipation and the North stood committed to a high moral object. A great wave of relief and exultation

[1] Russell Papers. Lyons to Russell, March 10, 1863. Lyons was slow to favour the emancipation proclamation. The first favourable mention I have found was on July 26, 1864. (Russell Papers. To Russell.) In this view his diplomatic colleagues coincided. Stoeckl, in December, 1863, wrote that slavery was dead in the Central and Border States, and that even in the South its form must be altered if it survived. (Russian Archives, Stoeckl to F. O., Nov. 22–Dec. 4, 1863, No. 3358.) But immediately after the second proclamation of January, 1863, Stoeckl could see no possible good in such measures. If they had been made of universal application it would have been a "great triumph for the principle of individual liberty," but as issued they could only mean "the hope of stirring a servile war in the South." (*Ibid.*, Dec. 24, 1863–Jan. 5, 1864, No. 70.)

swept over anti-slavery England, but did not so quickly extend to governmental circles. It was largely that England which was as yet without direct influence on Parliament which so exulted and now upheld the North. Could this England of the people affect governmental policy and influence its action toward America? Lyons correctly interpreted the North and Seward as now more inclined to press the British Government on points previously glossed over, and in the same month in which Lyons wrote this opinion there was coming to a head a controversy over Britain's duty as a neutral, which both during the war and afterwards long seemed to Americans a serious and distinctly unfriendly breach of British neutrality. This was the building in British ports of Confederate naval vessels of war.

CHAPTER XIII

THE LAIRD RAMS

THE building in British ports of Confederate war vessels like the *Alabama* and the subsequent controversy and arbitration in relation thereto have been exhaustively studied and discussed from every aspect of legal responsibility, diplomatic relations, and principles of international law. There is no need and no purpose here to review in detail these matters. The purpose is, rather, to consider the development and effect at the time of their occurrence of the principal incidents related to Southern ship-building in British yards. The *intention* of the British Government is of greater importance in this study than the correctness of its action.

Yet it must first be understood that the whole question of a belligerent's right to procure ships of war or to build them in the ports of neutral nations was, in 1860, still lacking definite application in international law. There were general principles already established that the neutral must not do, nor permit its subjects to do, anything directly in aid of belligerents. The British Foreign Enlistment Act, notification of which had been given in May, 1861, forbade subjects to "be concerned in the equipping, furnishing, fitting out, or arming, of any ship or vessel, with intent or in order that such ship or vessel shall be employed in the service . . ." of a belligerent, and provided for punishment of individuals and forfeiture of vessels if this prohibition were disobeyed. But the Act also declared that such

punishment, or seizure, would follow on due proof of the offence. Here was the weak point of the Act, for in effect if secrecy were maintained by offenders the proof was available only after the offence had been committed and one of the belligerents injured by the violation of the law. Over twenty years earlier the American Government, seeking to prevent its subjects from committing unneutral acts in connection with the Canadian rebellion of 1837, had realized the weakness of its neutrality laws as they then stood, and by a new law of March 10, 1838, hastily passed and therefore limited to two years' duration, in the expectation of a more perfect law, but intended as a clearer exposition of neutral duty, had given federal officials power to act and seize *on suspicion*, leaving the proof of guilt or innocence to be determined later. But the British interpretation of her own neutrality laws was that proof was required in advance of seizure—an interpretation wholly in line with the basic principle that a man was innocent until proved guilty, but fatal to that preservation of strict neutrality which Great Britain had so promptly asserted at the beginning of the Civil War.[1]

The South wholly lacking a navy or the means to create one, early conceived the idea of using neutral ports for

[1] In other respects, also, this question of belligerent ship-building and equipping in neutral ports was, in practice, vaguely defined. As late as 1843 in the then existing Texan war of independence against Mexico, the British Foreign Secretary, Aberdeen, had been all at sea. Mexico made a contract for two ships of war with the English firm of Lizardi & Company. The crews were to be recruited in England, the ships were to be commanded by British naval officers on leave, and the guns were to be purchased from firms customarily supplying the British Navy. Aberdeen advised the Admiralty to give the necessary authority to purchase guns. When Texas protested he at first seemed to think strict neutrality was secured if the same privileges were offered that country. Later he prohibited naval officers to go in command. One Mexican vessel, the *Guadaloupe*, left England with full equipment as originally planned; the other, the *Montezuma*, was forced to strip her equipment. But both vessels sailed under British naval officers for these were permitted to resign their commissions. They were later reinstated. In all this there was in part a temporary British policy to aid Mexico, but it is also clear that British governmental opinion was much in confusion as to neutral duty in the case of such ships. See my book, ***British Interests and Activities in Texas***, Ch. IV.

the construction of war vessels. Advice secured from able British lawyers was to the effect that if care were taken to observe the strict letter of the Foreign Enlistment Act, by avoiding warlike equipment, a ship, even though her construction were such as to indicate that she was destined to become a ship of war, might be built by private parties in British yards. The three main points requiring careful observance by the South were concealment of government ownership and destination, no war equipment and no enlistment of crew in British waters.

The principal agent selected by the South to operate on these lines was Captain J. D. Bullock, who asserts in his book descriptive of his work that he never violated British neutrality law and that prevailing legal opinion in England supported him in this view.[1] In March, 1862, the steamer *Oreto* cleared from Liverpool with a declared destination of "Palermo, the Mediterranean, and Jamaica." She was not heard of until three months later when she was reported to be at Nassau completing her equipment as a Southern war vessel. In June, Adams notified Russell "that a new and still more powerful war-steamer was nearly ready for departure from the port of Liverpool on the same errand."[2] He protested that such ships violated the neutrality of Great Britain and demanded their stoppage and seizure. From June 23 to July 28, when this second ship, "No. 290" (later christened the *Alabama*) left Liverpool, Adams and the United States consul at Liverpool, Dudley, were busy in securing evidence and in renewing protests to the Government. To each protest Russell replied in but a few lines that the matter had been referred to the proper departments, and it was not until July 26, when there was received from Adams an opinion by an eminent Queen's

[1] Bullock, *Secret Service under the Confederacy*.
[2] Bernard, *Neutrality of Great Britain during the American Civil War*.

Counsel, Collier, that the affidavits submitted were conclusive against the "290," that Russell appears to have been seriously concerned. On July 28, the law officers of the Crown were asked for an immediate opinion, and on the thirty-first telegrams were sent to Liverpool and to other ports to stop and further examine the vessel. But the "290" was well away and outside of British waters.[1]

The *Alabama*, having received guns and munitions by a ship, the *Bahama*, sent out from England to that end, and having enlisted in the Confederate Navy most of the British crews of the two vessels, now entered upon a career of destruction of Northern commerce. She was not a privateer, as she was commonly called at the time, but a Government vessel of war specially intended to capture and destroy merchant ships. In short her true character, in terms of modern naval usage, was that of a "commerce destroyer." Under an able commander, Captain Semmes, she traversed all oceans, captured merchant ships and after taking coal and stores from them, sank or burnt the captures; for two years she evaded battle with Northern war vessels and spread so wide a fear that an almost wholesale transfer of the flag from American to British or other foreign register took place, in the mercantile marine. The career of the *Alabama* was followed with increasing anger and chagrin by the North; this, said the public, was a British ship, manned by a British crew, using British guns and ammunition, whose escape from Liverpool had been winked at by the British Government. What further evidence was necessary of bad faith in a professed strict neutrality?

Nor were American officials far behind the public in suspicion and anger. At the last moment it had appeared

[1] *Parliamentary Papers*, 1863, *Commons*, LXXII. "Correspondence respecting the 'Alabama.'" Also *ibid.*, "Correspondence between Commissioner of Customs and Custom House Authorities at Liverpool relating to the 'Alabama.'" The last-minute delay was due to the illness of a Crown adviser.

as if the Government were inclined to stop the "290." Was the hurried departure of the vessel due to a warning received from official sources? On November 21, Adams reported that Russell complained in an interview of remarks made privately by Bright, to the effect that warning had come from Russell himself, and "seemed to me a little as if he suspected that Mr. Bright had heard this from me."[1] Adams disavowed, and sincerely, any such imputation, but at the same time expressed to Russell his conviction that there must have been from some source a "leak" of the Government's intention.[2] The question of advance warning to Bullock, or to the Lairds who built the *Alabama*, was not one which was likely to be officially put forward in any case; the real issue was whether an offence to British neutrality law had been committed, whether it would be acknowledged as such, and still more important, whether repetitions of the offence would be permitted. The *Alabama*, even though she might, as the American assistant-secretary of the Navy wrote, be "giving us a sick turn,"[3] could not by herself greatly affect the issue of the war; but many *Alabamas* would be a serious matter. The belated governmental order to stop the vessel was no assurance for the future since in reply to Adams' protests after her escape, and to a prospective claim for damages, Russell replied that in fact the orders to stop had been given merely for the purpose of further investigation, and that

[1] State Department, Eng., Vol. 81, No. 264. Adams to Seward, Nov. 21, 1862.

[2] Selborne, in his *Memorials: Family and Personal*, II, p. 430, declared that in frequent official communication with all members of the Cabinet at the time, "I never heard a word fall from any one of them expressive of anything but regret that the orders for the detention of the *Alabama* were sent too late." Of quite different opinion is Brooks Adams, in his "The Seizure of the Laird Rams" (*Proceedings*, Mass. Hist. Soc., Vol. XLV, pp. 243-333). In 1865 his father, the American Minister, made a diary entry that he had been shown what purported to be a copy of a note from one V. Buckley to Caleb Huse, Southern agent in England, warning him of danger to his "protegé." "This Victor Buckley is a young clerk in the Foreign Office." (*Ibid.*, p. 260, *note*.)

[3] Fox, *Confidential Correspondence*, I, p. 165. Fox to Dupont, Nov. 7,

in strict law there had been no neglect of governmental duty.[1] If this were so similar precautions and secrecy would prohibit official interference in the issue from British ports of a whole fleet of Southern war-vessels. Russell might himself feel that a real offence to the North had taken place. He might write, " I confess the proceedings of that vessel [the *Alabama*] are enough to *rile* a more temperate nation, and I owe a grudge to the Liverpool people on that account,"[2] but this was of no value to the North if the governmental decision was against interference without complete and absolute proof.

It was therefore the concern of the North to find some means of bringing home to the British Ministry the enormity of the offence in American eyes and the serious danger to good relations if such offences were to be continued. An immediate downright threat of war would have been impolitic and would have stirred British pride to the point of resentment. Yet American pride was aroused also and it was required of Seward that he gain the Northern object and yet make no such threat as would involve the two nations in war—a result that would have marked the success of Southern secession. That Seward was able to find the way in which to do this is evidence of that fertility of imagination and gift in expedient which marked his whole career in the diplomacy of the Civil War.[3]

In that same month when Adams was beginning his protests on the " 290," June, 1862, there had already been drawn the plans, and the contracts made with the Laird

[1] It is interesting that the opinion of many Continental writers on international law was immediately expressed in favour of the American and against the British contention. This was especially true of German opinion. (Lutz, *Notes*.)

[2] Lyons Papers. To Lyons, Dec. 20, 1862.

[3] I am aware that Seward's use of the " Privateering Bill," now to be recounted is largely a new interpretation of the play of diplomacy in regard to the question of Southern ship-building in England. Its significance became evident only when British correspondence was available ; but that correspondence and a careful comparison of dates permits, and, as I think, requires a revised statement of the incident of the Laird Rams.

Brothers at Liverpool, for the building of two vessels far more dangerous than the *Alabama* to the Northern cause. These were the so-called Laird Rams. They were to be two hundred and thirty feet long, have a beam of forty feet, be armoured with four and one-half inch iron plate and be provided with a "piercer" at the prow, about seven feet long and of great strength. This "piercer" caused the ships to be spoken of as rams, and when the vessels were fully equipped it was expected the "piercer" would be three feet under the surface of the water. This was the distinguishing feature of the two ships; it was unusual construction, nearly impossible of use in an ordinary battle at sea, but highly dangerous to wooden ships maintaining a close blockade at some Southern port. While there was much newspaper comment in England that the vessels were "new *Alabamas*," and in America that they were "floating fortresses," suitable for attack upon defenceless Northern cities, their primary purpose was to break up the blockading squadrons.[1]

Shortly before the escape of the *Alabama* and at a time when there was but little hope the British Government would seize her and shortly after the news was received in Washington that still other vessels were planned for building in the Lairds' yards, a Bill was introduced in Congress authorizing the President to issue letters of marque and privateering. This was in July, 1862, and on the twelfth, Seward wrote to Adams of the proposed measure specifying that the purpose was to permit privateers to seek for and capture or destroy the *Alabama* or other vessels of a like type. He characterized this as a plan "to organize the

[1] Bullock dreamed also of ascending rivers and laying Northern cities under contribution. According to a statement made in 1898 by Captain Page, assigned to command the rams, no instructions as to their use had been given him by the Confederate Government, but his plans were solely to break the blockade with no thought of attacking Northern cities. (Rhodes, IV. 385, *note*.)

militia of the seas by issuing letters of marque and reprisal."[1] Neither here nor at any time did Seward or Adams allege in diplomatic correspondence any other purpose than the pursuit of *Alabamas*, nor is it presumable that in July, 1862, the construction plans of the Rams were sufficiently well known to the North to warrant a conclusion that the later purpose of the proposed privateering fleet was *at first* quite other than the alleged purpose. Probably the Bill introduced in July, 1862, was but a hasty reaction to the sailing of the *Oreto* (or *Florida*) and to the failure of early protests in the case of the *Alabama*. Moreover there had been an earlier newspaper agitation for an increase of naval power by the creation of a "militia of the seas," though with no clear conception of definite objects to be attained. This agitation was now renewed and reinforced and many public speeches made by a General Hiram Wallbridge, who had long advocated an organization of the mercantile marine as an asset in times of war.[2] But though introduced in the summer of 1862, the "privateering bill" was not seriously taken up until February, 1863.

In the Senate discussion of the Bill at the time of introduction, Senator Grimes, its sponsor, declared that the object was to encourage privateers to pursue British ships when, as was expected, they should "turn Confederate." Sumner objected that the true business of privateers was to destroy enemy commerce and that the South had no such *bona fide* commerce. Grimes agreed that this was his opinion also, but explained that the administration wanted

[1] *U.S. Diplomatic Correspondence*, 1862, p. 134.

[2] Wallbridge, *Addresses and Resolutions*. Pamphlet. New York, n.d. He began his agitation in 1856, and now received much popular applause. His pamphlet quotes in support many newspapers from June, 1862, to September, 1863. Wallbridge apparently thought himself better qualified than Welles to be Secretary of the Navy. Welles regarded his agitation as instigated by Seward to get Welles out of the Cabinet. Welles professes that the "Privateering Bill" slipped through Congress unknown to him and "surreptitiously" (Diary, I, 245-50), a statement difficult to accept in view of the Senate debates upon it.

the measure passed so that it might have in its hands a power to be used if the need arose. The general opinion of the Senate was opposed and the matter was permitted to lapse, but without definite action, so that it could at any time be called up again.[1] Six months later the progress of construction and the purpose of the rams at Liverpool were common knowledge. On January 7, 1863, the privateering bill again came before the Senate, was referred to the committee on naval affairs, reported out, and on February 17 was passed and sent to the House of Representatives, where on March 2 it was given a third reading and passed without debate.[2] In the Senate, Grimes now clearly stated that the Bill was needed because the Confederates "are now building in England a fleet of vessels designed to break our blockade of their coast," and that the privateers were to "assist in maintaining blockades." There was no thorough debate but a few perfunctory objections were raised to placing so great a power in the hands of the President, while Sumner alone appears as a consistent opponent arguing that the issue of privateers would be dangerous to the North since it might lead to an unwarranted interference with neutral commerce. No speaker outlined the exact method by which privateers were to be used in "maintaining blockades"; the bill was passed as an "administration measure."

Coincidently, but as yet unknown in Washington, the chagrin of Russell at the escape of the *Alabama* had somewhat lost its edge. At first he had been impressed with the necessity of amending the Foreign Enlistment Act so as to prevent similar offences and had gained the approval of the law officers of the Crown. Russell had even offered to take up with America an agreement by which both

[1] Cong. Globe, 37th Congress, 2nd Session, Pt. IV, pp. 3271, 3325 and 3336.

[2] *Ibid.*, 3rd Session, Pt. I, pp. 220, 393, and Part II, pp. 960, 1028, 1489.

countries were to amend their neutrality laws at the same moment. This was in December, 1862, but now on February 14, 1863, he wrote to Lyons that the project of amendment had been abandoned as the Cabinet saw no way of improving the law.[1] While this letter to Lyons was on its way to America, a letter from Seward was *en route*, explaining to Adams the meaning of the privateering bill.

> "The Senate has prepared a Bill which confers upon the President of the United States the power to grant letters of marque and reprisal in any war in which the country may at any time be engaged, and it is expected that the Bill will become a law. Lord Lyons suggests that the transaction may possibly be misapprehended abroad, if it come upon foreign powers suddenly and without any explanations. You will be at liberty to say that, as the Bill stands, the executive Government will be set at liberty to put the law in force in its discretion, and that thus far the proper policy in regard to the exercise of that discretion has not engaged the President's attention. I have had little hesitation in saying to Lord Lyons that if no extreme circumstances occur, there will be entire frankness on the part of the Government in communicating to him upon the subject, so far as to avoid any surprise on the part of friendly nations, whose commerce or navigation it might be feared would be incidentally and indirectly affected, if it shall be found expedient to put the Act in force against the insurgents of the United States."[2]

Certainly this was vague explanation, yet though the main object might be asserted "to put the act in force against the insurgents," the hint was given that the commerce of friendly neutrals might be "incidentally and indirectly affected." And so both Lyons and Seward understood the matter, for on February 24, Lyons reported a long conversation with Seward in which after pointing out the probable "bad effect" on Europe, Lyons received the

reply that some remedy must be found for the fact that "the law did not appear to enable the British Government to prevent" the issue of Confederate "privateers."[1] On March 8, Seward followed this up by sending to Lyons an autograph letter:

> "I am receiving daily such representations from our seaports concerning the depredations on our commerce committed by the vessels built and practically fitted out in England, that I do most sincerely apprehend a new element is entering into the unhappy condition of affairs, which, with all the best dispositions of your Government and my own, cannot long be controlled to the preservation of peace.
>
> "If you think well of it, I should like that you should confidentially inform Earl Russell that the departure of more armed vessels under insurgent-rebel command from English ports is a thing to be deprecated above all things."

On March 9th, Lyons had a long talk with Seward about this, and it appears that Lincoln had seen the letter and approved it. Seward stated that the New York Chamber of Commerce had protested about the *Alabama*, declaring:

> "That no American merchant vessels would get freights—that even war with England was preferable to this—that in that case the maritime enterprise of the country would at least find a profitable employment in cruising against British trade."

Seward went on to show the necessity of letters of marque, and Lyons protested vigorously and implied that war must result.

> "Mr. Seward said that he was well aware of the inconvenience not to say the danger of issuing Letters of Marque: that he should be glad to delay doing so, or to escape the necessity altogether; but that really unless some intelligence came from England to allay the public exasperation, the measure would be unavoidable."[2]

[1] F. O., Am., Vol. 878, No. 180. Lyons to Russell.
[2] *Ibid.*, Vol. 879, No. 227. Lyons to Russell, March 10, 1863.

Lyons was much alarmed, writing that the feeling in the North must not be underestimated and pointing out that the newspapers were dwelling on the notion that under British interpretation of her duty as a neutral Mexico, if she had money, could build ships in British ports to cruise in destruction of French commerce, adding that "one might almost suppose" some rich American would give the funds to Mexico for the purpose and so seek to involve England in trouble with France.[1] Lyons had also been told by Seward in their conversation of March 9, that on that day an instruction had been sent to Adams to present to Russell the delicacy of the situation and to ask for some assurance that no further Southern vessels of war should escape from British ports. This instruction presented the situation in more diplomatic language but in no uncertain tone, yet still confined explanation of the privateering bill as required to prevent the "destruction of our national navigating interest, unless that calamity can be prevented by . . . the enforcement of the neutrality law of Great Britain. . . ."[2]

Lyons' reports reached Russell before Seward's instruction was read to him. Russell had already commented to Adams that American privateers would find no Confederate merchant ships and that if they interfered with neutral commerce the United States Government would be put in an awkward position. To this Adams replied that the privateers would seek and capture, if possible, vessels like the *Alabama*, but Russell asked Lyons to find out "whether in any case they [privateers] will be authorized to interfere with neutral commerce, and if in any case in what case, and to what extent."[3] Three days later, on March 26,

[1] *Ibid.*, No. 235. Lyons to Russell, March 13, 1863. Privately Lyons also emphasized American anger. (Russell Papers. To Russell, March 24, 1863.)

[2] *U.S. Diplomatic Correspondence*, 1863, Pt. I, p. 141. Seward to Adams, March 9, 1863.

[3] F. O., Am., Vol. 869, No. 147. Russell to Lyons, March 24, 1863.

Adams presented his instructions and these Russell regarded as "not unfriendly in tone," but in the long conversation that ensued the old result was reached that Adams declared Great Britain negligent in performance of neutral duty, while Russell professed eagerness to stop Southern ship-building if full evidence was "forthcoming." Adams concluded that "he had worked to the best of his power for peace, but it had become a most difficult task." Upon this Russell commented to Lyons, "Mr. Adams fully deserves the character of having always laboured for peace between our two Nations. Nor I trust will his efforts, and those of the two Governments fail of success."[1]

In these last days of March matters were in fact rapidly drawing to a head both in America and England. At Washington, from March seventh to the thirty-first, the question of issuing letters of marque and reprisal had been prominently before the Cabinet and even Welles who had opposed them was affected by unfavourable reports received from Adams as to the intentions of Great Britain. The final decision was to wait later news from England.[2] This was Seward's idea as he had not as yet received reports of the British reaction to his communications through Lyons and Adams. March 27 was the critical day of decision in London, as it was also the day upon which public and parliamentary opinion was most vigorously debated in regard to Great Britain's neutral duty. Preceding this other factors of influence were coming to the front. In the first days of March, Slidell, at Paris, had received semi-official assurances that if the South wished to build ships in French yards "we should be permitted to arm and equip them and proceed to sea."[3] This suggestion was permitted to percolate in England with the intention, no

[1] *Ibid.*, Vol. 869, No. 155. Russell to Lyons, March 27, 1863.
[2] Welles, *Diary*, I, pp. 245-50.
[3] Bigelow, *Retrospections*, I, 634, Slidell to Benjamin, March 4, 1863.

doubt, of strengthening Bullock's position there. In the winter of 1862-3, orders had been sent to the Russian Baltic fleet to cruise in western waters and there was first a suspicion in America, later a conviction, that the purpose of this cruise was distinctly friendly to the North—that the orders might even extend to actual naval aid in case war should arise with England and France. In March, 1863, this was but vague rumour, by midsummer it was a confident hope, by September-October, when Russian fleets had entered the harbours of New York and San Francisco, the rumour had become a conviction and the silence of Russian naval officers when banqueted and toasted was regarded as discreet confirmation. There was no truth in the rumour, but already in March curious surmises were being made even in England, as to Russian intentions, though there is no evidence that the Government was at all concerned. The truth was that the Russian fleet had been ordered to sea as a precaution against easy destruction in Baltic waters, in case the difficulties developing in relation to Poland should lead to war with France and England.[1]

In England, among the people rather than in governmental England, a feeling was beginning to manifest itself that the Ministry had been lax in regard to the *Alabama*, and as news of her successes was received this feeling was given voice. Liverpool, at first almost wholly on the side of the Lairds and of Southern ship-building, became doubtful

[1] For example of American contemporary belief and later "historical tradition," see Balch, *The Alabama Arbitration*, pp. 24-38. Also for a curious story that a large part of the price paid for Alaska was in reality a repayment of expenses incurred by Russia in sending her fleet to America, see *Letters of Franklin K. Lane*, p. 260. The facts as stated above are given by F. A. Golder, *The Russian Fleet and the Civil War* (*Am. Hist. Rev.*, July, 1915, pp. 801 *seq.*). The plan was to have the fleet attack enemy commerce. The idea of aid to the North was "born on American soil," and Russian officers naturally did nothing to contradict its spread. In one case, however, a Russian commander was ready to help the North. Rear-Admiral Papov with six vessels in the harbour of San Francisco was appealed to by excited citizens on rumours of the approach of the *Alabama* and gave orders to protect the city. He acted without instructions and was later reproved for the order by his superiors at home.

by the very ease with which the *Alabama* destroyed Northern ships. Liverpool merchants looked ahead and saw that their interests might, after all, be directly opposed to those of the ship-builders. Meetings were held and the matter discussed. In February, 1863, such a meeting at Plaistow, attended by the gentry of the neighbourhood, but chiefly by working men, especially by dock labourers and by men from the ship-building yards at Blackwall, resolved that "the Chairman be requested to write to the Prime Minister of our Queen, earnestly entreating him to put in force, with utmost vigilance, the law of England against such ships as the *Alabama*."[1] Such expressions were not as yet wide-spread, nor did the leading papers, up to April, indulge in much discussion, but British *doubt* was developing.[2]

Unquestionably, Russell himself was experiencing a renewed doubt as to Britain's neutral duty. On March 23, he made a speech in Parliament which Adams reported as "the most satisfactory of all the speeches he has made

[1] *The Liberator*, March 6, 1863.

[2] America opinion knew little of this change. An interesting, if somewhat irrational and irregular plan to thwart Southern ship-building operations, had been taken up by the United States Navy Department. This was to buy the Rams outright by the offer of such a price as, it was thought, would be so tempting to the Lairds as to make refusal unlikely. Two men, Forbes and Aspinwall, were sent to England with funds and much embarrassed Adams to whom they discreetly refrained from stating details, but yet permitted him to guess their object. The plan of buying ran wholly counter to Adams' diplomatic protests on England's duty in international law and the agents themselves soon saw the folly of it. Fox, Assistant Secretary of the Navy, wrote to Dupont, March 26, 1863: "The Confederate ironclads in England, I think, will be taken care of." (Correspondence, I, 196.) Thurlow Weed wrote to Bigelow, April 16, of the purpose of the visit of Forbes and Aspinwall. (Bigelow, *Retrospections*, I, 632.) Forbes reported as early as April 18 virtually against going on with the plan. "We must keep cool here, and prepare the way; we have put new fire into Mr. Dudley by furnishing *fuel*, and he is hard at it getting evidence.... My opinion *to-day* is that we can and shall stop by legal process and by the British Government the sailing of ironclads and other warships." (Forbes MS. To Fox.) That this was wholly a Navy Department plan and was disliked by State Department representatives is shown by Dudley's complaints (Forbes MS.). The whole incident has been adequately discussed by C. F. Adams, though without reference to the preceding citations, in his *Studies Military and Diplomatic*, Ch. IX.

since I have been at this post."[1] On March 26, came the presentation by Adams of Seward's instruction of which Russell wrote to Lyons as made in no unfriendly tone and as a result of which Adams wrote: "The conclusion which I draw . . . is, that the Government is really better disposed to exertion, and feels itself better sustained for action by the popular sentiment than ever before."[2] Russell told Adams that he had received a note from Palmerston "expressing his approbation of every word" of his speech three days before. In a portion of the despatch to Seward, not printed in the Diplomatic Correspondence, Adams advised against the issue of privateers, writing, "In the present favourable state of popular mind, it scarcely seems advisable to run the risk of changing the current in Great Britain by the presentation of a new issue which might rally all national pride against us as was done in the *Trent* case."[3] That Russell was indeed thinking of definite action is foreshadowed by the advice he gave to Palmerston on March 27, as to the latter's language in the debate scheduled for that day on the Foreign Enlistment Act. Russell wrote, referring to the interview with Adams:

> "The only thing which Adams could think of when I asked him what he had to propose in reference to the *Alabama* was that the Government should declare their disapproval of the fitting out of such ships of war to prey on American commerce.
>
> "Now, as the fitting out and escape of the *Alabama* and *Oreto* was clearly an evasion of our law, I think you can have no difficulty in declaring this evening that the Government disapprove of all such attempts to elude our law with a view to assist one of the belligerents."[4]

[1] *U.S. Diplomatic Correspondence*, 1863, Pt. I, p. 157. To Seward, March 24, 1863.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 160. To Seward, March 27, 1863.

[3] State Department, Eng., Vol. 82, No. 356. Adams to Seward, March 27, 1863.

[4] Palmerston MS. Russell to Palmerston, March

But the tone of parliamentary debate did not bear out the hopeful view of the American Minister. It was, as Bright wrote to Sumner, "badly managed and told against us,"[1] and Bright himself participated in this "bad management." For over a year he had been advocating the cause of the North in public speeches and everywhere pointing out to unenfranchised England that the victory of the North was essential to democracy in all Europe. Always an orator of power he used freely vigorous language and nowhere more so than in a great public meeting of the Trades Unions of London in St. James' Hall, on March 26, the evening before the parliamentary debate. The purpose of this meeting was to bring public pressure on the Government in favour of the North, and the pith of Bright's speech was to contrast the democratic instincts of working men with the aristocratic inclinations of the Government.[2] Reviewing "aristocratic" attitude toward the Civil War, Bright said:

> "Privilege thinks it has a great interest in this contest, and every morning, with blatant voice, it comes into your street and curses the American Republic. Privilege has beheld an afflicting spectacle for many years past. It has beheld thirty millions of men, happy and prosperous, without emperor, without king, without the surroundings of a court, without nobles, except such as are made by eminence in intellect and virtue, without State bishops and State priests.
>
> "'Sole venders of the lore which works salvation,' without great armies and great navies, without great debt and without great taxes.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> "You wish the freedom of your country. You wish it for yourselves. . . . Do not then give the hand of fellowship to the worst foes of freedom that the world has ever seen. . . . You will not do this. I have faith in you. Impartial history

[1] Rhodes, IV, p. 369, *notes*, April 4, 1863. Bright was made very anxious as to Government intentions by this debate.

[2] This topic will be treated at length in Chapter XVIII. It is here cited merely in relation to its effect on the Government at the moment.

> will tell that, when your statesmen were hostile or coldly neutral, when many of your rich men were corrupt, when your press—which ought to have instructed and defended—was mainly written to betray, the fate of a Continent and of its vast population being in peril, you clung to freedom with an unfailing trust that God in his infinite mercy will yet make it the heritage of all His children." [1]

The public meeting of March 26 was the most notable one in support of the North held throughout the whole course of the war, and it was also the most notable one as indicating the rising tide of popular demand for more democratic institutions. That it irritated the Government and gave a handle to Southern sympathizers in the parliamentary debate of March 27 is unquestioned. In addition, if that debate was intended to secure from the Government an intimation of future policy against Southern shipbuilding it was conducted on wrong lines for *immediate* effect—though friends of the North may have thought the method used was wise for *future* effect. This method was vigorous attack. Forster, leading in the debate,[2] called on Ministers to explain the "flagrant" violation of the Foreign Enlistment Act, and to offer some pledge for the future; he asserted that the Government should have been active on its own initiative in seeking evidence instead of waiting to be urged to enforce the law, and he even hinted at a certain degree of complicity in the escape of the *Alabama*. The Solicitor-General answered in a legal defence of the Government, complained of the offence of America in arousing its citizens against Great Britain upon unjustifiable grounds, but did not make so vigorous a reply as might, perhaps, have been expected. Still he stood firmly on the ground that the Government could not act without evidence to convict—in itself a statement that might well preclude

interference with the Rams. Bright accused the Government of a "cold and unfriendly neutrality," and referred at length to the public meeting of the previous evening:

> "If you had last night looked in the faces of three thousand of the most intelligent of the artisan classes in London, as I did, and heard their cheers, and seen their sympathy for that country for which you appear to care so little, you would imagine that the more forbearing, the more generous, and the more just the conduct of the Government to the United States, the more it would recommend itself to the magnanimous feelings of the people of this country."

This assumption of direct opposition between Parliament and the people was not likely to win or to convince men, whether pro-Southern or not, who were opponents of the speaker's long-avowed advocacy of more democratic institutions in England. It is no wonder then that Laird, who had been castigated in the speeches of the evening, rising in defence of the conduct of his firm, should seek applause by declaring, "I would rather be handed down to posterity as the builder of a dozen *Alabamas* than as a man who applies himself deliberately to set class against class, and to cry up the institutions of another country which, when they come to be tested, are of no value whatever, and which reduce the very name of liberty to an utter absurdity." This utterance was greeted with great cheering —shouted not so much in approval of the *Alabama* as in approval of the speaker's defiance of Bright.

In short, the friends of the North, if they sought some immediate pledge by the Government, had gone the wrong way about to secure it. Vigour in attack was no way to secure a favourable response from Palmerston. Always a fighting politician in public it was inevitable that he should now fight back. Far from making the statement recommended to him by Russell, he concluded the debate by reasserting the correctness of governmental procedure in



William Edward Forster (1851)

the case of the *Alabama*, and himself with vigour accused Forster and Bright of speaking in such a way as to increase rather than allay American irritation. Yet a careful reading of the speeches of both the Solicitor-General and of Palmerston, shows that while vindicating the Government's conduct in the past, they were avoiding *any* pledge of whatever nature, for the future.

Adams was clearly disappointed and thought that the result of the debate was "rather to undo in the popular mind the effect of Lord Russell's speech than to confirm it."[1] He and his English advisers were very uneasy, not knowing whether to trust to Russell's intimations of more active governmental efforts, or to accept the conclusion that his advice had been rejected by Palmerston.[2] Possibly if less anxious and alarmed they would have read more clearly between the lines of parliamentary utterances and have understood that their failure to hurry the Government into public announcement of a new policy was no proof that old policy would be continued. Disappointed at the result in Parliament, they forgot that the real pressure on Government was coming from an American declaration of an intention to issue privateers unless something were done to satisfy that country. Certainly Russell was unmoved by the debate for on April 3 he wrote to Palmerston:

> "The conduct of the gentlemen who have contracted for the ironclads at Birkenhead is so very suspicious that I have thought it necessary to direct that they should be detained. The Attorney-General has been consulted and concurs in the measure, as one of policy, though not of strict law.
>
> "We shall thus test the law, and if we have to pay damages we have satisfied the opinion which prevails here

[1] *U.S. Diplomatic Correspondence*, 1863, Pt. I, p. 164. Adams to Seward, March 28, 1863.

> as well as in America that this kind of neutral hostility should not be allowed to go on without some attempt to stop it." [1]

Two days later, on April 5, the *Alexandra*, a vessel being equipped to join the *Alabama* as a commerce destroyer, was seized on the ground that she was about to violate the Enlistment Act and a new policy, at least to make a test case in law, was thereby made public. In fact, on March 30, but three days after the debate of March 27, the case of the *Alexandra* had been taken up by Russell, referred to the law officers on March 31, and approved by them for seizure on April 4.[2] Public meetings were quickly organized in support of the Government's action, as that in Manchester on April 6, when six thousand people applauded the seizure of the *Alexandra*, demanded vigorous prosecution of the Lairds and others, and urged governmental activity to prevent any further ship-building for the South.[3]

On April 7, Russell wrote to Lyons:

> "The orders given to watch, and stop when evidence can be procured, vessels apparently intended for the Confederate service will, it is to be hoped, allay the strong feelings which have been raised in Northern America by the escape from justice of the *Oreto* and *Alabama*."[4]

It thus appears that orders had been issued to stop, on *evidence* to be sure, but on evidence of the vessels being "*apparently* intended" for the South. This was far from being the same thing as the previous assertion that conclusive evidence was required. What, then, was the basic consideration in Russell's mind leading to such a

[1] Palmerston MS.

[2] Bernard, p. 353. The case was heard in June, and the seizure held unwarranted. Appealed by the Government this decision was upheld by the Court of Exchequer in November. It was again appealed, and the Government defeated in the House of Lords in April, 1864.

[3] *Manchester Examiner and Times*, April 7, 1863. Goldwin Smith was one of the principal speakers. Letters were read from Bright, Forster, R. A. Taylor, and others.

[4] F. O., Am., Vol. 869, No. 183.

face-about on declared policy ? Chagrin at the very evident failure of existing neutrality law to operate, recognition that there was just cause for the rising ill-will of the North, no doubt influenced him, but more powerful than these elements was the anxiety as to the real purpose and intent in application of the American "privateering" Bill. How did Russell, and Lyons, interpret that Bill and what complications did they foresee and fear ?

As previously stated in this chapter, the privateering Bill had been introduced as an "administration measure" and for that reason passed without serious debate. In the Cabinet it was opposed by Welles, Secretary of the Navy, until he was overborne by the feeling that "something must be done" because vessels were building in England intended to destroy the blockade, The Rams under construction were clearly understood to have that purpose. If privateers were to offset the action of the Rams there must be some definite plan for their use. Seward and Adams repeatedly complained of British inaction yet in the same breath asserted that the privateers were intended to chase and destroy *Alabamas*---a plan so foolish, so it seemed to British diplomats, as to be impossible of acceptance as the full purpose of Seward. How, in short, *could* privateers make good an injury to blockade about to be done by the Rams ? If added to the blockading squadrons on station off the Southern ports they would but become so much more fodder for the dreaded Rams. If sent to sea in pursuit of *Alabamas* the chances were that they would be the vanquished rather than the victors in battle. There was no Southern mercantile marine for them to attack and privateering against "enemy's commerce" was thus out of the question since there was no such commerce.

There remained but one reasonable supposition as to the intended use of privateers. If the Rams compelled the

North would be to establish a " cruising squadron " blockade remote from the shores of the enemy. If conducted by government war-ships such a blockade was not in contravention to British interpretation of international law.[1] But the Northern navy, conducting a cruising squadron blockade was far too small to interfere seriously with neutral vessels bringing supplies to the Confederacy or carrying cotton from Southern ports. A " flood of privateers," scouring the ocean from pole to pole might, conceivably, still render effective that closing in of the South which was so important a weapon in the Northern war programme.

This was Russell's interpretation of the American plan and he saw in it a very great danger to British commerce and an inevitable ultimate clash leading to war. Such, no doubt, it was Seward's desire should be Russell's reaction, though never specifically explaining the exact purpose of the privateers. Moreover, nine-tenths of the actual blockade-running still going on was by British ships, and this being so it was to be presumed that " privateers " searching for possible blockade runners would commit all sorts of indignities and interferences with British merchant ships whether on a blockade-running trip or engaged in ordinary trade between non-belligerent ports.

Immediately on learning from Lyons details of the privateering bill, Russell had instructed the British Minister at Washington to raise objections though not formally making official protest, and had asked for explanation of the exact nature of the proposed activities of such vessels. Also he had prepared instructions to be issued by the

[1] " Historicus," in articles in the *Times*, was at this very moment, from December, 1862, on, discussing international law problems, and in one such article specifically defended the belligerent right to conduct a cruising squadron blockade. See *Historicus on International Law*, pp. 99-118. He stated the established principle to be that search and seizure could be used " not only " for " vessels actually intercepted in the attempt to enter the blockaded port, but those also which shall be elsewhere met with and shall be found to have been destined to such port, with knowledge of the fact and notice of the blockade." (*Ibid.*, p. 108.)

Admiralty to British naval commanders as to their duty of preventing unwarranted interference with legitimate British commerce by privateers.[1] The alteration of governmental policy as indicated in the arrest of the *Alexandra*, it might be hoped, would at least cause a suspension of the American plan, but assurances were strongly desired. Presumably Russell knew that Adams as a result of their conversations, had recommended such suspension, but at Washington, Lyons, as yet uninformed of the *Alexandra* action, was still much alarmed. On April 13 he reported that Seward had read to him a despatch to Adams, relative to the ships building in England, indicating that this was "a last effort to avert the evils which the present state of things had made imminent."[2] Lyons had argued with Seward the inadvisabilty of sending such a despatch, since it was now known that Russell had "spoken in a satisfactory manner" about Confederate vessels, but Seward was insistent. Lyons believed there was real cause for anxiety, writing:

> "A good deal of allowance must be made for the evident design of the Government and indeed of the people to intimidate England, but still there can be little doubt that the exasperation has reached such a point as to constitute a serious danger. It is fully shared by many important members of the Cabinet—nor are the men in high office exempt from the overweening idea of the naval power of the United States, which reconciles the people to the notion of a war with England. Mr. Seward for a certain time fanned the flame in order to recover his lost popularity. He is now, I believe, seriously anxious to avoid going farther. But if strong measures against England were taken up as a Party cry by the Republicans, Mr. Seward would oppose very feeble resistance to them. If no military success be obtained within a short time, it may become a Party necessity to resort to some means of producing an excitement

[1] F. O., Am., Vol. 869, No. 158. Russell to Lyons, March 28, 1863.
[2] F. O., Am., Vol. 881, No. 309. To Russell.

in the country sufficient to enable the Government to enforce the Conscription Act, and to exercise the extra-legal powers conferred by the late Congress. To produce such an excitement the more ardent of the party would not hesitate to go, to the verge of a war with England. Nay there are not a few who already declare that if the South must be lost, the best mode to conceal the discomfiture of the party and of the nation, would be to go to war with England and attribute the loss of the South to English interference." [1]

On the same day Lyons wrote, privately:

"I would rather the quarrel came, if come it must, upon some better ground for us than this question of the ships fitted out for the Confederates. The great point to be gained in my opinion, would be to prevent the ships sailing, without leading the people here to think that they had gained their point by threats." [2]

So great was Lyons' alarm that the next day, April 14, he cipher-telegraphed Monck in Canada that trouble was brewing,[3] but soon his fears were somewhat allayed. On the seventeenth he could report that Seward's "strong" despatch to Adams was not intended for communication to Russell,[4] and on the twenty-fourth when presenting, under instructions, Russell's protest against the privateering plan he was pleased, if not surprised, to find that the "latest advices" from England and the news of the seizure of the *Alexandra*, had caused Seward to become very conciliatory. Lyons was assured that the plan "was for the present at rest."[5] Apparently Seward now felt more security than did Lyons as to future British action for three days later the British Minister wrote to Vice-Admiral Milne that an American issue of letters of marque would surely come if

[1] *Ibid.*, No. 310. To Russell, April 13, 1863.
[2] Russell Papers. To Russell, April 13, 1863.
[3] F. O., Am., Vol. 882, No. 324. Copy enclosed in Lyons to Russell, April 17, 1863.

England did not stop Southern ship-building, and he wrote in such a way as to indicate his own opinion that effective steps *must* be taken to prevent their escape.[1]

The whole tone and matter of Lyons' despatches to Russell show that he regarded the crisis of relations in regard to Southern ship-building in British yards as occurring in March-April, 1863. Seward became unusually friendly, even embarrassingly so, for in August he virtually forced Lyons to go on tour with him through the State of New York, thus making public demonstration of the good relations of the two Governments. This sweet harmony and mutual confidence is wholly contrary to the usual historical treatment of the Laird Rams incident, which neglects the threat of the privateering bill, regards American protests as steadily increasing in vigour, and concludes with the "threat of war" note by Adams to Russell just previous to the seizure of the Rams, in September. Previously, however, American historians have been able to use only American sources and have been at a loss to understand the privateering plan, since Seward never went beyond a vague generalization of its object in official utterances. It is the British reaction to that plan which reveals the real "threat" made and the actual crisis of the incident.

It follows therefore that the later story of the Rams requires less extended treatment than is customarily given to it. The correct understanding of this later story is the recognition that Great Britain had in April given, a pledge and performed an act which satisfied Seward and Adams that the Rams would not be permitted to escape. It was their duty nevertheless to be on guard against a British relaxation

[1] Lyons Papers, April 27, 1863. Lyons wrote: "The stories in the newspapers about an ultimatum having been sent to England are untrue. But it is true that it had been determined (or very nearly determined) to issue letters of marque, if the answers to the despatches sent were not satisfactory. It is very easy to see that if U.S. privateers were allowed to capture British merchant vessels on charges of breach of blockade or carrying contraband of war, the vexations would have soon become intolerable to our commerce, and a quarrel must have ensued."

of the promise made, and the delay, up to the very last moment, in seizing the Rams, caused American anxiety and ultimately created a doubt of the sincerity of British actions.

Public opinion in England was steadily increasing against Southern ship-building. On June 9, a memorial was sent to the Foreign Office by a group of ship-owners in Liverpool, suggesting an alteration in the Foreign Enlistment Act if this were needed to prevent the issue of Southern ships, and pointing out that the "present policy" of the Government would entail a serious danger to British commerce in the future if, when England herself became a belligerent, neutral ports could be used by the enemy to build commerce destroyers.[1] The memorial concluded that in any case it was a disgrace that British law should be so publicly infringed. To this, Hammond, under-secretary, gave the old answer that the law was adequate "provided proof can be obtained of any act done with the intent to violate it."[2] Evidently ship-owners, as distinguished from ship-builders, were now acutely alarmed. Meanwhile attention was fixed on the trial of the *Alexandra*, and on June 22, a decision was rendered against the Government, but was promptly appealed.

This decision made both Northern and Southern agents anxious and the latter took steps further to becloud the status of the Rams. Rumours were spread that the vessels were in fact intended for France, and when this was disproved that they were being built for the Viceroy of Egypt. This also proved to be untrue. Finally it was declared that the real owners were certain French merchants whose purpose in contracting for such clearly warlike vessels was left in mystery, but with the intimation that Egypt was to be

[1] *Parliamentary Papers*, 1863, *Commons*, LXXII. "Memorial from Shipowners of Liverpool on Foreign Enlistment Act."

[2] *Ibid.*

the ultimate purchaser. Captain Bullock had indeed made such a contract of sale to French merchants but with the proviso of resale to him, after delivery. On his part, Russell was seeking *proof* fully adequate to seizure, but this was difficult to obtain and such as was submitted was regarded by the law officers as inadequate. They reported that there was "no evidence capable of being presented to a court of justice." He informed Adams of this legal opinion at the moment when the latter, knowing the Rams to be nearing completion, and fearing that Russell was weakening in his earlier determination, began that series of diplomatic protests which very nearly approached a threat of war.

At Washington also anxiety was again aroused by the court's decision in the *Alexandra* case, and shortly after the great Northern victories at Vicksburg and Gettysburg, Seward wrote a despatch to Adams, July 11, which has been interpreted as a definite threat of war. In substance Seward wrote that he still felt confident the Government of Great Britain would find a way to nullify the *Alexandra* decision, but renewed, in case this did not prove true, his assertion of Northern intention to issue letters of marque, adding a phrase about the right to "pursue" Southern vessels even into neutral ports.[1] But there are two considerations in respect to this despatch that largely negative the belligerent intent attributed to it: Seward did not read or communicate it to Lyons, as was his wont when anything serious was in mind; and he did not instruct Adams to communicate it to Russell. The latter never heard of it until the publication, in 1864, of the United States diplomatic correspondence.[2]

[1] *U.S. Diplomatic Correspondence*, 1863, Pt. I, pp. 308-10.

[2] The despatch taken in its entirety save for a few vigorous sentences quite typical of Seward's phrase-making, is not at all warlike. Bancroft, II, 385 *seq.*, makes Seward increasingly anxious from March to September, and concludes with a truly warlike despatch to Adams, September 5. This last was the result of Adams' misgivings reported in mid-August, and it is not until these were received (in my interpretation) that Seward

In London, on July 11, Adams began to present to Russell evidence secured by Consul Dudley at Liverpool, relative to the Rams and to urge their immediate seizure. Adams here but performed his duty and was in fact acting in accordance with Russell's own request.[1] On July 16 he reported to Seward that the Roebuck motion for recognition of the South[2] had died ingloriously, but expressed a renewal of anxiety because of the slowness of the government; if the Rams were to escape, Adams wrote to Russell, on July 11, Britain would herself become a participant in the war.[3] Further affidavits were sent to Russell on August 14, and on September 3, having heard from Russell that the Government was legally advised "they cannot interfère in any way with these vessels," Adams sent still more affidavits and expressed his regret that his previous notes had not sufficiently emphasized the grave nature of the crisis pending between the United States and Great Britain. To this Russell replied that the matter was "under serious and anxious consideration," to which, on September 5, in a long communication, Adams wrote that if the Rams escaped: "It would be superfluous in me to point out to your Lordship that this is war."

The phrase was carefully chosen to permit a denial of a threat of war on the explanation that Great Britain would herself be participating in the war. There is no question that at the moment Adams thought Russell's "change of policy" of April was now thrown overboard, but the fact was that on September 1, Russell had already

really began to fear the "pledge" made in April would not be carried out. Adams himself, in 1864, read to Russell a communication from Seward denying that his July 11 despatch was intended as a threat or as in any sense unfriendly to Great Britain. (F. O., Am., Vol. 939, No. 159. Russell to Lyons, April 3, 1864.)

[1] *Parliamentary Papers*, 1864, *Commons*, LXII. "Correspondence respecting iron-clad vessels building at Birkenhead."

[2] See next chapter.

[3] State Department, Eng., Vol. 83, No. 452, and No. 453 with enclosure. Adams to Seward, July 16, 1863.

given directions to take steps for the detention of the Rams and that on September 3, positive instructions were given to that effect,[1] though not carried out until some days later. There had been no alteration in the " new policy " of April ; the whole point of the delay was governmental anxiety to secure evidence sufficient to convict and thus to avoid attack for acting in contradiction to those principles which had been declared to be the compelling principles of non-interference in the case of the *Alabama*. But so perfect were the arrangements of Captain Bullock that complete evidence was not procurable and Russell was forced, finally, to act without it.[2]

It would appear from a letter written by Russell to Palmerston, on September 3, the day on which he gave the order to stop, that no Cabinet approval for this step had yet formally been given, since Russell notified Palmerston of his purpose and asked the latter, if he disapproved, to call a Cabinet at once.[3] The *plan* to stop the Rams must have long been understood for Palmerston called no Cabinet. Moreover it is to be presumed that he was preparing the public for the seizure, for on this same September 3, the *Times*, in a long editorial, argued that the law as it stood (or was interpreted), was not in harmony with true neutrality, and pointed out future dangers to British commerce, as had the Liverpool ship-owners. Delane of the *Times* was at this period especially close to Palmerston, and it is at least inferential that the editorial was an advance notice of governmental intention to apply a policy known in intimate circles to have been for some time matured. Four days

[1] Rhodes, IV, 381.

[2] Many of these details were unknown at the time so that on the face of the documents then available, and for long afterwards, there appeared ground for believing that Adams' final protests of September 3 and 5 had forced Russell to yield. Dudley, as late as 1893, thought that " at the crisis " in September, Palmerston, in the absence of Russell, had given the orders to stop the rams. (In *Penn. Magazine of History*, Vol. 17, pp. 34-54. " Diplomatic Relations with England during the Late War.")

[3] Rhodes, IV, p. 382.

later, while governmental action was still unknown to the public another editorial advocated seizure of the Rams.[1] Russell had acted under the fear that one of the Rams might slip away as had the *Alabama ;* he had sent orders to stop and investigate, but he delayed final seizure in the hope that better evidence might yet be secured, conducting a rapid exchange of letters with Lairds (the builders), seeking to get admissions from them. It was only on September 9 that Lairds was officially ordered not to send the vessels on a " trial trip," and it was not until September 16 that public announcement was made of the Government's action.[2]

Russell has been regarded as careless and thoughtless in that it was not until September 8 he relieved Adams' mind by assuring him the Rams would be seized, even though three days before, on September 5, this information had been sent to Washington. The explanation is Russell's eager search for evidence to *convict*, and his correspondence with Lairds which did not come to a head until the eighth, when the builders refused to give information. To the builders Russell was writing as if a governmental decision had not yet been reached. He could take no chance of a " leak " through the American Minister. Once informed, Adams was well satisfied though his immediate reaction was to criticize, not Russell, but the general " timidity and vacillation " of the law officers of the Crown.[3] Two days later, having learned from Russell himself just what was taking place, Adams described the " firm stand " taken by the Foreign Secretary, noted the general approval by the

[1] The *Times*, Sept. 7, 1863.

[2] *Ibid.* Editorial, Sept. 16, 1863. The Governmental correspondence with Lairds was demanded by a motion in Parliament, Feb. 23, 1864, but the Government was supported in refusing it. A printed copy of this correspondence, issued privately, was placed in Adams' hands by persons unnamed and sent to Seward on March 29, 1864. Seward thereupon had this printed in the *Diplomatic Correspondence*, 1864-5, Pt. I, No. 633.

[3] State Department, Eng., Vol. 84, No. 492. Adams to Seward, Sept. 8, 1863.

public press and expressed the opinion that there was now a better prospect of being able to preserve friendly relations with England than at any time since his arrival in London.[1] Across the water British officials were delighted with the seizure of the Rams. Monck in Canada expressed his approval.[2] Lyons reported a "great improvement" in the feeling toward England and that Seward especially was highly pleased with Russell's expressions, conveyed privately, of esteem for Seward together with the hope that he would remain in office.[3]

The actual governmental seizure of the Rams did not occur until mid-October, though they had been placed under official surveillance on September 9. Both sides were jockeying for position in the expected legal battle when the case should be taken up by the courts.[4] At first Russell even thought of making official protest to Mason in London and a draft of such protest was prepared, approved by the Law Officers and subsequently revised by Palmerston,

[1] *U.S. Diplomatic Correspondence*, 1863, Pt. I, p. 370. To Seward, Sept. 10, 1863. Adams, looking at the whole matter of the Rams and the alleged "threat of war" of Sept. 5, from the point of view of his own anxiety at the time, was naturally inclined to magnify the effects of his own efforts and to regard the *crisis* as occurring in September. His notes to Russell and his diary records were early the main basis of historical treatment. Rhodes, IV, 381-84, has disproved the accusation of Russell's yielding to a threat. Brooks Adams (Mass. Hist. Soc. *Proceedings*, Vol. XLV, p. 293, *seq.*) ignores Rhodes, harks back to the old argument and amplifies it with much new and interesting citation, but not to conviction. My interpretation is that the real crisis of Governmental decision to act came in April, and that events in September were but final applications of that decision.

[2] Russell Papers. Monck to Stuart, Sept. 26, 1863. Copy in Stuart to Russell, Oct. 6, 1863.

[3] *Ibid.* Lyons to Russell, Oct. 16, 1863.

[4] Hammond wrote to Lyons, Oct. 17: "You will learn by the papers that we have at last seized the Iron Clads. Whether we shall be able to bring home to them legally that they were Confederate property is another matter. I think we can, but at all events no moral doubt can be entertained of the fact, and, therefore, we are under no anxiety whether as to the public or Parliamentary view of our proceeding. They would have played the devil with the American ships, for they are most formidable ships. I suppose the Yankees will sleep more comfortably in consequence." (Lyons Papers.) The Foreign Office thought that it had thwarted plans to seize violently the vessels and get them to sea. (F. O., Am., Vol. 930. Inglefield to Grey, Oct. 25, and Romaine to Hammond, Oct. 26, 1863.)

but finally was not sent.[1] Possibly it was thought that such a communication to Mason approached too nearly a recognition of him in his desired official capacity, for in December the protest ultimately directed to be made through Consul-General Crawford at Havana, instructed him to go to Richmond and after stating very plainly that he was in no way recognizing the Confederacy to present the following :

> " It appears from various correspondence the authenticity of which cannot be doubted, that the Confederate Government having no good ports free from the blockade of the Federals have conceived the design of using the ports of the United Kingdom for the purpose of constructing ships of war to be equipped and armed to serve as cruisers against the commerce of the United States of America, a State with which Her Majesty is at peace. . . ."
>
> " These acts are inconsistent with the respect and comity which ought to be shewn by a belligerent towards a Neutral Power.
>
> "Her Majesty has declared her Neutrality and means strictly to observe it.
>
> "You will therefore call upon Mr. Benjamin to induce his Government to forbear from all acts tending to affect injuriously Her Majesty's position." [2]

To carry out this instruction there was required permission for Crawford to pass through the blockade but Seward refused this when Lyons made the request.[3]

Not everyone in Britain, however, approved the Government's course in seizing the Rams. Legal opinion especially was very generally against the act. Adams now pressed either for an alteration of the British law or for a convention

[1] F. O., Am., Vol. 929. Marked " September, 1863." The draft summarized the activities of Confederate ship-building and threatened Southern agents in England with " the penalities of the law. . . ."

[2] F. O., Am., Vol. 932, No. 1. F. O. to Consul-General Crawford, Dec. 16, 1863. The South, on October 7, 1863, had already " expelled " the British consuls. Crawford was to protest against this also. (*Ibid.*, No. 4.)

[3] Bonham. *British Consuls in the South*, p. 254. (Columbia Univ. Studies, Vol. 43.)

with America establishing mutual similar interpretation of neutral duty. Russell replied that "until the trials of the *Alexandra* and the steam rams had taken place, we could hardly be said to know what our law was, and therefore not tell whether it required alteration. I said, however, that he might assure Mr. Seward that the wish and intention of Government were to make our neutrality an honest and bona-fide one."[1] But save from extreme and avowed Southern sympathizers criticism of the Government was directed less to the stoppage of the Rams than to attacks of a political character, attempting to depict the weakness of the Foreign Minister and his humiliation of Great Britain in having "yielded to American threats." Thus, February 11, 1864, after the reassembling of Parliament, a party attack was made on Russell and the Government by Derby in the House of Lords. Derby approved the stopping of the Rams but sought to prove that the Government had dishonoured England by failing to act of its own volition until threatened by America. He cited Seward's despatch of July 11 with much unction, that despatch now having appeared in the printed American diplomatic correspondence with no indication that it was not an instruction at once communicated to Russell. The attack fell flat for Russell simply replied that Adams had never presented such an instruction. This forced Derby to seek other ground and on February 15 he returned to the matter, now seeking to show by the dates of various documents that "at the last moment" Adams made a threat of war and Russell had yielded. Again Russell's reply was brief and to the effect that orders to stop the Rams had been given before the communications from Adams were received. Finally, on February 23, a motion in the Commons called for all correspondence with Adams and with Lairds. The

[1] Lyons Papers. Russell to Lyons, Dec. 5, 1863. Bullock, *Secret Service*, declares the British Government to have been neutral but with strong leaning toward the North.

Government consented to the first but refused that with Lairds and was supported by a vote of 187 to 153.[1]

Beginning with an incautious personal and petty criticism of Russell the Tories had been driven to an attempt to pass what was virtually a vote of censure on the Ministry yet they were as loud as was the Government in praise of Adams and in approval of the seizure of the Rams. Naturally their cause was weakened, and the Ministry, referring to expressions made and intentions indicated as far back as March, 1863, thus hinting without directly so stating that the real decision had then been made, was easily the victor in the vote.[1] Derby had committed an error as a party leader and the fault rankled for again in April, 1864, he attempted to draw Russell into still further discussion on dates of documents. Russell's reply ignored that point altogether.[2] It did not suit his purpose to declare, flatly, the fact that in April assurances had been given both to Adams and through Lyons to Seward, that measures would be taken to prevent the departure of Southern vessels from British ports. To have made this disclosure would have required an explanation *why* such assurance had been given and this would have revealed the effect on both Russell and Lyons of the Northern plan to create a *cruising squadron blockade by privateers*. *There* was the real threat. The later delays and seeming uncertainties of British action made Adams anxious but there is no evidence that Russell ever changed his purpose. He sought stronger evidence before acting and he hoped for stronger support

[1] Hansard, 3rd Ser., CLXXIII, pp. 430-41, 544-50, 955-1021. The Tory point of view is argued at length by Brooks Adams, *The Seizure of the Laird Rams*, pp. 312-324.

[2] Hansard, 3rd. Ser., CLXXIV, pp. 1862-1913. *The Index*, naturally vicious in comment on the question of the Rams, summed up its approval of Derby's contentions: "Europe and America alike will inevitably believe that it was the threat of Mr. Adams, and nothing else, which induced the Foreign Secretary to retract his letter of the 1st September, and they will draw the necessary conclusion that the way to extort concessions from England is by bluster and menace." (Feb. 18, 1864, p. 106.)

from legal advisers, but he kept an eye on the Rams and when they had reached the stage where there was danger of escape, he seized them even though the desired evidence was still lacking.[1] Seward's "privateering bill" plan possibly entered upon in a moment of desperation and with no clear statement from him of its exact application had, as the anxiety of British diplomats became pronounced, been used with skill to permit, if not to state, the interpretation they placed upon it, and the result had been the cessation of that inadequate neutrality of which America complained.

[1] Lairds brought suit for damages, but the case never reached a decision, for the vessels were purchased by the Government. This has been regarded as acknowledgment by the Government that it had no case. In my view the failure to push the case to a conclusion was due to the desire not to commit Great Britain on legal questions, in view of the claim for damages certain to be set up by the United States on account of the depredations of the *Alabama*.

CHAPTER XIV

ROEBUCK'S MOTION

In the mid-period during which the British Government was seeking to fulfil its promise of an altered policy as regards ship-building and while the public was unaware that such a promise had been given, certain extreme friends of the South thought the time had come for renewed pressure upon the Government, looking toward recognition of the Confederacy. The *Alexandra* had been seized in April, but the first trial, though appealed, had gone against the Government in June, and there was no knowledge that the Ministry was determined in its stand. From January to the end of March, 1863, the public demonstrations in approval of the emancipation proclamation had somewhat checked expressions of Southern sympathy, but by the month of June old friends had recovered their courage and a new champion of the South came forward in the person of Roebuck.

Meanwhile the activities of Southern agents and Southern friends had not ceased even if they had, for a time, adopted a less vigorous tone. For four months after the British refusal of Napoleon's overtures on mediation, in November, 1862, the friends of the South were against "acting now," but this did not imply that they thought the cause lost or in any sense hopeless. Publicists either neutral in attitude or even professedly sympathetic with the North could see no outcome of the Civil War save separation of North and South. Thus the historian Freeman in the preface to the

first volume of his uncompleted *History of Federal Government*, published in 1863, carefully explained that his book did not have its origin in the struggle in America, and argued that the breaking up of the Union in no way proved any inherent weakness in a federal system, but took it for granted that American reunion was impossible. The novelist, Anthony Trollope, after a long tour of the North, beginning in September, 1861, published late in 1862 a two-volume work, *North America*, descriptive of a nation engaged in the business of war and wholly sympathetic with the Northern cause. Yet he, also, could see no hope of forcing the South back into the Union. "The North and South are virtually separated, and the day will come in which the West also will secede."[1]

Such interpretations of conditions in America were not unusual; they were, rather, generally accepted. The Cabinet decision in November, 1862, was not regarded as final, though events were to prove it to be so for never again was there so near an approach to British intervention. Mason's friend, Spence, early began to think that true Southern policy was now to make an appeal to the Tories against the Government. In January, 1863, he was planning a new move:

> "I have written to urge Mr. Gregory to be here in time for a thorough organization so as to push the matter this time to a vote. I think the Conservatives may be got to move as a body and if so the result of a vote seems to me very certain. I have seen Mr. Horsfall and Mr. Laird here and will put myself in communication with Mr. Disraeli as the time approaches for action for this seems to me now our best card." [2]

That some such effort was being thought of is evidenced by the attitude of the *Index* which all through the months from November, 1862, to the middle of January, 1863, had

[1] Trollope, *North America*, I, p. 124.
[2] Mason Papers. Spence to Mason, Jan. 3, 1863. Liverpool.

continued to harp on the subject of mediation as if still believing that something yet might be done by the existing Ministry, but which then apparently gave up hope of the Palmerstonian administration:

> "But what the Government means is evident enough. It does not mean to intervene or to interfere. It will not mediate, if it can help it; it will not recognize the Confederate States, unless there should occur some of those 'circumstances over which they have no control,' which leave weak men and weak ministers no choice. They will not, if they are not forced to it, quarrel with Mr. Seward, or with Mr. Bright. They will let Lancashire starve; they will let British merchantmen be plundered off Nassau and burnt off Cuba; they will submit to a blockade of Bermuda or of Liverpool; but they will do nothing which may tend to bring a supply of cotton from the South, or to cut off the supply of eggs and bacon from the North." [1]

But this plan of 'turning to the Tories' received scant encouragement and was of no immediate promise, as soon appeared by the debate in Parliament on reassembling, February 5, 1863. Derby gave explicit approval of the

[1] The *Index*, Jan. 29, 1863, p. 217. The active agent in control of the *Index* was Henry Hotze, who, in addition to managing this journal, used secret service funds of the Confederacy to secure the support of writers in the London press. He was in close touch with all the Southern agents sent to Europe at various times, but appears never to have been fully trusted by either Mason or Slidell. In 1912-13 I made notes from various materials originating with Hotze, these being then in the possession of Mr. Charles Francis Adams. These materials were (1) a letter and cash book marked "C.S.A. Commercial Agency, London"; (2) a copy despatch book, January 6, 1862, to December 31, 1864; (3) a copy letter-book of drafts of "private" letters, May 28, 1864, to June 16, 1865. All these materials were secured by Mr. Adams from Professor J. F. Jameson, who had received them from Henry Vignaud. Since Mr. Adams' death in 1915 no trace of these Hotze materials has been found. My references, then, to "Hotze Papers," must rest on my notes, and transcripts of many letters, taken in 1912-13. Describing his activities to Benjamin, Hotze stated that in addition to maintaining the *Index*, he furnished news items and *editorials* to various London papers, had seven paid writers on these papers, and was a pretty constant distributor of "boxes of cigars imported from Havana . . . American whiskey and other articles." He added: "It is, of course, out of the question to give vouchers." (Hotze Papers MS. Letter Book. Hotze to Benjamin, No. 19, March 14, 1863.) In Hotze's cash book one of his regular payees was Percy Gregg who afterwards wrote a history of the Confederacy. Hotze complained that he could get no "paid writer" on the *Times*.

Government's refusal to listen to Napoleon.[1] By February, Russell, having recovered from the smart of defeat within the Cabinet, declared himself weary of the perpetual talk about mediation and wrote to Lyons, ". . . till both parties are heartily tired and sick of the business, I see no use in talking of good offices. When that time comes Mercier will probably have a hint; let him have all the honour and glory of being the first."[2] For the time being Spence's idea was laid aside, Gregory writing in response to an inquiry from Mason:

> "The House of Commons is opposed to taking any step at present, feeling rightly or wrongly that to do so would be useless to the South, and possibly embroil us with the North. Any motion on the subject will be received with disfavour, consequently the way in which it will be treated will only make the North more elated, and will irritate the South against us. If I saw the slightest chance of a motion being received with any favour I would not let it go into other hands, but I find the most influential men of all Parties opposed to it."[3]

Of like opinion was Slidell who, writing of the situation in France, reported that he had been informed by his "friend at the Foreign Office" that "It is believed that every possible thing has been done here in your behalf—we must now await the action of England, and it is through that you must aim all your efforts in that direction."[4]

With the failure, at least temporary, of Southern efforts to move the British Government or to stir Parliament, energies were now directed toward using financial methods of winning support for the Southern cause. The "Confederate Cotton Loan" was undertaken with the double

[1] See *ante*, Ch. XI.

[2] Lyons Papers, Feb. 14, 1863.

[3] Mason Papers, March 18, 1863.

[4] Pickett Papers. Slidell to Benjamin, No. 34, May 3, 1863. This despatch is omitted by Richardson.

object of providing funds for Southern agents in Europe and of creating an interested support of the South, which might, it was hoped, ultimately influence the British Government.

By 1863 it had become exceedingly difficult, owing to the blockade, for the Government at Richmond to transmit funds to its agents abroad. Bullock, especially, required large amounts in furtherance of his ship-building contracts and was embarrassed by the lack of business methods and the delays of the Government at home. The incompetence of the Confederacy in finance was a weakness that characterized all of its many operations whether at home or abroad[1] and was made evident in England by the confusion in its efforts to establish credits there. At first the Confederate Government supplied its agents abroad with drafts upon the house of Fraser, Trenholm & Company, of Liverpool, a branch of the firm long established at Charleston, South Carolina, purchasing its bills of exchange with its own "home made" money. But as Confederate currency rapidly depreciated this method of transmitting funds became increasingly difficult and costly. The next step was to send to Spence, nominated by Mason as financial adviser in England, Confederate money bonds for sale on the British market, with authority to dispose of them as low as fifty cents on the dollar, but these found no takers.[2] By September, 1862, Bullock's funds for ship-building were exhausted and some new method of supply was required. Temporary relief was found in adopting a suggestion from Lindsay whereby cotton was made the basis for an advance of £60,000, a form of cotton bond being devised which fixed the price of cotton at eightpence the pound. These bonds were not put on the market but were privately

[1] Schwab, *The Confederate States of America* gives the best analysis and history of Southern financing.

[2] It is possible that a few were disposed of to contractors in payment for materials.

placed by Lindsay & Company with a few buyers for the entire sum, the transaction remaining secret.[1]

In the meantime this same recourse to cotton had occurred to the authorities at Richmond and a plan formulated by which cotton should be purchased by the Government, stored, and certificates issued to be sold abroad, the purchaser being assured of "all facilities of shipment." Spence was to be the authorized agent for the sale of these "cotton certificates," but before any reached him various special agents of the Confederacy had arrived in England by December, 1862, with such certificates in their possession and had disposed of some of them, calling them "cotton warrants." The difficulties which might arise from separate action in the market were at once perceived and following a conference with Mason all cotton obligations were turned to Fraser, Trenholm & Company. Spence now had in his hands the "money bonds" but no further attempt was made to dispose of these since the "cotton warrants" were considered a better means of raising funds.

It is no doubt true that since all of these efforts involved a governmental guarantee the various "certificates" or "warrants" partook of the nature of a government bond. Yet up to this point the Richmond authorities, after the first failure to sell "money bonds" abroad were not keen to attempt anything that could be stamped as a foreign "government loan." Their idea was rather that a certain part of the produce of the South was being set aside as the property of those who in England should extend credit to the South. The sole purpose of these earlier operations was to provide funds for Southern agents. By July, 1862, Bullock had exhausted his earlier credit of a million dollars. The £60,000 loan secured through Lindsay then tided over an emergency demand and this had been followed by a development on similar lines of the "cotton certificates"

[1] Mason Papers. Mason to Slidell, Sept. 27, 1862.

and "warrants" which by December, 1862, had secured, through Spence's agency, an additional million dollars or thereabouts. Mason was strongly recommending further expansion of this method and had the utmost confidence in Spence. Now, however, there was broached to the authorities in Richmond a proposal for the definite floating in Europe of a specified "cotton loan."

This proposal came through Slidell at Paris and was made by the well-established firm of Erlanger & Company. First approached by this company in September, 1862, Slidell consulted Mason but found the latter strongly committed to his own plans with Spence.[1] But Slidell persisted and Mason gave way.[2] Representatives of Erlanger proceeded to Richmond and proposed a loan of twenty-five million dollars; they were surprised to find the Confederate Government disinclined to the idea of a foreign loan, and the final agreement, cut to fifteen millions, was largely made because of the argument advanced that as a result powerful influences would thus be brought to the support of the South.[3] The contract was signed at Richmond, January 28, 1863, and legalized by a secret act of Congress on the day following.[4] But there was no Southern enthusiasm for the project. Benjamin wrote to Mason that the Confederacy disclaimed the "desire or intention on our part to effect a loan in Europe . . . during the war we want only such very moderate sums as are required abroad for the purchase of warlike supplies and for vessels, and even that is not required because of our want of funds,

[1] *Ibid.* Slidell to Mason, Oct. 2, 1862.

[2] Slidell's daughter was engaged to be married to Erlanger's son.

[3] Slidell himself wrote: "I should not have gone so far in recommending these propositions . . . had I not the best reason to believe that even in anticipation of its acceptance the very strongest influence will be enlisted in our favour." (Richardson, II, p. 340. To Benjamin, Oct. 28, 1862.)

[4] Schwab, *The Confederate States of America*, pp. 30-31. Schwab is in

but because of the difficulties of remittance"; as for the Erlanger contract the Confederacy "would have declined it altogether but for the political considerations indicated by Mr. Slidell. . . ."[1]

From Mason's view-point the prime need was to secure money; from Slidell's (at least so asserted) it was to place a loan with the purpose of establishing strong friends. It had been agreed to suspend the operations of Spence until the result of Erlanger's offer was learned, but pressure brought by Caleb Huse, purchasing agent of the Confederacy, caused a further sale of "cotton warrants."[2] Spence, fearing he was about to be shelved, became vexed and made protest to Mason, while Slidell regarded Spence[3] as a weak and meddlesome agent.[4] But on February 14, 1863, Erlanger's agents returned to Paris and uncertainty was at an end. Spence went to Paris, saw Erlanger, and agreed to co-operate in floating the loan.[5] Then followed a remarkable bond market operation, interesting, not so much as regards the financial returns to the South, for these were negligible, as in relation to the declared object of Slidell and the Richmond Government—namely, the "strong influences" that would accompany the successful flotation of a loan.

Delay in beginning operations was caused by the failure to receive promptly the authenticated copy of the Act of Congress authorizing the loan, which did not arrive until March 18. By this contract Erlanger & Company, sole managers of the loan, had guaranteed flotation of the entire $15,000,000 at not less than 77, the profit of the Company to be five per cent., plus the difference between 77 and the

[1] Richardson, II, 399-401, Jan. 15, 1863.
[2] *Ibid*, p. 420. Mason to Benjamin, Feb. 5, 1863.
[3] Mason Papers, Jan. 23, 1863.
[4] *Ibid.* Slidell to Mason, Feb. 15, 1863.
[5] *Ibid.* Slidell to Mason, Feb. 23, 1863, and Mason to Slidell, Feb. 24, 1863.

actual price received, but the first $300,000 taken was to be placed at once at the disposal of the Government. The bonds were put on the market March 19, in London, Liverpool, Paris, Amsterdam and Frankfurt, but practically all operations were confined to England. The bid for the loan was entitled "*Seven per Cent. Cotton Loan of the Confederate States of America for* 3 *Millions Sterling at* 90 *per Cent.*" The bonds were to bear interest at seven per cent. and were to be exchangeable for cotton at the option of the holder at the price of sixpence "for each pound of cotton, at any time not later than six months after the ratification of a treaty of peace between the present belligerents." There were provisions for the gradual redemption of the bonds in gold for those who did not desire cotton. Subscribers were to pay 5 per cent. on application, 10 per cent. on allotment, 10 per cent. on each of the days, the first of May, June and July, 1863, and 15 per cent. on the first of August, September and October.

Since the price of cotton in England was then 21 pence per pound it was thought here was a sufficiently wide margin to offer at least a good chance of enormous profits to the buyer of the bonds. True "the loan was looked upon as a wild cotton speculation,"[1] but odds were so large as to induce a heavy gamblers' plunge, for it seemed hardly conceivable that cotton could for some years go below sevenpence per pound, and even that figure would have meant profit, *if* the Confederacy were established. Moreover, even though the loan was not given official recognition by the London stock exchange, the financial columns of the *Times* and the *Economist* favoured it and the subscriptions were so prompt and so heavy that in two days the loan was reported as over-subscribed three times in London alone.[2] With the closing of the subscription the bonds went up to 95½.

[1] Schwab, p. 33.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 33. In France permission to advertise the loan was at first refused, but this was changed by the intervention of the Emperor.

Slidell wrote: "It is a financial recognition of our independence, emanating from a class proverbially cautious, and little given to be influenced by sentiment or sympathy."[1] On Friday, March 27, the allotment took place and three days later Mason wrote, "I think I may congratulate you, therefore, on the triumphant success of our infant credit—it shows, *malgré* all detraction and calumny, that cotton is king at last."[2]

"Alas for the King! Two days later his throne began to tremble and it took all the King's horses and all the King's men to keep him in state."[3] On April 1, the flurry of speculation had begun to falter and the loan was below par; on the second it dropped to 3½ discount, and by the third the promoters and the Southern diplomats were very anxious. They agreed that someone must be "bearing" the bonds and suspected Adams of supplying Northern funds for that purpose.[4] Spence wrote from Liverpool in great alarm and coincidently Erlanger & Company urged that Mason should authorize the use of the receipts already secured to hold up the price of the bonds. Mason was very reluctant to do this,[5] but finally yielded when informed of the result of an interview between Spence, Erlanger, and the latter's chief London agent, Schroeder. Spence had proposed a withdrawal of a part of the loan from the market as likely to have a stabilizing effect, and opposed the Erlanger plan of using the funds already in hand. But

[1] Richardson, II, p. 457. To Benjamin, March 21, 1863.

[2] Mason's *Mason*, p. 401. To Benjamin, March 30, 1863.

[3] MS. Thesis, by Walter M. Case, for M.A. degree at Stanford University: *James M. Mason—Confederate Diplomat* (1915). I am much indebted to Mr. Case's Chapter V: "Mason and Confederate Finance."

[4] No evidence has been found to support this. Is not the real reason for the change to be found in British Governmental intentions known or suspected? March 27 was the day of the Parliamentary debate seemingly antagonistic to the North: while March 31, on the other hand, the *Alexandra* case was referred to the Law Officers, and April 4 they recommend her seizure, which was done on April 5. It is to be presumed that rumours of this seeming face-about by the Government had not failed to reach the bond market.

[5] Mason Papers. Mason to Slidell, April 3, 1863.

Schroeder coolly informed him that if the Confederate representative refused to authorize the use of these funds to sustain the market, then Erlanger would regard his Company as having "completed their contract . . . which was simply to issue the Loan." "Having issued it, they did not and do not guarantee that the public would pay up their instalments. If the public abandon the loan, the 15 per cent sacrificed is, in point of fact, not the property of the Government at all, but the profits of Messrs. Erlanger & Co., actually in their hands, and they cannot be expected to take a worse position. At any rate they will not do so, and unless the compact can be made on the basis we name, matters must take their course."[1]

In the face of this ultimatum, Spence advised yielding as he "could not hesitate . . . seeing that nothing could be so disastrous politically, as well as financially, as the public break-down of the Loan."[2] Mason gave the required authorization and this was later approved from Richmond. For a time the "bulling" of the loan was successful, but again and again required the use of funds received from actual sales of bonds and in the end the loan netted very little to the Confederacy. Some $6,000,000 was squandered in supporting the market and from the entire operation it is estimated that less than $7,000,000 was realized by the Confederacy, although, as stated by the *Economist*, over $12,000,000 of the bonds were outstanding and largely in the hands of British investors at the end of the war.[3]

[1] *Ibid.* Spence to Mason, May 9, 1863. This letter was written a month after the event at Mason's request for an exact statement of what had occurred.

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] Schwab, pp. 39-44. Schwab believes that Erlanger & Company "are certainly open to the grave suspicion of having themselves been large holders of the bonds in question, especially in view of the presumably large amount of lapsed subscriptions, and of having quietly unloaded them on the unsuspecting Confederate agents when the market showed signs of collapsing" (p. 35). Schwab did not have access to Spence's report which gives further ground for this suspicion.

The loan soon became, not as had been hoped and prophesied by Slidell, a source of valuable public support; but rather a mere barometer of Southern fortunes.[1] From first to last the Confederate Cotton Loan bore to subscribers the aspect of a speculative venture and lacked the regard attached to sound investment. This fact in itself denied to the loan any such favourable influence, or "financial recognition of the Confederacy," as Mason and Slidell, in the first flush of success, attributed to it. The rapid fluctuations in price further discredited it and tended to emphasize the uncertainty of Southern victory. Thus "confidence in the South" was, if anything, lessened instead of increased by this turning from political to financial methods of bringing pressure upon the Government.[2]

Southern political and parliamentary pressure had indeed been reserved from January to June, 1863. Public attention was distracted from the war in America by the Polish question, which for a time, particularly during the months of March and April, 1863, disturbed the good relations existing between England and France since the Emperor seemed bent on going beyond British "meddling," even to pursuing a policy that easily might lead to war with Russia. Europe diverted interest from America, and Napoleon himself was for the moment more concerned over the Polish question than with American affairs, even though the Mexican venture was still a worry to him. It was no time for a British parliamentary "push" and when a question was raised on the cotton famine in

[1] A newspaper item that Northern ships had run by Vicksburg sent it down; Lee's advance into Pennsylvania caused a recovery; his retreat from Gettysburg brought it so low as thirty per cent. discount.

[2] After the war was over Bigelow secured possession of and published an alleged list of important subscribers to the loan in which appeared the name of Gladstone. He repeated this accusation—a serious one if true, since Gladstone was a Cabinet member—in his *Retrospections* (I, p. 620), and the story has found place in many writings (e.g., G. P. Putnam, *Memoirs*, p. 213). Gladstone's emphatic denial, calling the story a "mischievous forgery," appears in Morley, *Gladstone*, II, p. 83.

Lancashire little attention was given it, though ordinarily it would have been seized upon as an opportunity for a pro-Southern demonstration. This was a bitter attack by one Ferrand in the Commons, on April 27, directed against the cotton manufacturers as lukewarm over employees' sufferings. Potter, a leading cotton manufacturer, replied to the attack. Potter and his brother were already prominent as strong partisans of the North, yet no effort was made to use the debate to the advantage of the South.[1]

In late May both necessity and fortuitous circumstance seemed to make advisable another Southern effort in Parliament. The cotton loan, though fairly strong again because of Confederate governmental aid, was in fact a failure in its expected result of public support for the South; something must be done to offset that failure. In Polish affairs France had drawn back; presumably Napoleon was again eager for some active effort. Best of all, the military situation in America was thought to indicate Southern success; Grant's western campaign had come to a halt with the stubborn resistance of the great Mississippi stronghold at Vicksburg, while in Virginia, Lee, on May 2-3, had overwhelmingly defeated Hooker at Chancellorsville and was preparing, at last, a definite offensive campaign into Northern territory. Lee's advance north did not begin until June 10, but his plan was early known in a select circle in England and much was expected of it. The time seemed ripe, therefore, and the result was notification by Roebuck of a motion for the recognition of the Confederacy—a first step the real purpose of which was to attempt that 'turning to the Tories' which had been advocated by Spence in January, but postponed on the advice of Gregory.[2] *The Index* clearly indicated where lay the wind: "No one," it declared "now asks what will be the policy of Great

[1] Hansard, 3rd Ser., CLXX, pp. 776-838.
[2] See *ante*, p. 155.

Britain towards America; but everybody anxiously waits on what the Emperor of the French will do."

> ". . . England to-day pays one of the inevitable penalties of free government and of material prosperity, that of having at times at the head of national affairs statesmen who belong rather to the past than to the present, and whose skill and merit are rather the business tact and knowledge of details, acquired by long experience, than the quick and prescient comprehension of the requirements of sudden emergencies. . . .
>
> "The nominal conduct of Foreign Affairs is in the hands of a diplomatic Malaprop, who has never shown vigour, activity, or determination, except where the display of these qualities was singularly unneeded, or even worse than useless. . . . From Great Britain, then, under her actual Government, the Cabinet at Washington has nothing to fear, and the Confederate States nothing to expect."[1]

Of main interest to the public was the military situation. The *Times* minimized the western campaigns, regarding them as required for political effect to hold the north-western states loyal to the Union, and while indulging in no prophecies as to the fate of Vicksburg, expressing the opinion that, if forced to surrender it, the South could easily establish "a new Vicksburg" at some other point.[2] Naturally *The Index* was pleased with and supported this view.[3] Such ignorance of the geographic importance of Vicksburg may seem like wilful misleading of the public; but professed British military experts were equally ignorant. Captain Chesney, Professor of Military History at Sandhurst College, published in 1863, an analysis of American campaigns, centring all attention on the battles in Maryland and Virginia and reaching the conclusion that the South could resist, indefinitely, any Northern attack.[4] He dis-

[1] The *Index*, May 28, 1863, pp. 72-3.
[2] The *Times*, June 1, 1863.

missed the western campaigns as of no real significance. W. H. Russell, now editor of the *Army and Navy Gazette*, better understood Grant's objectives on the Mississippi but believed Northern reconquest of the South to the point of restoration of the Union to be impossible. If, however, newspaper comments on the success of Southern armies were to be regarded as favourable to Roebuck's motion for recognition, W. H. Russell was against it.

> "If we could perceive the smallest prospect of awaking the North to the truth, or of saving the South from the loss and trials of the contest by recognition, we would vote for it to-morrow. But next to the delusion of the North that it can breathe the breath of life into the corpse of the murdered Union again, is the delusion of some people in England who imagine that by recognition we would give life to the South, divide the nations on each side of the black and white line for ever, and bring this war to the end. There is probably not one of these clamourers for recognition who could define the limits of the State to be recognized. . . . And, over and above all, recognition, unless it meant 'war,' would be an aggravation of the horrors of the contest; it would not aid the South one whit, and it would add immensely to the unity and the fury of the North."[1]

The British Foreign Secretary was at first little concerned at Roebuck's motion, writing to Lyons, "You will see that Roebuck has given notice of a motion to recognize the South. But I think it certain that neither Lord Derby nor Cobden will support it, and I should think no great number of the Liberal party. Offshoots from all parties will compose the minority."[2] Russell was correct in this view but not so did it appear to Southern agents who now became active at the request of Roebuck and Lindsay in securing from the Emperor renewed expressions of willingness to act, and promptly, if England would but give the word. There was no real hope that Russell would change his policy, but

[1] *Army and Navy Gazette*, June 6, 1863.
[2] Lyons Papers, May 30, 1863.

there seemed at least a chance of replacing the Whig Ministry with a Tory one. The date for the discussion of the motion had been set for June 30. On June 13, Lindsay, writing to Slidell, enclosed a letter from Roebuck asking for an interview with Napoleon,[1] and on June 16, Mason wrote that if Slidell saw the Emperor it was of the greatest importance that he, Mason, should be at once informed of the results and how far he might communicate them to "our friends in the House."[2] Slidell saw the Emperor on June 18, talked of the possibility of "forcing the English Cabinet to act or to give way to a new ministry," asked that an interview be given Lindsay and Roebuck, and hinted that Lord Malmesbury, a warm friend of the Emperor, would probably be the Foreign Secretary in a Tory cabinet. Napoleon made no comment indicating any purpose to aid in upsetting the Palmerston Government, but consented to the requested interview and declared he would go to the length of officially informing the British Ministry that France was very ready to discuss the advisability of recognizing the South.[3]

This was good news. June 22, Slidell received a note from Mocquard stating that Baron Gros, the French Ambassador at London, had been instructed to sound Russell. Meanwhile, Roebuck and Lindsay had hurried to Paris, June 20, saw Napoleon and on the twenty-fifth, Slidell reported that they were authorized to state in the House of Commons that France was "not only willing but

[1] Callahan, *Diplomatic History of the Southern Confederacy*, p. 184. Callahan's Chapter VIII, "The Crisis in England" is misnamed, for Roebuck's motion and the whole plan of "bringing in the Tories" never had a chance of succeeding, as, indeed, Callahan himself notes. His detailed examination of the incident has unfortunately misled some historians who have derived from his work the idea that the critical period of British policy towards America was Midsummer, 1863, whereas it occurred, in fact, in October–November, 1862 (e.g., Schmidt, "Wheat and Cotton during the Civil War," pp. 413 *seq*. Schmidt's thesis is largely dependent on placing the critical period in 1863).

[2] Mason Papers. To Slidell.

[3] Callahan, pp. 184-5.

anxious to recognize the Confederate States with the co-operation of England."[1] Slidell added, however, that Napoleon had not promised Roebuck and Lindsay to make a formal proposal to Great Britain. This rested on the assurances received by Slidell from Mocquard, and when Mason, who had let the assurance be known to his friends, wrote that Russell, replying to Clanricarde, on June 26, had denied any official communication from France, and asked for authority from Slidell to back up his statements by being permitted to give Roebuck a copy of the supposed instruction,[2] he received a reply indicating confusion somewhere :

> "I called yesterday on my friend at the Affaires Etrangeres on the subject of your note of Saturday : he has just left me. M. D. de Lh. will not give a copy of his instructions to Baron Gros--but this is the substance of it. On the 19th he directed Baron Gros to take occasion to say to leading Members of Parliament that the Emperor's opinions on the subject of American affairs were unchanged. That he was disposed with the co-operation of England immediately to recognize the Confederate States; this was in the form of a draft letter, not a despatch. On the 22nd, he officially instructed the Baron to sound *Palmerston* on the subject and to inform him of the Emperor's views and wishes. This was done in consequence of a note from the Emperor, to the Minister, in which he said, 'Je me demande, s'il ne serait bien d'avertir Lord Palmerston, que je suis décidé à reconnaitre le Sud.' This is by far the most significant thing that the Emperor has said, either to me or to the others. It renders me comparatively indifferent what England may do or omit doing. At all events, let Mr. Roebuck press his motion and make his statement of the Emperor's declaration. Lord Palmerston will not dare to dispute it and the responsibility of the continuance of the war will rest entirely upon him. M. Drouyn de Lhuys has not heard from Baron Gros the result of his interview with

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 186. To Benjamin.

[2] Mason Papers. Mason to Slidell, June 27, 1863. Mason wrote : "The question of veracity is raised."

Palmerston. I see that the latter has been unwell and it is probable that the former had not been able to see him. There can be no impropriety in Mr. Roebuck's seeing Baron Gros, who will doubtless give him information which he will use to advantage. I write in great haste; will you do me the favour to let Lord Campbell know the substance of this note, omitting that portion of it which relates to the Emperor's inclination to act alone. Pray excuse me to Lord Campbell for not writing to him, time not permitting me to do so."[1]

This did not satisfy Mason; he telegraphed on the twenty-ninth, "Can I put in hands of Roebuck copy of Mocquard's note brought by Corcoran."[2] To which Slidell replied by letter:

> "For fear the telegraph may commit some blunder I write to say that M. Mocquard's note, being confidential, cannot be *used in any way*. I showed it to Messrs. Roebuck and Lindsay when they were here and have no objection that they should again see it confidentially." [3]

On June 29, Roebuck went to Baron Gros and received the information that no formal communication had been made to Russell. The next day in an effort in some way to secure an admission of what Mason and his friends believed to be the truth, Lord Campbell asked Russell in the House of Lords if he had received either a document or a verbal communication outlining Napoleon's desires. Russell replied that Baron Gros had told him "an hour ago" that he had not even received any instruction to deliver such a communication.[4] This was in the hours preceding the debate, now finally to occur in the Commons. Evidently there had been an error in the understanding of Napoleon by Slidell, Roebuck and Lindsay, or else there was a question of veracity between Russell, Baron Gros and Napoleon.

[1] *Ibid.* Slidell to Mason, June 29, 1863.
[2] *Ibid.* To Slidell.
[3] *Ibid.* To Mason. "Monday eve." (June 29, 1863.)
[4] Callahan, 186; and Hansard, 3rd Ser., CLXXI, p. 1719.

Roebuck's motion was couched in the form of a reqnest to the Queen to enter into negotiations with foreign powers for co-operation in recognition of the Confederacy. Roebuck argued that the South had in fact established its independence and that this was greatly to England's advantage since it put an end to the " threatening great power " in the West. He repeated old arguments based on suffering in Lancashire—a point his opponents brushed aside as no longer of dangerous concern—attacked British anti-slavery sentiment as mere hypocrisy and minimized the dangers of a war with the North, prophesying an easy victory for Great Britain. Then, warmed to the real attack on the Government Roebuck related at length his interview with Napoleon, claiming to have been commissioned by the Emperor to urge England to action and asserting that since Baron Gros had been instructed to apply again to the British Cabinet it must be evident that the Ministry was concealing something from Parliament. Almost immediately, however, he added that Napoleon had told him no formal French application could be renewed to Great Britain since Russell had revealed to Seward, through Lyons, the contents of a former application.

Thus following the usual pro-Southern arguments, now somewhat perfunctorily given, the bolt against the Government had been shot with all of Roebuck's accustomed " vigour " of utterance.[1] Here was direct attack; that it was a futile one early became evident in the debate. Lord Robert Montagu, while professing himself a friend of the South, was sarcastic at the expense of Roebuck's entrance into the field of diplomacy, enlarged upon the real dangers of becoming involved in the war, and moved an amendment in favour of continued British neutrality. Palmerston was absent, being ill, but Gladstone, for the

Government, while carefully avoiding expressions of sympathy for either North or South, yet going out of his way to pass a moral judgment on the disaster to political liberty if the North should wholly crush the South, was positive in assertion that it would be unwise to adopt either Roebuck's motion or Montagu's amendment. Great Britain should not *commit* herself to any line of policy, especially as military events were "now occurring" which might greatly alter the whole situation, though "the main result of the contest was not doubtful." Here spoke that element of the Ministry still convinced of ultimate Southern success.

If Gladstone's had been the only reply to Roebuck he and his friends might well have thought they were about to secure a ministerial change of front. But it soon appeared that Gladstone spoke more for himself than for the Government. Roebuck had made a direct accusation and in meeting this, Layard, for the Foreign Office, entered a positive and emphatical denial, in which he was supported by Sir George Grey, Home Secretary, who added sharp criticism of Roebuck for permitting himself to be made the channel of a French complaint against England. It early became evident to the friends of the South that an error in tactics had been committed and in two directions; first, in the assertion that a new French offer had been made when it was impossible to present proof of it; and second, in bringing forward what amounted to an attempt to unseat the Ministry without previously committing the Tories to a support of the motion. Apparently Disraeli was simply letting Roebuck "feel out" the House. The only member of the Tory party strongly supporting him was Lord Robert Cecil, in a speech so clearly a mere party one that it served to increase the strength of ministerial resistance. Friends of the North quickly appreciated the situation and in strong

of British emancipation sentiment as did Bright in what was, read to-day, the most powerful of all his parliamentary utterances on the American war. In particular Bright voiced a general disbelief in the accuracy of Roebuck's report of his interview with Napoleon, called upon his "friend" Lindsay for his version[1] of the affair, and concluded by recalling former speeches by Roebuck in which the latter had been fond of talking about the "perjured lips" of Napoleon. Bright dilated upon the egotism and insolence of Roebuck in trying to represent the Emperor of France on the floor of the House of Commons. The Emperor, he asserted, was in great danger of being too much represented in Parliament.[2]

The result of this first day's debate on June 30 was disconcerting to Southern friends. It had been adjourned without a vote, for which they were duly thankful. Especially disconcerting was Slidell's refusal to permit the citation of Mocquard's note in proof of Roebuck's assertions. Mason wrote:

> "I have yeur note of 29th ult. You will see in the papers of to-day the debate in the House last night, at which I was present, and will have seen what in the H. L. Lord Russell said in reply to Lord Campbell. Thus the French affair remains in a 'muss,' unless the Emperor will show his hand *on paper*, we shall never know what he really means, or derive any benefit from his private and individual revelations. As things now stand before the public, there can be but one opinion, i.e., that he holds one language in private com-

[1] Bright and Lindsay had, in fact, long been warm friends. They disagreed on the Civil War, but this did not destroy their friendship.

[2] Hansard, 3rd. Ser., CLXXI, pp. 1771-1842, for debate of June 30. Roebuck's egotism was later related by Lamar, then in London on his way to Russia as representative of the South. A few days before the debate Lamar met Roebuck at Lindsay's house and asked Roebuck whether he expected Bright to take part in the debate. "No, sir," said Roebuck sententiously, "Bright and I have met before. It was the old story—the story of the swordfish and the whale! No, sir! Mr. Bright will not cross swords with me again." Lamar attended the debate and saw Roebuck given by Bright the "most deliberate and tremendous pounding I ever witnessed." (*Education of Henry Adams*, pp. 161-2.)

munications, though 'with liberty to divulge,' and another to his ambassador here. The debate is adjourned to to-morrow night, when Lindsay will give in his explanation. It would be uncivil to say that I have no confidence in the Emperor, but certainly what has come from him so far can invite only distrust." [1]

As in Parliament, so in the public press, immediate recognition of the Confederacy received little support. The *Times*, while sympathetic with the purpose was against Roebuck's motion, considering it of no value unless backed up by force; to this the *Times* was decidedly opposed.[2] Of like opinion was the *Economist*, declaring that premature recognition was a justifiable ground for a declaration of war by the North.[3] July 2, Roebuck asked when the debate was to be renewed and was told that must wait on Palmerston's recovery and return to the House. Bright pressed for an immediate decision. Layard reaffirmed very positively that no communication had been received from France and disclosed that Napoleon's alleged complaint of a British revelation to Seward of French overtures was a myth, since the document in question had been printed in the *Moniteur*, thus attracting Seward's attention.[4] Thus Roebuck was further discredited. July 4, Spence wrote strongly urging the withdrawal of the motion:

> "I have a letter from an eminent member of the House and great friend of the South urging the danger of carrying Mr. Roebuck's motion to a vote. It is plain it will be defeated by a great majority and the effect of this will encourage the North and distress our friends. It will also strengthen the minority of the Cabinet in favour of the North. . . .
>
> "The fact is the ground of the motion, which was action on the part of France, has failed us—and taken shape which tells injuriously instead of being the great support. . . .

[1] Mason Papers. To Slidell, July 1, 1863.
[2] July 1, 1863.
[3] July 4, 1863.
[4] Hansard, 3rd. Ser., CLXXII, pp. 67-73.

"If a positive engagement were made by Mr. Disraeli to support the motion it would alter the question entirely. In the absence of this I fear the vote would be humiliating and would convey an impression wholly delusive, for the members are 10 to 1 in favour of the South and yet on this point the vote might be 5 to 1 against Southern interests."[1]

On July 6, Palmerston was back in the House and Roebuck secured an agreement for a resumption of the debate on "Monday next."[2] Meantime many powerful organs of the French press had taken up the matter and were full of sharp criticism of Napoleon's supposed policy and actions as stated by Roebuck. The effect in England was to create a feeling that Napoleon might have difficulty in carrying out a pro-Southern policy.[3] Palmerston, wishing to avoid further discussion on Napoleon's share in providing fuel for the debate, wrote in a very conciliatory and pleasant way to Roebuck, on July 9:

"Perhaps you will allow me thus privately to urge upon you, and through you upon Mr. Lindsay, the expediency of dropping altogether, whether your debate goes on or not, all further mention or discussion of what passed between you and Mr. Lindsay on the one hand, and the Emperor of the French on the other. In truth the whole proceeding on this subject the other day seems to me to have been very irregular. The British Parliament receives messages and communications from their own sovereign, but not from the sovereigns of other countries. . . ."

[1] Mason Papers. To Mason, July 4, 1863. In fact Disraeli, throughout the Civil War, favoured strict neutrality, not agreeing with many of his Tory colleagues. He at times expressed himself privately as believing the Union would not be restored but was wise enough to refrain from such comment publicly. (Monypenny, *Disraeli*, IV, p. 328.)

[2] Hansard, 3rd. Ser., CLXXII, p. 252.

[3] *The Index* felt it necessary to combat this, and on July 9 published a "letter from Paris" stating such criticisms to be negligible as emanating wholly from minority and opposition papers. "All the sympathies of the French Government have, from the outset, been with the South, and this, quite independently of other reasons, dictated the line which the opposition press has consistently followed; the Orleanist *Debats*, Republican *Siècle*, The Palais Royal *Opinion*, all join in the halloo against the South."

"No good can come of touching again upon this matter, nor from fixing upon the Emperor a mistake which amid the multiplicity of things he has to think of he may be excused for making. I am very anxious that neither you nor Mr. Lindsay should mention those matters any more, as any discussion about them must tend to impair the good relations between the French and English Governments. Might I ask you to show this note to Mr. Lindsay, your fellow traveller."[1]

The next day, in the Commons, Sir James Ferguson appealed to Roebuck to withdraw his motion altogether as inexpedient, because of the uncertainty of events in America and as sure to be defeated if pressed to a vote. Palmerston approved this suggestion and urged that if the debate be continued speakers should refrain from all further mention of the personal questions that had been raised, since these were not proper matters for discussion in the House and were embarrassing to the French Emperor. But Palmerston's skill in management was unavailing in this case and the "muss" (as Mason called it) was continued when Lindsay entered upon a long account of the interview with Napoleon, renewed the accusations of Russell's "revelations" to Seward and advised Roebuck not to withdraw his motion but to postpone it "until Monday." The *Scotia*, he said was due and any moment news from America might change the governmental policy. Again the fat was in the fire. Palmerston sharply disavowed that news would change policy. Kinglake thought Roebuck's actions should be thoroughly investigated. Forster eagerly pressed for continuation of the debate. There was a general criticism of Roebuck's "diplomacy," and of Lindsay's also. Northern friends were jubilant and those of the South embarrassed and uncertain. Gregory believed that the motion should be withdrawn "in the interest of the South," but Lord Robert Cecil renewed Lindsay's ad-

[1] Palmerston MS. July 9, 1863.

vice to wait "until Monday" and this was finally done.[1]

All England was in fact eagerly waiting for news from America. Lee's advance was known to have passed by Washington, but no reports were yet at hand of the battle which must determine this first great offensive campaign by the South. July 9, the *Times* predicted, editorially, that Lee was about to capture Washington and that this event would be met by a great cry of joy and relief in the North, now weary of the war and eager to escape from the despotism of Lincoln's administration.[2] Nevertheless the *Times*, while still confident of Lee's victorious advance and of the welcome likely to be accorded him in the North, came out strongly on July 13 in an appeal to Roebuck to withdraw his motion, arguing that even if he were successful Great Britain ought to make no hurried change of policy.[3] On this day, the thirteenth, Roebuck moved the discharge

[1] Hansard, 3rd Ser., CLXXII, 554 *seq.*, July 10, 1863.

[2] In the same issue appeared a letter from the New York correspondent of the *Times*, containing a similar prediction but in much stronger terms. For the last half of the war the *Times* was badly served by this correspondent who invariably reported the situation from an extreme anti-Northern point of view. This was Charles Mackay who served the *Times* in New York from March, 1862, to December, 1865. (Mackay, *Forty Years' Recollections*, II, p. 412.) Possibly he had strict instructions. During this same week Lyons, writing privately to Russell, minimized the "scare" about Lee's advance. He reported that Mercier had ordered up a war-ship to take him away if Washington should fall. Lyons cannily decided such a step for himself inadvisable, since it would irritate Seward and in case the unexpected happened he could no doubt get passage on Mercier's ship. When news came of the Southern defeat at Gettysburg and of Grant's capture of Vicksburg, Lyons thought the complete collapse of the Confederacy an imminent possibility. Leslie Stephen is a witness to the close relations of Seward and Lyons at this time. He visited Washington about a month after Gettysburg and met Seward, being received with much cordiality as a *verbal* champion in England of the North. (He had as yet published no signed articles on the war.) In this conversation he was amused that Seward spoke of the friendly services of "Monkton Mill," as a publicist on political economy. (Maitland, *Leslie Stephen*, p. 120.)

[3] In this issue a letter from the New York correspondent, dated July 1, declared that all of the North except New England, would welcome Lee's triumph: "... he and Mr. Jefferson Davis might ride in triumph up Broadway, amid the acclamations of a more enthusiastic multitude than ever assembled on the Continent of America." The New York city which soon after indulged in the "draft riots" might give some ground for such writing, but it was far fetched, nevertheless—and New York was not the

of his motion in a speech so mild as to leave the impression that "Tear 'em" had his tail between his legs but, Lindsay, his feelings evidently injured by the aspersions cast upon his own "amateur diplomacy," spoke at much length of the interview with Napoleon and tried to show that on a previous occasion he had been, in fact, "employed" by the Government. Palmerston was pithy and sarcastic in reply. Lindsay, he said, had "employed" himself. He hoped that this would be the "last time when any member of this House shall think it his duty to communicate to the British House of Commons that which may have passed between himself and the Sovereign of a foreign country."[1]

The entire debate on Roebuck's motion was a serious blow to the cause of the South in Parliament. Undertaken on a complete misunderstanding of the position of Tory leaders, begun with a vehemence that led its mover into tactical error, it rapidly dwindled to a mere question of personal veracity and concluded in sharp reproof from the Government. No doubt the very success (so it seemed at the moment) of Southern arms, upon which Roebuck counted to support his motion was, in actual effect, a deterrent, since many Southern sympathizers thought Great Britain might now keep hands off since the South was "winning anyway." There is no evidence that Russell thought this, or that he was moved by any consideration save the fixed determination to remain neutral—even to the extent of reversing a previous decision as to the powers of the Government in relation to Southern ship-building.

Roebuck withdrew his motion, not because of any imminent Southern victory, but because he knew that if pressed to a vote it would be overwhelmingly defeated.

[1] Hansard, 3rd Ser., CLXXII, 661 *seq*. Ever afterwards Roebuck was insistent in expressions of dislike and fear of America. At a banquet to him in Sheffield in 1869 he delivered his "political testament": "Beware of Trades Unions; beware of Ireland; beware of America." (Leader, *Autobiography and Letters of Roebuck*, p. 330.)

The debate was the last one of importance on the topics of mediation or recognition.[1] News of Lee's check at Gettysburg reached London on July 16, but was described by the *Times* two days later as virtually a Southern victory since the Northern army had been compelled to act wholly on the defensive. In the same issue it was stated of Vicksburg, "it is difficult to see what possible hope there can be of reducing the city."[2] But on July 20, full news of the events of July 4, when Vicksburg fell and Lee began his retreat from Gettysburg, was received and its significance acknowledged, though efforts were made to prove that these events simply showed that neither side could conquer the other.[3] In contradiction of previous assertions that "another Vicksburg" might easily be set up to oppose Northern advance in the west there was now acknowledgment that the capture of this one remaining barrier on the Mississippi was a great disaster to the South. *The Index*, forgetful that it was supposedly a British publication, declared: "The saddest news which has reached *us* since the fall of New Orleans is the account of the surrender of Vicksburg. The *very day* on which the capitulation took place renders the blow heavier."[4]

[1] May 31, 1864, Lindsay proposed to introduce another recognition motion, but on July 25 complained he had had no chance to make it, and asked Palmerston if the Government was not going to act. The reply was a brief negative.

[2] The *Times*, July 18, 1863.

[3] The power of the *Times* in influencing public opinion through its news columns was very great. At the time it stood far in the lead in its foreign correspondence and the information printed necessarily was that absorbed by the great majority of the British public. Writing on January 23, 1863, of the mis-information spread about America by the *Times*, Goldwin Smith asserted: "I think I never felt so much as in this matter the enormous power which the *Times* has, not from the quality of its writing, which of late has been rather poor, but from its exclusive command of publicity and its exclusive access to a vast number of minds. The *ignorance* in which it has been able to keep a great part of the public is astounding." (To E. S. Beesly. Haultain, *Correspondence of Goldwin Smith*, p. 11.)

[4] *The Index*, July 23, 1863, p. 200. The italics are mine. The implication is that a day customarily celebrated as one of rejoicing has now become one for gloom. No *Englishman* would be likely to regard July 4 as a day of rejoicing.

"The fall of Vicksburg," wrote Spence, "has made me ill all the week, never yet being able to drive it off my mind."[1] Adams reported that the news had caused a panic among the holders of the Cotton Loan bonds and that the press and upper classes were exceedingly glad they had refused support of Roebuck's motion.[2]

If July, 1863, may in any way be regarded as the "crisis" of Southern effort in England, it is only as a despairing one doomed to failure from the outset, and receiving a further severe set-back by the ill-fortune of Lee's campaign into Pennsylvania. The real crisis of governmental attitude had long since passed. Naturally this was not acknowledged by the staunch friends of the South any more than at Richmond it was acknowledged (or understood) that Gettysburg marked the crisis of the Confederacy. But that the end of Southern hope for British intervention had come at Richmond, was made clear by the action of Benjamin, the Confederate Secretary of State. On August 4, he recalled Mason, writing that the recent debates in Parliament showed the Government determined not to receive him:

> "Under these circumstances, your continued residence in London is neither conducive to the interests nor consistent with the dignity of this Government, and the President therefore requests that you consider your mission at an end, and that you withdraw, with your secretary, from London."[3]

A private letter accompanying the instruction authorized Mason to remain if there were any "marked change" in governmental attitude, but since the decision of the Ministry to seize the Laird Rams had been made public at nearly the same moment when this instruction was received, September

[1] Mason Papers. To Mason, July 25, 1863.
[2] *U.S. Diplomatic Correspondence*, 1863, Pt. I, p. 329. Adams to Seward, July 30, 1863.
[3] Mason, *Mason*, p. 449.

15, Mason could hardly fail to retire promptly. Indeed, the very fact of that seizure gave opportunity for a dramatic exit though there was no connection between Benjamin's instruction and the stopping of Confederate ship-building in England. The real connection was with the failure of the Gettysburg campaign and the humiliating collapse of Roebuck's motion. Even the *Times* was now expanding upon the "serious reverses" of the South and making it clearly understood that England "has not had and will not have the slightest inclination to intervention or mediation, or to take any position except that of strict neutrality."[1]

Mason at once notified Slidell of his receipt of the recall instruction and secured the latter's approval of the communication he proposed making to Russell.[2] A general consultation of Southern agents took place and Mason would have been vexed had he known how small was the regard for his abilities as a diplomat.[3] *The Index* hastened to join in a note already struck at Richmond of warm welcome to France in her conquest of Mexico, reprinting on September 17 an editorial from the *Richmond Enquirer* in which it was declared, "France is the only Power in the world that has manifested any friendly feeling towards the Confederacy in its terrible struggle for independence." Evidently all hope was now centred upon Napoleon, a conclusion without doubt distasteful to Mason and one which he was loth to accept as final.

[1] Sept. 4, 1863. The *Times* was now printing American correspondence sharply in contrast to that which preceded Gettysburg when the exhaustion and financial difficulties of the North were dilated upon. Now, letters from Chicago, dated August 30, declared that, to the writer's astonishment, the West gave every evidence that the war had fostered rather than checked, prosperity. (Sept. 15, 1863.).

[2] Mason Papers. Mason to Slidell, Sept. 14 and 15, 1863. Slidell to Mason, Sept. 16, 1863.

[3] McRea wrote to Hotze, September 17, 1863, that in his opinion Slidell and Hotze were the only Southern agents of value diplomatically in Europe (Hotze Correspondence). He thought all others would soon be recalled. Slidell, himself, even in his letter to Mason, had the questionable taste of drawing a rosy picture of his own and his family's intimate social intercourse with the Emperor and the Empress.

On September 21, Mason notified Russell of his withdrawal very nearly in the words of Benjamin's instruction. The news was at once made public, calling out from the *Times* a hectoring editorial on the folly of the South in demanding recognition before it had won it.[1] In general, however, the press took a tone apparently intended to "let Mason down easily," acknowledging that his act indicated a universal understanding that Great Britain would not alter her policy of strict neutrality, but expressing admiration for the courage and confidence of the South.[2] September 25, Russell replied to Mason with courtesy but also with seeming finality:

> "I have on other occasions explained to you the reasons which have induced Her Majesty's Government to decline the overtures you allude to, and the motives which have hitherto prevented the British Court from recognizing you as the accredited Minister of an established State.
>
> "These reasons are still in force, and it is not necessary to repeat them.
>
> "I regret that circumstances have prevented my cultivating your personal acquaintance, which, in a different state of affairs, I should have done with much pleasure and satisfaction."[3]

Thus Mason took his exit. Brief entrances upon the stage in England were still to be his, but the chief rôle there was now assigned to others and the principal scenes transferred to France. That Mason did not fully concur in this as final, easily as it was accepted by Slidell, is evident from his later correspondence with Lindsay and Spence. He regarded the question of British recognition of the South as mainly an English political question, pinning his hopes on a Tory overthrow of Palmerston's Ministry. This he

[1] Sept. 23, 1863.

[2] e.g., *Manchester Guardian*, Sept. 23, 1863, quoted in *The Index*, Sept. 24, p. 343.

[3] Mason's *Mason*, p. 456.

believed to depend on the life of the Prime Minister and his anxious inquiries as to the health of Palmerston were frequent. Nothing in his instructions indicated a desired course of action and Mason after consulting Slidell and, naturally, securing his acquiescence, determined to remain in Europe waiting events.

If the South was indignant at British inaction the North was correspondingly pleased and after the seizure of the Laird Rams was officially very friendly—at least so Lyons reported.[1] In this same private letter, however, Lyons ventured a strong protest against a notion which now seems to have occurred to Russell of joint action by England, France and Spain to withdraw belligerent rights *to the North*, unless the United States formally "concede to their enemy the status of a Belligerent for all *international* purposes." Why or how this idea came to be taken up by Russell is uncertain. Possibly it was the result of irritation created by the persistence of Seward in denying that the war was other than an effort to crush rebellious subjects—a theory clearly against the fact yet consistently maintained by the American Secretary of State throughout the entire war and constantly causing difficulties in relations with neutral countries. At any rate Lyons was quick to see the danger. He wrote:

"Such a declaration might produce a furious outburst of wrath from Government and public here. It cannot, however, be denied that the reasoning on which the Declaration would be founded would be incontrovertible, and that in the end firmness answers better with the Americans than coaxing. But then England, France and Spain must be really firm, and not allow their Declaration to be a *brutum fulmen*. If on its being met, as it very probably would be, by a decided refusal on the part of the United States, they did not proceed to break up the Blockade, or at all events to resist by force the exercise of the right of visit on the high seas, the United

States Government and people would become more difficult to deal with than ever. I find, however, that I am going beyond my own province, and I will therefore add only an excuse for doing so." [1]

Lyons followed this up a week later by a long description of America's readiness for a foreign war, a situation very different from that of 1861. America, he said, had steadily been preparing for such a contingency not with any desire for it but that she might not be caught napping.[2] This was written as if merely an interesting general speculation and was accompanied by the assurance, "I don't think the Government here at all desires to pick a quarrel with us or with any European Power—but the better prepared it is, the less manageable it will be."[3] Nevertheless, Lyons' concern over Russell's motion of withdrawing belligerent rights to the North was great, and his representations presumably had effect, for no more was heard of the matter. Russell relieved Lyons' mind by writing, November 21:

"I hope you continue to go on quietly with Seward. I think this is better than any violent demonstrations of friendship which might turn sour like beer if there should be a thunder-storm.

"But I am more and more persuaded that amongst the

[1] *Ibid.* Lyons wrote after receiving a copy of a despatch sent by Russell to Grey, in France, dated October 10, 1863.

[2] F. O., Am., 896. No. 788. Confidential. Lyons to Russell, Nov. 3, 1863. "It seems, in fact, to be certain that at the commencement of a war with Great Britain, the relative positions of the United States and its adversary would be very nearly the reverse of what they would have been if a war had broken out three or even two years ago. Of the two Powers, the United States would now be the better prepared for the struggle—the coasts of the United States would present few points open to attack—while the means of assailing suddenly our own ports in the neighbourhood of this country, and especially Bermuda and the Bahamas, would be in immediate readiness. Three years ago Great Britain might at the commencement of a war have thrown a larger number of trained troops into the British Provinces on the continent than could have been immediately sent by the United States to invade those provinces. It seems no exaggeration to say that the United States could now without difficulty send an Army exceeding in number, by five to one, any force which Great Britain would be likely to place there."

[3] *Ibid.* Private. Lyons to Russell, Nov. 3, 1863.

> Powers with whose Ministers I pass my time there is none with whom our relations ought to be so frank and cordial as the United States." [1]

If relations with the North were now to be so "frank and cordial," there was, indeed, little remaining hope possible to English friends of the South. Bright wrote to Sumner: "Neutrality is agreed upon by all, and I hope a more fair and friendly neutrality than we have seen during the past two years."[2] George Thompson, at Exeter Hall, lauding Henry Ward Beecher for his speech there, commented on the many crowded open public meetings in favour of the North as compared with the two pro-Southern ones in London, slimly and privately attended.[3] Jefferson Davis, in addressing the Confederate Congress, December 7, was bitter upon the "unfair and deceptive conduct" of England.[4] Adams, by mid-December, 1863, was sure that previous British confidence in the ultimate success of the South was rapidly declining.[5]

Such utterances, if well founded, might well have portended the cessation of further Southern effort in England. That a renewal of activity soon occurred was due largely to a sudden shift in the military situation in America and to the realization that the heretofore largely negative support given to the Southern cause must be replaced by organized and persistent effort. Grant's victorious progress in the West had been checked by the disaster to Rosencrans at Chicamauga, September 18, and Grant's army forced to

[1] Lyons Papers. To Lyons.

[2] Rhodes, IV, p. 393. Nov. 20, 1863.

[3] *The Liberator*, Nov. 27, 1863. I have not dwelt upon Beecher's tour of England and Scotland in 1863, because its influence in "winning England" seems to me absurdly over-estimated. He was a gifted public orator and knew how to "handle" his audiences, but the majority in each audience was friendly to him, and there was no such "crisis of opinion" in 1863 as has frequently been stated in order to exalt Beecher's services.

[4] Dodd, *Jefferson Davis*, p. 319. The words are Dodd's.

[5] State Department, Eng., Vol. 84, No. 557. Adams to Seward, Dec. 17,

retrace its steps to recover Chattanooga. It was not until November 24 that the South was compelled to release its grip upon that city. Meanwhile in the East, Lee, fallen back to his old lines before Richmond, presented a still impregnable front to Northern advance. No sudden collapse, such as had been expected, followed the Southern defeats at Vicksburg and Gettysburg. Again the contest presented the appearance of a drawn battle. Small wonder then that McHenry, confident in his statistics, should now declare that at last cotton was to become in truth King,[1] and count much upon the effect of the arguments advanced in his recently published book.[2] Small wonder that Southern friends should hurry the organization of the "Southern Independence Association." Seeking a specific point of attack and again hoping for Tory support they first fixed their attention on the new trial of the *Alexandra*, on appeal from the decision by the Chief Baron of the Court of Exchequer. On December 4, Lindsay wrote to Mason that he had daily been "journeying to town" with the "old Chief Baron" and was confident the Government would again be defeated—in which case it would be very open to attack for the seizure of the Rams also. Nevertheless he was emphatic in his caution to Mason not to place too high a hope on any change in Government policy or on any expectation that the Tories would replace Palmerston.[3]

[1] Hotze Correspondence. McHenry to Hotze, Dec. 1, 1863.

[2] McHenry, *The Cotton Trade*, London, 1863. The preface in the form of a long letter to W. H. Gregory is dated August 31, 1863. For a comprehensive note on McHenry see C. F. Adams in Mass. Hist. Soc. *Proceedings*, March, 1914, Vol. XLVII, 279 *seq*.

[3] Mason Papers.

CHAPTER XV

THE SOUTHERN INDEPENDENCE ASSOCIATION

NORTHERN friends in England were early active in organizing public meetings and after the second emancipation proclamation of January 1, 1863, these became both numerous and notable. Southern friends, confident in the ultimate success of the Confederacy and equally confident that they had with them the great bulk of upper-class opinion in England, at first thought it unnecessary to be active in public expressions aside from such as were made through the newspapers. Up to November, 1862, *The Index* records no Southern public meeting. But by the summer of 1863, the indefatigable Spence had come to the conclusion that something must be done to offset the efforts of Bright and others, especially in the manufacturing districts where a strong Northern sympathy had been created. On June 16, he wrote to Mason that on his initiative a Southern Club had been organized in Manchester and that others were now forming in Oldham, Blackburn and Stockport. In Manchester the Club members had "smashed up the last Abolitionist meeting in the Free Trade Hall":

> "These parties are not the rich spinners but young men of energy with a taste for agitation but little money. It appears to my judgment that it would be wise not to stint money in aiding this effort to expose cant and diffuse the truth. Manchester is naturally the centre of such a move and you will see there are here the germs of important work —but they need to be tended and fostered. I have supplied

> a good deal of money individually but I see room for the use of £30 or £40 a month or more." [1]

The appeal for funds (though Spence wrote that he would advance the required amounts on the chance of reimbursement from the Confederate secret service fund) is interesting in comparison with the contributions willingly made by Bright's friends. "Young men of energy with a taste for agitation but little money" reveals a source of support somewhat dubious in persistent zeal and requiring more than a heavy list of patrons' names to keep up a public interest. Nevertheless, Spence succeeded, for a short time, in arousing a show of energy. November 24, 1863, Mason wrote to Mann that measures were "in progress and in course of execution" to hold public meetings, memorialize Parliament, and form an association for the promotion of Southern independence "under the auspices of such men as the Marquis of Lothian, Lord Robert Cecil, M.P., Lord Wharncliffe, Lord Eustace Cecil, Messrs. Haliburton, Lindsay, Peacocke, Van Stittart, M.P., Beresford Hope, Robert Bourke, and others. . . ."[2] A fortnight later Spence reported his efforts and postulated that in them, leading to European intervention, lay the principal, if not the only hope, of Southern independence—a view never *publicly* acknowledged by any devoted friend of the South:

> "The news is gloomy—very, and I really do not see how the war is to be worked out to success without the action of Europe. That is stopped by our Government but there is a power that will move the latter, if it can only be stirred up, and that, of course, is public opinion. I had a most agreeable and successful visit to Glasgow upon a requisition signed by the citizens. The enemy placarded the walls and brought all their forces to the meeting, in which out of 4,000 I think they were fully 1,000 strong, but we beat them completely, carrying a resolution which embraced a memorial

[1] Mason Papers.
[2] *Ibid.*

> to Lord Palmerston. We have now carried six public meetings, Sheffield, Oldham, Stockport, Preston, Ashton, Glasgow. We have three to come off now ready, Burnley, Bury, Macclesfield, and others in preparation. My plan is to work up through the secondary towns to the chief ones and take the latter, Liverpool, Manchester, London, etc., as we come upon the assembling of Parliament. . . . By dint of perseverance I think we shall succeed. The problem is simply to convert latent into active sympathy. There is ample power on our side to move the Cabinet—divided as it is, if we can only arouse that power. At any rate the object is worth the effort." [1]

In the month of November, *The Index* began to report these meetings. In nearly all, Northern partisans were present, attempted to heckle the speakers, and usually presented amendments to the address which were voted down. Spence was given great credit for his energy, being called " indefatigable " :

> " The commencement of the session will see Parliament flooded with petitions from every town and from every mill throughout the North. A loud protest will arise against the *faineant* policy which declines to interfere while men of English blood are uselessly murdering each other by thousands, and while England's most important manufacture is thereby ruined. . . . It remains to be seen whether the voice of the North will have any effect upon the policy of the Government."[2]

By " the North " was meant the manufacturing districts and an explanation was made of the difficulty of similar efforts in London because it was really a " congeries of cities," with no such solidarity of interests as characterized " the North."[3] Without London, however, the movement

[1] *Ibid.* Spence to Mason, Dec. 7, 1863.

[2] *The Index*, Dec. 10, 1863, p. 518.

[3] The success of pro-Northern meetings in London was ignored. Lord Bryce once wrote to C. F. Adams, " My recollection is that while many public meetings were held all over Great Britain by those who favoured the cause which promised the extinction of Slavery, no open (i.e., non-ticket)

lacked driving force and it was determined to create there an association which should become the main-spring of further activities. Spence, Beresford Hope, and Lord Eustace Cecil were made a committee to draft a plan and preliminary address. Funds were now forthcoming from the big blockade-running firms :

> "Some time ago I saw friend Collie, who had made a terrific sum of money, and told him he must come out for the cause in proportion thereto. To this he responded like a brick, I was near saying, but I mean Briton—by offering at once to devote a percentage of cotton out of each steamer that runs the blockade, to the good of the cause. He has given me at once £500 on account of this—which I got to-day in a cheque and have sent on to Lord Eustace Cecil, our treasurer. Thus, you see, we are fairly afloat there." [1]

Yet Spence was fighting against fear that all this agitation was too late :

> "Nevertheless it is not to be disguised that the evil tidings make uphill work of it—very. Public opinion has quite veered round to the belief that the South will be exhausted. The *Times* correspondent's letters do great harm—more especially Gallenga's—who replaced Chas. Mackay at New York. I have, however, taken a berth for Mackay by Saturday's boat, so he will soon be out again and he is dead for our side." [2]

Again Spence asserted the one great hope to be in European intervention :

> "I am now clear in my own mind that unless we get

meeting ever expressed itself on behalf of the South, much as its splendid courage was admired." (Letter, Dec. 1, 1913, in Mass. Hist. Soc. *Proceedings*, Vol. XLVII, p. 55.) No doubt many of these pro-Southern meetings were by ticket, but that many were not is clear from the reports in *The Index*.

[1] Mason Papers. Spence to Mason, Dec. 17, 1863.

[2] *Ibid.* The *weight* of the *Times* is here evident even though Goldwin Smith's statement, made in a speech at Providence, R.I., in 1864, be true that the London *Daily Telegraph*, a paper not committed to either side in America, had three times the circulation of the *Times*. (*The Liberator*, Sept. 30, 1864.) Smith's speech was made on the occasion of receiving the

Europe to move—or some improbable convulsion occur in the North—the end will be a sad one. It seems to me therefore, impossible that too strenuous an effort can be made to move our Government and I cannot understand the Southerners who say: 'Oh, what can you make of it?' I have known a man brought back to life two hours after he seemed stone-dead—the efforts at first seemed hopeless, but in case of life or death what effort should be spared?"[1]

The Manchester Southern Club was the most active of those organized by Spence and was the centre for operations in the manufacturing districts. On December 15, a great gathering (as described by *The Index*) took place there with delegates from many of the near-by towns.[2] Forster referred to this and other meetings as "spasmodic and convulsive efforts being made by Southern Clubs to cause England to interfere in American affairs,"[3] but the enthusiasm at Manchester was unquestioned and plans were on foot to bombard with petitions the Queen, Palmerston, Russell and others in authority, but more especially the members of Parliament as a body. These petitions were "in process of being signed in every town and almost in every cotton-mill throughout the district."[4] It was high time for London, if it was desired that she should lead and *control*

[1] *Ibid.* That Mason did contribute Confederate funds to Spence's meetings comes out in later correspondence, but the amount is uncertain.

[2] *The Index*, Dec. 17, 1863, p. 532. "The attendance of representatives was numerous, and the greatest interest was manifested throughout the proceedings. Manchester was represented by Mr. W. R. Callender (Vice-Chairman of the Central Committee), and by Messrs. Pooley, J. H. Clarke, T. Briggs, Rev. Geo. Huntington, Rev. W. Whitelegge, Messrs. Armstrong, Stutter, Neild, Crowther, Stenhouse, Parker, Hough, W. Potter, Bromley, etc. Mr. Mortimer Collins, the Secretary of the Association, was also present. The districts were severally represented by the following gentlemen: Stockport—Messrs. Constantine and Leigh; Rochdale—Mr. Thos. Staley; Bradford—Mr. J. Leach; Hyde—Messrs. Wild and Fletcher; Glossop—Mr. C. Schofield; Oldham—Messrs. Whittaker, Steeple, and Councillor Harrop; Delf and Saddleworth—Mr. Lees, J.P.; Macclesfield—Messrs. Cheetham and Bridge; Heywood—Mr. Fairbrother; Middleton—Mr. Woolstencroft; Alderley (Chorley)—Mr. J. Beesley, etc., etc."

[3] So reported by *The Index*, Jan. 14, 1864, p. 20, in comment on speeches

these activities, to perfect her own Club. "Next week," wrote Lindsay, on January 8, 1864, it would be formally launched under the name of "The Southern Independence Association,"[1] and would be in working order before the reassembling of Parliament.

The organization of meetings by Spence and the formation of the Southern Independence Association were attempts to do for the South what Bright and others had done earlier and so successfully for the North. Tardily the realization had come that public opinion, even though but slightly represented in Parliament, was yet a powerful weapon with which to influence the Government. Unenfranchised England now received from Southern friends a degree of attention hitherto withheld from it by those gentry who had been confident that the goodwill of the bulk of their own class was sufficient support to the Southern cause. Early in the war one little Southern society had indeed been organized, but on so diffident a basis as almost to escape notice. This was the *London Confederate States Aid Association* which came to the attention of Adams and his friends in December, 1862, through the attendance at an early meeting of one, W. A. Jackson ("Jefferson Davis' ex-coachman"), who reported the proceedings to George Thompson. The meeting was held at 3 Devonshire Street, Portland Place, was attended by some fifty persons and was addressed by Dr. Lempriere. A Mr. Beals, evidently an unwelcome guest, interrupted the speaker, was forcibly ejected by a policeman and got revenge by arranging a demonstration against Mason (who was present), confronting him, on leaving the house, with a placard showing a negro in chains.[2] There was no "public effort" contemplated in such a meeting, although funds were to be

[1] Mason Papers. To Mason.

[2] *The Liberator*, Dec. 26, 1862, giving an extract from the London *Morning Star* of Dec. 4, and a letter from George Thompson.

solicited to aid the South. Adams reported the Association as a sort of Club planning to hold regular Wednesday evening meetings of its members, the dues being a shilling a week and the rules providing for loss of membership for non-attendance.[1]

Nothing more is heard of this Association after December, 1862. Possibly its puerilities killed it and in any case it was not intended to appeal to the public.[2] But the launching of the Southern Independence Association betokened the new policy of constructive effort in London to match and guide that already started in the provinces. A long and carefully worded constitution and address depicted the heroic struggles of the Confederates and the "general sympathy" of England for their cause; dwelt upon the "governmental tyranny, corruption in high places, ruthlessness in war, untruthfulness of speech, and causeless animosity toward Great Britain" of the North; and declared that the interests of America and of the world would be best served by the independence of the South. The effect of a full year's penetration in England of Lincoln's emancipation proclamation is shown in the necessity felt by the framers of this constitution to meet that issue. This required delicate handling and was destined to cause some heart-burnings. The concluding section of the constitution read:

"The Association will also devote itself to the cultivation of kindly feelings between the people of Great Britain and of the Confederate States; and it will, in particular, steadily but kindly represent to the Southern States, that recognition by Europe must necessarily lead to a revision of the system

[1] *U.S. Diplomatic Correspondence*, 1863, Pt. I, p. 18. Adams to Seward, Dec. 18, 1862, enclosing a pamphlet issued by the Association.

[2] Its appeal for funds was addressed in part to women. "Fairest and best of earth! for the sake of violated innocence, insulted virtue, and the honour of your sex, come in woman's majesty and omnipotence and give strength to a cause that has for its object the highest human aims—the amelioration and exaltation of humanity."

> of servile labour, unhappily bequeathed to them by England, in accordance with the spirit of the age, so as to combine the gradual extinction of slavery with the preservation of property, the maintenance of the civil polity, and the true civilization of the negro race." [1]

The Association was unquestionably armed with distinguished guns of heavy calibre in its Committee and officers, and its membership fee (one guinea annually) was large enough to attract the élite, but it remained to be seen whether all this equipment would be sent into action. As yet the vigour of the movement was centred at Manchester and even there a curious situation soon arose. Spence in various speeches, was declaring that the "Petition to Parliament" movement was spreading rapidly. 30,000 at Ashton, he said, had agreed to memoralize the Government. But on January 30, 1864, Mason Jones, a pro-Northern speaker in the Free Trade Hall at Manchester, asked why Southern public meetings had come to a halt.

[1] *The Index*, Jan. 14, 1864, p. 23. The committee of organization was as follows :—

> The Most Noble the Marquis of Lothian,
> The Most Noble the Marquis of Bath,
> The Lord Robert Cecil, M.P.,
> The Lord Eustace Cecil,
> The Right Honourable Lord Wharncliffe.
> The Right Honourable Lord Campbell,
> The Hon. C. Fitzwilliam, M.P.,
> The Honourable Robt. Bourke,
> Edward Akroyd, Esq., Halifax,
> Colonel Greville, M.P.,
> W. H. Gregory, Esq., M.P.,
> T. C. Haliburton, Esq., M.P.,
> A. J. B. Beresford Hope, Esq.,
> W. S. Lindsay, Esq., M.P.,
> G. M. W. Peacocke, Esq., M.P.,
> Wm. Scholefield, Esq., M.P.,
> James Spence, Esq., Liverpool,
> William Vansittart, Esq., M.P.
>
> ---
>
> Chairman : A. J. B. Beresford Hope, Esq.
> Treasurer : The Lord Eustace Cecil.

"The Southerners," he declared, "had taken the Free Trade Hall in the outset with that intention and they were obliged to pay the rent of the room, though they did not use it. They knew that their resolutions would be outvoted and that amendments would pass against them."[1] There must have been truth in the taunt for while *The Index* in nearly every issue throughout the middle of 1864 reports great activity there, it does not give any account of a public meeting. The reports were of many applications for membership "from all quarters, from persons of rank and gentlemen of standing in their respective counties."[2]

Just here lay the weakness of the Southern Independence Association programme. It *did* appeal to "persons of rank and gentlemen of standing," but by the very fact of the flocking to it of these classes it precluded appeal to Radical and working-class England—already largely committed to the cause of the North. Goldwin Smith, in his "Letter to a Whig Member of the Southern Independence Association," made the point very clear.[3] In this pamphlet, probably the strongest presentation of the Northern side and the most-severe castigation of Southern sympathizers that appeared throughout the whole war, Smith appealed to old Whig ideas of political liberty, attacked the aristocracy and the Church of England, and attempted to make the

[1] *The Liberator*, Feb. 26, 1864.

[2] *The Index*, March 17, 1864, p. 174. An amusing reply from an "historian" inclined to dodge is printed as of importance. One would like to know his identity, and what his "judicial situation" was. "An eminent Conservative historian writes as follows: 'I hesitate to become a member of your Association from a doubt whether I should take that open step to which my inclinations strongly prompt me, or adhere to the neutrality in public life to which, as holding a high and responsible judicial situation in this country, I have hitherto invariably confined myself. And after mature consideration I am of opinion that it will be more decorous to abide in this instance by my former rule. I am the more inclined to follow this course from the reflection that by not appearing in public as an advocate of the Southern States, I shall be able to serve their cause more effectually in my literary character. And the printing of a new edition of my "History" (which is now going on) will afford me several opportunities of doing so, of which I shall not fail gladly to avail myself.'"

[3] Printed,. London, 1864.

Radicals of England feel that the Northern cause was their cause. Printing the constitution and address of the Association, with the list of signers, he characterized the movement as fostered by "men of title and family," with "a good sprinkling of clergymen," and as having for its object the plunging of Great Britain into war with the North.[1]

It is significant, in view of Mason Jones' taunt to the Southern Independence Association at Manchester, that *The Index*, from the end of March to August, 1864, was unable to report a single Southern public meeting. The London Association, having completed its top-heavy organization; was content with that act and showed no life. The first move by the Association was planned to be made in connection with the *Alexandra* case when, as was expected, the Exchequer Court should render a decision against the Government's right to detain her. On January 8, 1864, Lindsay wrote to Mason that he had arranged for the public launching of the Association "next week," that he had again seen the Chief Baron who assured him the Court would decide "that the Government is entirely wrong":

> "I told him that if the judgment was clear, and if the Government persisted in proceeding further, that our Association (which he was pleased to learn had been formed) would take up the matter in Parliament and out of it, for if we had no right to seize these ships, it was most unjust that we should detain them by raising legal quibbles for the

[1] At the time a recently-printed work by a clergyman had much vogue: "The South As It Is, or Twenty-one Years' Experience in the Southern States of America." By Rev. T. D. Ozanne. London, 1863. Ozanne wrote: "Southern society has most of the virtues of an aristocracy, increased in zest by the democratic form of government, and the freedom of discussion on all topics fostered by it. It is picturesque, patriarchal, genial. It makes a landed gentry, it founds families, it favours leisure and field sports; it develops a special class of thoughtful, responsible, guiding, and protecting minds; it tends to elevation of sentiment and refinement of manners" (p. 61). Especially he insisted the South was intensely religious and he finally dismissed slavery with the phrase: "The Gospel of the Son of God has higher objects to attain than the mere removal of one social

> purpose of keeping them here till the time arrived when the South might not require them. I think public opinion will go with us on this point, for John Bull—with all his failings —loves fair play." [1]

It is apparent from the language used by Lindsay that he was thinking of the Laird Rams and other ships fully as much as of the *Alexandra*,[2] and hoped much from an attack on the Government's policy in detaining Southern vessels. Earl Russell was to be made to bear the brunt of this attack on the reassembling of Parliament. In an *Index* editorial, Adams was pictured as having driven Russell into a corner by "threats which would not have been endured for an hour by a Pitt or a Canning"; the Foreign Secretary as invariably yielding to the "acknowledged mastery of the Yankee Minister":

> "Mr. Adams' pretensions are extravagant, his logic is blundering, his threats laughable; but he has hit his mark. We can trace his influence in the detention of the *Alexandra* and the protracted judicial proceedings which have arisen out of it; in the sudden raid upon the rams at Birkenhead; in the announced intention of the Government to alter the Foreign Enlistment Act of this country in accordance with the views of the United States Cabinet. When one knows the calibre of Mr. Adams one feels inclined to marvel at his success. The astonishment ceases when one reflects that the British Secretary for Foreign Affairs is Earl Russell."[3]

But when, on February 23, the debate on the Laird Rams occurred,[4] the Tory leaders, upon whom Lindsay and others depended to drive home the meaning of the *Alexandra* decision, carefully avoided urging the Govern-

[1] Mason Papers.

[2] The *Alexandra*,, as a result of the Court's decision, was again appealed, but on an adverse decision was released, proceeded to Nassau, where she was again libelled in the Vice-Admiralty Court of the Bahamas, and again released. She remained at Nassau until the close of the war, thus rendering no service to the South. (Bernard, pp. 354-5.)

[3] Feb. 4, 1864, p. 73.

ment to change its policy and contented themselves with an effort, very much in line with that initiated by *The Index*, to belittle Russell as yielding to a threat. Adams was even applauded by the Tories for his discretion and his anxiety to keep the two countries out of war. The Southern Independence Association remained quiescent. Very evidently someone, presumably Derby or Disraeli, had put a quietus on the plan to make an issue of the stoppage of Southern ship-building. Russell's reply to his accusers was but a curt denial without going into details, in itself testimony that he had no fear of a party attack on the *policy* of stopping the ships. He was disgusted with the result of the *Alexandra* trial and in conversation with Adams reflected upon "the uncertainty and caprice incident everywhere to the administration of justice."[1]

As between Russell and Seward the waters formerly troubled by the stiff manner and tone of the one statesman and the flamboyance of the other were now unusually calm. Russell was less officious and less eager to protest on minor matters and Seward was less belligerent in language. Seward now radiated supreme confidence in the ultimate victory of the North. He had heard rumours of a movement to be made in Parliament for interposition to bring the war to an end by a reunion of North and South on a basis of Abolition and of a Northern assumption of the Confederate debts. Commenting on this to Lyons he merely remarked that the Northern answer could be put briefly as: (1) determination to crush rebellion by force of arms and resentment of any "interposition"; (2) the slaves were already free and would not be made the subject of any bargain; (3) "As to the Confederate debt the United States, Mr. Seward said, would never pay a dollar of it."[2] That there was public animosity to Great Britain, Lyons

[1] State Department, Eng. Adams to Seward, April 7, 1864.
[2] F. O., Am., Vol. 944, No. 81. Lyons to Russell, Feb. 1, 1864.

did not deny and reported a movement in Congress for ending the reciprocity treaty with Canada but, on Seward's advice, paid no attention to this, acknowledging that Seward was very wise in political manipulation and depending on his opposition to the measure.[1] Some alarm was indeed caused through a recurrence by Seward to an idea dating back to the very beginning of the war of establishing ships off the Southern ports which should collect duties on imports. He told Lyons that he had sent a special agent to Adams to explain the proposal with a view to requesting the approval of Great Britain. Lyons urged that no such request be made as it was sure to be refused, interpreting the plan as intended to secure a British withdrawal of belligerent rights to the South, to be followed by a bold Northern defiance to France if she objected.[2] Adams did discuss the project with Russell but easily agreed to postpone consideration of it and in this Seward quietly acquiesced.[3] Apparently this was less a matured plan than a "feeler," put out to sound British attitude and to learn, if possible, whether the tie previously binding England and France in their joint policy toward America was still strong. Certainly at this same time Seward was making it plain to Lyons that while opposed to current Congressional expressions of antagonism to Napoleon's Mexican policy, he was himself in favour, once the Civil War was ended, of helping the republican Juarez drive the French from Mexico.[4]

For nearly three years Russell, like nearly all Englishmen, had held a firm belief that the South could not be conquered and that ultimately the North must accept the bitter pill of Southern independence. Now he began to doubt, yet still held to the theory that even if conquered the South would never yield peaceful obedience to the Federal Govern-

[1] Russell Papers. Lyons to Russell, Feb. 9, 1864.
[2] F. O., Am., Vol. 944, No. 98. Lyons to Russell, Feb. 12, 1864.
[3] *Ibid.*, Vol. 946, No. 201. Lyons to Russell, March 22, 1864.
[4] *Ibid.*, Vol. 945, No. 121. Lyons to Russell, Feb. 23, 1864.

ment. As a reasoning and reasonable statesman he wished that the North could be made to see this.

> ". . . It is a pity," he wrote to Lyons, " the Federals think it worth their while to go on with the war. The obedience they are ever likely to obtain from the South will not be quiet or lasting, and they must spend much money and blood to get it. If they can obtain the right bank of the Mississippi, and New Orleans, they might as well leave to the Confederates Charleston and Savannah." [1]

This was but private speculation with no intention of urging it upon the United States. Yet it indicated a change in the view held as to the warlike *power* of the North. Similarly the *Quarterly Review*, long confident of Southern success and still prophesying it, was acknowledging that " the unholy [Northern] dream of universal empire " must first have passed.[2] Throughout these spring months of 1864, Lyons continued to dwell upon the now thoroughly developed readiness of the United States for a foreign war and urged the sending of a military expert to report on American preparations.[3] He was disturbed by the arrogance manifested by various members of Lincoln's Cabinet, especially by Welles, Secretary of the Navy, with whom Seward, so Lyons wrote, often had difficulty in demonstrating the unfortunate diplomatic bearing of the acts of naval officers. Seward was as anxious as was Lyons to avoid irritating incidents, " but he is not as much listened to as he ought to be by his colleagues in the War and Navy Departments."[4]

[1] Lyons Papers, April 23, 1864.

[2] April, 1864.

[3] Russell Papers. Lyons to Russell, April 19, 1864, and F. O., Am., Vol. 948, No. 284. Lyons to Russell, April 25, 1864. A Captain Goodenough was sent to America and fully confirmed Lyons' reports.

[4] Russell Papers. Lyons to Russell, May 9, 1864. The tone of the *New York Herald* might well have given cause for anxiety. " In six months at the furthest, this unhappy rebellion will be brought to a close. We shall then have an account to settle with the Governments that have either outraged us by a recognition of what they call ' the belligerent rights '

Such an act by a naval officer, defiant of British authority and disregardful of her law, occurred in connection with a matter already attracting the attention of the British public and causing some anxiety to Russell—the alleged securing in Ireland of enlistments for the Northern forces. The war in America had taken from the ranks of industry in the North great numbers of men and at the same time had created an increased demand for labour. But the war had also abruptly checked, in large part, that emigration from Europe which, since the middle 'forties, had been counted upon as a regular source of labour supply, easily absorbed in the steady growth of productive enterprise. A few Northern emissaries of the Government early sent abroad to revive immigration were soon reinforced by private labour agents and by the efforts of steamship companies.[1] This resulted in a rapid resumption of

of the rebels, or by the active sympathy and aid which they have afforded them. Let France and England beware how they swell up this catalogue of wrongs. By the time specified we shall have unemployed a veteran army of close upon a million of the finest troops in the world, with whom we shall be in a position not only to drive the French out of Mexico and to annex Canada, but, by the aid of our powerful navy, even to return the compliment of intervention in European affairs." (Quoted by *The Index*, July 23, 1863, p. 203.)

[1] Bigelow, *Retrospections*, I, p. 563, states that great efforts were made by the Government to stimulate immigration both to secure a labour supply and to fill up the armies. Throughout and even since the war the charge has been made by the South that the foreign element, after 1862, preponderated in Northern armies. There is no way of determining the exact facts in regard to this for no statistics were kept. A Memorandum prepared by the U.S. War Department, dated July 15, 1898, states that of the men examined for physical fitness by the several boards of enrolment, subsequent to September 1, 1864 (at which time, if ever, the foreign element should have shown preponderance), the figures of nativity stood: United States, 341,569; Germany, 54,944; Ireland, 50,537; British-America, 21,645; England, 16,196; and various other countries no one of which reached the 3,500 mark. These statistics really mean little as regards war-time immigration since they do not show *when* the foreign-born came to America; further, from the very first days of the war there had been a large element of American citizens of German and Irish birth in the Northern armies. Moreover, the British statistics of emigration, examined in relation to the figures given above, negative the Southern accusation. In 1861, but 38,000 subjects of Great Britain emigrated to the United States; in 1862, 48,000; while in 1863 the number suddenly swelled to 130,000, and this figure was repeated in 1864. In each year almost exactly two-thirds were from Ireland. Now of the 94,000 from Ireland in 1863, considering the number of Irish-American citizens already in the army, it is evident that the bulk must have gone into labour supply.

emigration in 1863, and in several cases groups of Irishmen signed contracts of such a nature (with non-governmental agents) that on arrival in America they were virtually black-jacked into the army. The agents thereby secured large profits from the sums offered under the bounty system of some of the Eastern states for each recruit. Lyons soon found himself called upon to protest, on appeal from a few of these hoodwinked British citizens, and Seward did the best he could to secure redress, though the process was usually a long one owing to red-tape and also to the resistance of army officers.

As soon as the scheme of "bounty profiteers" was discovered prompt steps were taken to defeat it by the American Secretary of State. But the few cases occurring, combined with the acknowledged and encouraged agents of *bona fide* labour emigration from Ireland, gave ground for accusations in Parliament that Ireland was being used against the law as a place of enlistments. Russell had early taken up the matter with Adams, investigation had followed, and on it appearing that no authorized Northern agent was engaged in recruiting in Ireland the subject had been dropped.[1] There could be and was no objection to encourage labour emigration, and this was generally recognized as the basis of the sudden increase of the numbers going to America.[2] But diplomatic and public quiescence was disturbed when the United States war vessel *Kearsarge*, while in port at Queenstown, November, 1863, took on board fifteen Irishmen and sailed away with them. Russell at once received indirectly from Mason (who was now in France), charges that these men had been enlisted and in the presence of the American consul at Queenstown; he was prompt in investigation but before this was well under

[1] *Parliamentary Papers*, 1863, *Commons*, LXXII. "Correspondence with Mr. Adams respecting enlistment of British subjects."

[2] The *Times*, Nov. 21, 1863. Also March 31, 1864.

way the *Kearsarge* sailed into Queenstown again and landed the men. She had gone to a French port and no doubt Adams was quick to give orders for her return. Adams was soon able to disprove the accusation against the consul but it still remained a question whether the commander of the vessel was guilty of a bold defiance of British neutrality. On March 31, 1864, the Irishmen, on trial at Cork, pleaded guilty to violation of the Foreign Enlistment Act, but the question of the commander's responsibility was permitted to drop on Adams' promise, April 11, of further investigation.[1]

The *Kearsarge* case occurred as Parliament was drawing to a close in 1863, and at a time when Southern efforts were at low ebb. It was not, therefore, until some months later when a gentleman with a shady past, named Patrick Phinney, succeeded in evading British laws and in carrying off to America a group of Irishmen who found themselves, unwillingly, forced into the Northern army, that the two cases were made the subject of a Southern and Tory attack on Russell. The accusations were sharply made that Russell was not sufficiently active in defending British law and British honour,[2] but these were rather individual accusations than concerted and do not indicate any idea of making an issue with the Government.[3] Whenever opportunity arose some inquiry up to July, 1864, would be made intended to bring out the alleged timidity of Russell's policy towards the North—a method then also being employed on many other matters with the evident intention

[1] *Parliamentary Papers*, 1864, *Commons*, LXII. "Correspondence respecting the Enlistment of British seamen at Queenstown." Also "Further Correspondence," etc.

[2] For facts and much correspondence on the Phinney case see *Parliamentary Papers*, 1864, *Commons*, LXII. "Correspondence respecting the Enlistment of British subjects in the United States Army." Also "Further Correspondence," etc.

[3] Hansard, 3rd Ser., CLXXIV, p. 628, and CLXXV, p. 353, and CLXXVI, p. 2161. In the last of these debates, July 28, 1864, papers were asked for on "Emigration to America," and readily granted by the Government.

of weakening the Ministry for the great Tory attack now being organized on the question of Danish policy.

In truth from the beginning of 1864, America had been pushed to one side in public and parliamentary interest by the threatening Danish question which had long been brewing but which did not come into sharp prominence until March. A year earlier it had become known that Frederick VII of Denmark, in anticipation of a change which, under the operations of the Salic law, would come at his death in the constitutional relations of Denmark to Schleswig-Holstein, was preparing by a new "constitutional act" to secure for his successor the retention of these districts. The law was enacted on November 13, 1863, and Frederick VII died two days later. His successor, Christian IX, promptly declared his intention to hold the duchies in spite of their supposed desire to separate from Denmark and to have their own Prince in the German Confederation. The Federal Diet of the Confederation had early protested the purpose of Denmark and Russell had at first upheld the German arguments but had given no pledges of support to anyone.[1] But Palmerston on various occasions had gone out of his way to express in Parliament his favour for the Danish cause and had used incautious language even to the point of virtually threatening British aid against German ambitions.[2] A distinct crisis was thus gradually created, coming to a head when Prussia, under Bismarck's guiding hand, dragging Austria in with her, thrust the Federal Diet of the Confederation to one side, and assumed command of the movement to wrest Schleswig-Holstein from Denmark.

This occurred in February, 1864, and by this time Palmerston's utterances, made against the wish of the

[1] Walpole, *History of Twenty-five Years*, Vol. I, Ch. VI.

[2] In the Cabinet, Palmerston (and to some extent Russell) was opposed by Granville and Clarendon (the latter of whom just at this time entered the Cabinet) and by the strong pro-German influence of the Queen. (Fitzmaurice, *Granville*, I, Ch. XVI.)

majority of his Cabinet colleagues (though this was not known), had so far aroused the British public as to have created a feeling, widely voiced, that Great Britain could not sit idly by while Prussia and Austria worked their will on Denmark. There was excellent ground for a party attack to unseat the Ministry on the score of a humiliating "Danish policy," at one time threatening vigorous British action, then resorting to weak and unsuccessful diplomatic manœuvres. For three months the Government laboured to bring about through a European council some solution that should both save something for Denmark and save its own prestige. Repeatedly Palmerston, in the many parliamentary debates on Denmark, broke loose from his Cabinet colleagues and indulged in threats which could not fail to give an excellent handle to opponents when once it became clear that the Ministry had no intention of coming in arms to the defence of the Danish King.

From February to June, 1864, this issue was to the fore. In its earlier stages it did not appear to Southern sympathizers to have any essential bearing on the American question, though they were soon to believe that in it lay a great hope. Having set the Southern Independence Association on its feet in London and hoping much from its planned activities, Lindsay, in March, was momentarily excited over rumours of some new move by Napoleon. Being undeceived[1] he gave a ready ear to other rumours, received privately through Delane of the *Times*, that an important Southern victory would soon be forthcoming.[2] Donoughmore, the herald of this glad news also wrote:

> "Our political prospects here are still very uncertain. The Conference on the Danish question will either make or

[1] Mason Papers. Slidell to Mason, March 13, 1864.

[2] This came through a letter from Donoughmore to Mason, April 4, 1864, stating that it was private information received by Delane from Mackay, the *Times* New York correspondent. The expected Southern victory was to come "in about fourteen days." (Mason Papers.)

> mar the Government. If they can patch up a peace they will remain in office. If they fail, out they go." [1]

Here was early expressed the real hope of one faction of extreme Southern friends in the Danish question. But Lindsay had not yet made clear where he stood on a possible use of a European situation to affect the cause of the South. Now, as always, he was the principal confidant and friend of Mason in England, but he was on ordinary political questions not in sympathy with Tory principles or measures. He was soon disgusted with the apathy of the London Independence Association and threatened to resign membership if this organization, started with much trumpeting of intended activity, did not come out boldly in a public demand for the recognition of the South.[2] He had already let it be known that another motion would be made in Parliament for mediation and recognition and was indignant that the Association did not at once declare its adherence. Evidently there were internal difficulties. Lindsay wrote Mason that he retained membership only to prevent a break up of the Association and had at last succeeded in securing a meeting of the Executive Committee when his proposed parliamentary resolution would be considered. The Manchester Association was much more alert and ready to support him. " The question is quite ripe *for fresh agitation* and from experience I find that that agitation *must* be started by a debate in Parliament. No notice is taken of lectures or speeches in the provinces." [3]

Before any move was made in Parliament letters to the newspapers began anew to urge that the Ministry should be pressed to offer mediation in America. They met with little favourable response. The *Times*, at the very end of Lindsay's effort, explained its indifference,

[1] *Ibid.*
[2] Mason Papers. Lindsay to Beresford Hope, April 8, 1864.
[3] *Ibid.* Lindsay to Mason, May 10, 1864.

and recited the situation of October-November, 1862, stating that the question had then been decided once for all. It declared that Great Britain had "no moral right to interfere" and added that to attempt to do so would result in filling "the North with the same spirit of patriotism and defiance as animated the invaded Confederates."[1] Thus support to Lindsay was lacking in a hoped-for quarter, but his conferences with Association members had brought a plan of modified action the essential feature of which was that the parliamentary motion must not be made a *party* one and that the only hope of the South lay in the existing Government. This was decidedly Lindsay's own view though it was clearly understood that the opportuneness of the motion lay in ministerial desire for and need of support in its Danish policy. Lindsay expected to find Palmerston more complaisant than formerly as regards American policy and was not disappointed. He wrote to Mason on May 27:

> "I received in due course your note of the 23rd. In a matter of so much importance I shall make no move in the House in regard to American affairs without grave consideration. I am therefore privately consulting the friends of the South. On this subject we had a meeting of our lifeless association on Monday last and on the same subject we are to have another meeting next Monday; but differences of opinion exist there as well as elsewhere, as to the advisability of moving at present. Some say 'move'—others, 'postpone'—but the news by the *Scotia* to-morrow will regulate to a considerable extent our course of action. One thing is now clear to me that the motion must *not* be a party one, and that the main point will be to get the Government to go with *whoever* brings forward the motion, for as you are aware I would rather see the motion in other hands than mine, as my views on the American question are so well known. As no competent member however seems disposed to move or rather to incur the responsibility,

[1] July 18, 1864.

I sent to inquire if it would be agreeable to Lord Palmerston to see me on American affairs and on the subject of a motion to be brought forward in the House. He sent word that he would be very glad to see me, and I had, therefore, a long meeting with him alone last night, the result of which was that if I brought forward a motion somewhat as follows, on the third of June, he would likely be prepared *to accept it*, though he asked if I would see him again after the *Scotia* arrived. The motion we talked about was to this *effect*—'That the House of Commons deeply regretting the great loss of life and the sufferings of the people of the United States and the Confederate States of North America by the continuance of the war which has been so long waged between them, trust that Her Majesty's Government will avail itself of the earliest opportunity of mediating in conjunction with the other powers of Europe to bring about a cessation of hostilities.'"

Lindsay had suggested to Palmerston that it was desirable for Mason to return to England and have a conference with the Premier. To this Palmerston gave a ready consent but, of course, no invitation. Lindsay strongly urged Mason to come over :

"*I think much good will follow your meeting Lord Palmerston. It will lead to other meetings;* and besides in other matters I think if you came here, you might *at present* prove of much service to the South." [1]

Meanwhile the difference within the Southern Independence Association permitted the coming forward of a minor London organization called *The Society for Promoting the Cessation of Hostilities in America.* A letter was addressed by it to Members of Parliament urging that the time had come for action :

"215 *Regent Street,*
London, W.
May 28th, 1864.

"SIR,

"The Society which has the honour to present to you

[1] Mason Papers.

the accompanying pamphlet, begs to state that there now exists in Great Britain and Ireland a strong desire to see steps taken by the Government of this country in concert with other Powers, to bring about peace on a durable basis between the belligerents in North America.

"I am directed by the Committee to express a hope that you will, before the Session closes, support a motion in Parliament to this effect; and should you desire to see evidence of the feeling of a large portion of the country in this matter, I shall be most happy to lay it before you." [1]

Whether Lindsay, vexed with the delays of the Association, had stirred the Society to action, is not clear, but the date of this letter, following on the day after the interview with Palmerston, is suggestive. The pressure put on Mason to come to London was not at first successful. Mason had become fixed in the opinion, arrived at in the previous fall, that there was no favour to be expected from Palmerston or Russell and that the only hope rested in their overthrow. Against this idea Lindsay had now taken definite ground. Moreover, Mason had been instructed to shake the dust of England from off his shoes with no official authority to return. Carefully explaining this last point to Lindsay he declined to hold an interview with Palmerston, except on the latter's invitation, or at least suggestion:

"Had the suggestion you make of an interview and conversation with Lord Palmerston originated with his Lordship I might not have felt myself prohibited by my instructions from at once acceding to it, but as it has the form only of his assent to a proposition from you I must with all respect decline it.

"Although no longer accredited by my Government as Special Commissioner to Great Britain, I am yet in Europe with full powers, and therefore, had Lord Palmerston expressed a desire to see me as his own act (of course unofficially, and even without any reason assigned for the

> interview) I should have had great pleasure in complying with his request." [1]

The explanation of disinclination to come was lengthy, but the last paragraph indicated an itching to be active in London again. Lindsay renewed his urgings and was not only hopeful but elated over the seeming success of his overtures to the Government. He had again seen Palmerston and had now pushed his proposal beyond the timid suggestion of overtures when the opportune moment should arrive to a definite suggestion of recognition of the Confederacy:

> "I reasoned on the *moral* effect of recognition, considering that the restoration of the Union, which was utterly hopeless, was the object which the North had in view, etc., etc. This reasoning appeared to produce a considerable effect, for he appears now to be very open to conviction. He again said that in his opinion the subjugation of the South could not be effected by the North, and he added that he thought the people of the North were becoming more and more alive to the fact every day."

Lindsay's next step was to be the securing of an interview with Russell and if he was found to be equally acquiescent all would be plain sailing:

> "Now, if by strong reasoning in a quiet way, and by stern facts we can get Lord R. to my views, I think I may say that all difficulty so far as our Cabinet is concerned, *is at an end*. I hope to be able to see Lord Russell alone to-morrow. He used to pay some little attention to any opinions I ventured to express to him, and I am *not* without hope. I may add that I was as frank with Lord Palmerston as he has been pleased to be with me, and I told him at parting to-day, that my present intention was not to proceed with the Motion at least for 10 days or a fortnight, unless he was prepared to support me. He highly commended this course, and seemed much gratified with what I said. The fact is, *sub rosa*, it is clear to me that *no* motion will be carried unless

[1] Mason Papers. Mason to Lindsay, May 29, 1864.

it is supported by the Government for it is clear that Lord Derby is resolved to leave the responsibility with the Executive, and therefore, *in the present state of matters*, it would seriously injure the cause of the South to bring forward any motion which would not be carried."

Lindsay then urges Mason to come at once to London.

"Now apart altogether from you seeing Lord Palmerston, I must earnestly entreat you to come here. Unless you are much wanted in Paris, your visit here, as a private gentleman, can do no harm, and *may, at the present moment, be of great service to your country*." [1]

Palmerston's willingness to listen to suggestions of what would have amounted to a complete face-about of British policy on America, his "gratification" that Lindsay intended to postpone the parliamentary motion, his friendly courtesy to a man whom he had but recently rebuked for a meddlesome "amateur diplomacy," can be interpreted in no other light than an evidence of a desire to prevent Southern friends from joining in the attack, daily becoming more dangerous, on the Government's Danish policy. How much of this Lindsay understood is not clear; on the face of his letters to Mason he would seem to have been hoodwinked, but the more reasonable supposition is, perhaps, that much was hoped from the governmental necessity of not alienating supporters. The Danish situation was to be used, but without an open threat. In addition the tone of the public press, for some time gloomy over Southern prospects, was now restored to the point of confidence and in this the *Times* was again leading.[2] The Society for Promoting the Cessation of Hostilities in America quickly issued another circular letter inviting Members of Parliament to join in a deputation to call on Palmerston to urge action

[1] *Ibid.* Lindsay to Mason, May 30, 1864.

[2] Editorials of May 28 and 30, 1864, painted a dark picture for Northern

on the lines of Lindsay's first overture. Such a deputation would represent " more than 5,000 members and the feeling of probably more than twenty millions of people." It should not be a deputation " of parties " but representative of all groups in Parliament :

> " The Society has reason to believe that the Premier is disposed to look favourably upon the attempt here contemplated and that the weight of an influential deputation would strengthen his hands." [1]

This proposal from the Society was now lagging behind Lindsay's later objective—namely, direct recognition. That this was felt to be unfortunate is shown by a letter from Tremlett, Honorary Secretary of the Society, to Mason. He wrote that the *Southern Independence Association*, finally stirred by Lindsay's insistence, had agreed to join the Society in a representation to Palmerston but had favoured some specific statement on recognition. Palmerston had sent word that he favoured the Society's resolution but not that of the Association, and as a result the joint letter of the two organizations would be on the mild lines of Lindsay's original motion :

> " Although this quite expresses the object of our Society, still I do not think the ' Independence Association ' ought to have ' ratted ' from its principles. It ought not to have consented to ignore the question which it was instituted to bring before Parliament—that of the Independence of the Confederacy—and more than that, the ambiguous ending of the resolution to be submitted is not such as I think ought to be allowed. You know the resolution and therefore I need only quote the obnoxious words ' That Her Majesty's Government will avail itself of the earliest opportunity of mediating, etc.'
>
> " This is just leaving the Government where they have been all along. They have always professed to take ' the

[1] Mason Papers. Sample letter, June 1, 1864. Signed by F. W. Tremlett, Hon. Sec.

> earliest opportunity' but of which they are to be the judges!"[1]

Evidently there was confusion in the ranks and disagreement among the leaders of Southern friends. Adams, always cool in judgment of where lay the wind, wrote to Seward on this same day that Lindsay was delaying his motion until the receipt of favourable news upon which to spring it. Even such news, Adams believed, would not alter British policy unless it should depict the "complete defeat and dispersion" of Northern forces.[2] The day following the *Times* reported Grant to be meeting fearful reverses in Virginia and professed to regard Sherman's easy advance toward Atlanta as but a trap set for the Northern army in the West.[3] But in reality the gage of battle for Southern advantage in England was fixed upon a European, not an American, field. Mason understood this perfectly. He had yielded to Lindsay's insistence and had come to London. There he listened to Lindsay's account of the interview (now held) with Russell, and June 8 reported it to Slidell:

> "Of his intercourse with Lord Russell he reports in substance that his Lordship was unusually gracious and seemed well disposed to go into conversation. Lord Russell agreed that the war on the part of the United States was hopeless and that neither could union be restored nor the South brought under the yoke. . . . In regard to Lindsay's motion Lord Russell said, that he could not *accept* it, but if brought up for discussion his side would *speak* favourably of it. That is to say they would commend it if they could not vote for it."

This referred to Lindsay's original motion of using the "earliest opportunity of mediation," and the pleasant

[1] *Ibid.* Tremlett to Mason, June 2, 1864.

[2] State Department, Eng., Vol. 86, No. 705. Adams to Seward, June 2,

reception given by Russell scarcely justified any great hope of decided benefit for the South. It must now have been fairly apparent to Lindsay, as it certainly was to Mason, that all this complaisance by Palmerston and Russell was but political manipulation to retain or to secure support in the coming contest with the Tories. The two old statesmen, wise in parliamentary management, were angling for every doubtful vote. Discussing with Lindsay the prospects for governmental action Mason now ventured to suggest that perhaps the best chances of success lay with the Tories, and found him unexpectedly in agreement:

> "I told Lindsay (but for his ear only) that Mr. Hunter, editor of the *Herald*, had written to Hotze about his connection with Disraeli, and he said at once, that if the latter took it up in earnest, it could not be in better hands and would carry at the expense of the Ministry and that he would most cheerfully and eagerly yield him the *pas*. Disraeli's accession, as you remember, was contingent upon our success in Virginia—and agreeing entirely with Lindsay that the movement could not be in better hands and as there were but 10 days before his motion could again come, I thought the better policy would be for the present that he should be silent and to await events." [1]

Slidell was less sceptical than was Mason but agreed that it might best advantage the South to be rid of Russell:

> "If Russell can be trusted, which to me is very doubtful, Lindsay s motion must succeed. Query, how would its being brought forward by Disraeli affect Russell's action—if he can be beaten on a fair issue it would be better for us perhaps than if it appeared to be carried with his qualified assent." [2]

But Mason understood that Southern expectation of a

[1] Mason Papers. Mason to Slidell, June 8, 1864. Mason wrote to Benjamin that Disraeli had said "to one of his friends and followers" that he would be prepared to bring forward some such motion as that prepared by Lindsay. (Mason's *Mason*, p. 500. To Benjamin, June 9, 1864.) Evidently the friend was Hunter.

[2] Mason Papers. Slidell to Mason, June 9, 1864.

change in British policy toward America must rest (and even then but doubtfully) on a change of Government. By June 29 his personal belief was that the Tory attack on the Danish question would be defeated and that this would "of course postpone Lindsay's projected motion."[1] On June 25, the Danish Conference had ended and the Prussian war with Denmark was renewed. There was a general feeling of shame over Palmerston's bluster followed by a meek British inaction. The debate came on a vote of censure, July 8, in the course of which Derby characterized governmental policy as one of "meddle and muddle." The censure was carried in the Lords by nine votes, but was defeated in the Commons by a ministerial majority of eighteen. It was the sharpest political crisis of Palmerston's Ministry during the Civil War. Every supporting vote was needed.[2]

Not only had Lindsay's motion been postponed but the interview with Palmerston for which Mason had come to London had also been deferred in view of the parliamentary crisis. When finally held on July 14, it resolved itself into a proud and emphatic assertion by Mason that the South could not be conquered, that the North was nearly ready to acknowledge it and that the certainty of Lincoln's defeat in the coming Presidential election was proof of this. Palmerston appears to have said little.

> "At the conclusion I said to him in reply to his remark, that he was gratified in making my acquaintance, that I felt obliged by his invitation to the interview, but that the obligation would be increased if I could take with me any expectation that the Government of Her Majesty was prepared to unite with France, in some act expressive of their sense that the war should come to an end. He said, that perhaps, as I was of opinion that the crisis was at hand,

[1] *Ibid.* Mason to Slidell, June 29, 1864.

> it might be better to wait until it had arrived. I told him that my opinion was that the crisis had passed, at least so far as that the war of invasion would end with the campaign." [1]

Reporting the interview to Slidell in much the same language, Mason wrote:

> "My own impressions derived from the whole interview are, that [while] P. is as well satisfied as I am, that the separation of the States is final and the independence of the South an accomplished fact, the Ministry fears to move under the menaces of the North." [2]

Slidell's comment was bitter:

> "I am very much obliged for your account of your interview with Lord Palmerston. It resulted very much as I had anticipated excepting that his Lordship appears to have said even less than I had supposed he would. However, the time has now arrived when it is comparatively of very little importance what Queen or Emperor may say or think about us. A plague, I say, on both your Houses." [3]

Slidell's opinion from this time on was, indeed, that the South had nothing to expect from Europe until the North itself should acknowledge the independence of the Confederacy. July 21, *The Index* expressed much the same view and was equally bitter. It quoted an item in the *Morning Herald* of July 16, to the effect that Mason had secured an interview with Palmerston and that "the meeting was satisfactory to all parties":

> "The withdrawal of Mr. Lindsay's motion was, it is said, the result of that interview, the Premier having given a sort of implied promise to support it at a more opportune moment; that is to say, when Grant and Sherman have

[1] Mason's *Mason*, p. 507. Mason to Benjamin, July 14, 1864.
[2] Mason Papers, July 16, 1864.
[3] *Ibid.* To Mason, July 17, 1864.

> been defeated, and the Confederacy stand in no need of recognition."

In the same issue *The Index* described a deputation of clergymen, noblemen, Members of Parliament " and other distinguished and influential gentlemen " who had waited upon Palmerston to urge mediation toward a cessation of hostilities in America. Thus at last the joint project of the Southern Independence Association and of the Society for Promoting the Cessation of Hostilities in America had been put in execution *after* the political storm had passed and not before—when the deputation might have had some influence. But the fact was that no deputation, unless a purely party one, could have been collected before the conclusion of the Danish crisis. When finally assembled it " had no party complexion," and the smiling readiness with which it received Palmerston's jocular reply indicating that Britain's safest policy was to keep strictly to neutrality is evidence that even the deputation itself though harassed by Lindsay and others into making this demonstration, was quite content to let well enough alone. Not so *The Index* which sneered at the childishness of Palmerston :

> " . . . He proved incontestably to his visitors that, though he has been charged with forgetting the vigour of his prime, he can in old age remember the lessons of his childhood, by telling them that
>
> They who in quarrels interpose
> Will often wipe a bloody nose (laughter)—
>
> a quotation which, in the mouth of the Prime Minister of the British Empire, and on such an occasion, must be admitted as not altogether unworthy of Abraham Lincoln himself." [1]

Spence took consolation in the fact that Mason had at last come into personal contact with Palmerston, " even

[1] *The Index*, July 21, 1864, p. 457.

now at his great age a charming contrast to that piece of small human pipe-clay, Lord Russell."[1] But the whole incident of Lindsay's excited efforts, Mason's journey to London and interview with Palmerston, and the deputation, left a bad taste in the mouth of the more determined friends of the South—of those who were Confederates rather than Englishmen. They felt that they had been deceived and toyed with by the Government. Mason's return to London was formally approved at Richmond but Benjamin wrote that the argument for recognition advanced to Palmerston had laid too much stress on the break-down of the North. All that was wanted was recognition which was due the South from the mere facts of the existing situation, and recognition, if accorded, would have at once ended the war without intervention in any form.[2] Similarly *The Index* stated that mediation was an English notion, not a Southern one. The South merely desired justice, that is, recognition.[3] This was a bold front yet one not unwarranted by the military situation in midsummer of 1864, as reported in the press. Sherman's western campaign toward Atlanta had but just started and little was known of the strength of his army or of the powers of Southern resistance. This campaign was therefore regarded as of minor importance. It was on Grant's advance toward Richmond that British attention was fixed; Lee's stiff resistance, the great losses of the North in battle after battle and finally the settling down by Grant to besiege the Southern lines at Petersburg, in late June, 1864, seemed to indicate that once again an offensive in Virginia to "end the war" was doomed to that failure which had marked the similar efforts of each of the three preceding years.

Southern efforts in England to alter British neutrality

[1] Mason Papers. Spence to Mason, July 18, 1864.
[2] Richardson, II, pp. 673-74. Benjamin to Mason, Sept. 29, 1864.

practically ended with Lindsay's proposed but undebated motion of June, 1864, but British confidence in Southern ability to defend herself indefinitely, a confidence somewhat shattered at the beginning of 1864—had renewed its strength by July. For the next six months this was to be the note harped upon in society, by organizations, and in the friendly press.

CHAPTER XVI

BRITISH CONFIDENCE IN THE SOUTH

AFTER three years of great Northern efforts to subdue the South and of Southern campaigns aimed, first, merely toward resistance, but later involving offensive battles, the Civil War, to European eyes, had reached a stalemate where neither side could conquer the other. To the European neutral the situation was much as in the Great War it appeared to the American neutral in December, 1916, at the end of two years of fighting. In both wars the neutral had expected and had prophesied a short conflict. In both, this had proved to be false prophecy and with each additional month of the Civil War there was witnessed an increase of the forces employed and a psychological change in the people whereby war seemed to have become a normal state of society. The American Civil War, as regards continuity, numbers of men steadily engaged, resources employed, and persistence of the combatants, was the "Great War," to date, of all modern conflicts. Not only British, but nearly all foreign observers were of the opinion by midsummer of 1864, after an apparent check to Grant in his campaign toward Richmond, that all America had become engaged in a struggle from which there was scant hope of emergence by a decisive military victory. There was little knowledge of the steady decline of the resources of the South even though Jefferson Davis in a message to the Confederate Congress in February, 1864, had spoken bitterly of Southern disorganization.[1] Yet this belief in stalemate

[1] Dodd, *Jefferson Davis*, p. 232.

in essence still postulated an ultimate Southern victory, for the function of the Confederacy was, after all, to *resist* until its independence was recognized. Ardent friends of the North in England both felt and expressed confidence in the outcome, but the general attitude of neutral England leaned rather to faith in the powers of indefinite Southern resistance, so loudly voiced by Southern champions.

There was now one element in the situation, however, that hampered these Southern champions. The North was at last fully identified with the cause of emancipation; the South with the perpetuation of slavery. By 1864, it was felt to be impossible to remain silent on this subject and even in the original constitution and address of the Southern Independence Association a clause was adopted expressing a hope for the gradual extinction of slavery.[1] This brought Mason some heartburnings and he wrote to Spence in protest, the latter's reply being that he also agreed that the South ought not to be offered gratuitous advice on what was purely "an internal question," but that the topic was full of difficulties and the clause would have to stand, at least in some modified form. At Southern public meetings, also, there arose a tendency to insert in resolutions similar expressions. "In Manchester," Spence wrote, "Mr. Lees, J.P., and the strongest man on the board, brought forward a motion for an address on this subject. I went up to Manchester purposely to quash it and I did so effectually."[2]

Northern friends were quick to strike at this weakness in Southern armour; they repeatedly used a phrase, "The Foul Blot," and by mere iteration gave such currency to it that even in Southern meetings it was repeated. *The Index*, as early as February, 1864, felt compelled to meet the phrase and in an editorial, headed "The Foul Blot,"

[1] See *ante*, p. 192.

argued the error of Southern friends. As long as they could use the word "blot" in characterization of Southern slavery, *The Index* felt that there could be no effective British push for Southern independence and it asserted that slavery, in the sense in which England understood it, did not exist in the Confederacy.

"... It is truly horrible to reduce human beings to the condition of cattle, to breed them, to sell them, and otherwise dispose of them, as cattle. But is it defending such practices to say that the South does none of these things, but that on the contrary, both in theory and in practice, she treats the negro as a fellow-creature, with a soul to be saved, with feelings to be respected, though in the social order in a subordinate place, and of an intellectual organization which requires guardianship with mutual duties and obligations? This system is called slavery, because it developed itself out of an older and very different one of that name, but for this the South is not to blame.

. . . . . .

"But of this the friends of the South may be assured, that so long as they make no determined effort to relieve the Southern character from this false drapery, they will never gain for it that respect, that confidence in the rectitude of Southern motives, that active sympathy, which can alone evoke effective assistance. . . . The best assurance you can give that the destinies of the negro race are safe in Southern hands is, not that the South will repent and reform, but that she has consistently and conscientiously been the friend and benefactor of that race.

. . . . . .

"It is, therefore, always with pain that we hear such expressions as 'the foul blot,' and similar ones, fall from the lips of earnest promoters of Confederate Independence. As a concession they are useless; as a confession they are untrue. . . . Thus the Southerner may retort as we have seen that an Englishman would retort for his country. He might say the South is proud, and of nothing more proud than this—not that she has slaves, but that she has treated them

> as no nation ever used it under similar circumstances, and that she has solved mercifully and humanely a most difficult problem which has elsewhere defied solution save in blood. Or he might use the unspoken reflection of an honest Southerner at hearing much said of 'the foul blot': 'It was indeed a dark and damnable blot that England left us with, and it required all the efforts of Southern Christianity to pale it as it now is.'" [1]

In 1862 and to the fall of 1863, *The Index* had declared that slavery was not an issue in the war; now its defence of the "domestic institution" of the South, repeatedly made in varying forms, was evidence of the great effect in England of Lincoln's emancipation edicts. *The Index* could not keep away from the subject. In March, quotations were given from the *Reader*, with adverse comments, upon a report of a controversy aroused in scientific circles by a paper read before the Anthropological Society of London. James Hunt was the author and the paper, entitled "The Negro's Place in Nature," aroused the contempt of Huxley who criticized it at the meeting as unscientific and placed upon it the "stigma of public condemnation." The result was a fine controversy among the scientists which could only serve to emphasize the belief that slavery was indeed an issue in the American War and that the South was on the defensive. Winding up a newspaper duel with Hunt who emerged rather badly mauled, Huxley asserted "the North is justified in any expenditure of blood or treasure which shall eradicate a system hopelessly inconsistent with the moral elevation, the political freedom, or the economical progress of the American people. . . ." [2]

Embarrassment caused by the "Foul Blot" issue, the impossibility to many sincere Southern friends of accepting the view-point of *The Index*, acted as a check upon the holding of public meetings and prevented the carrying out of that

[1] *The Index*, Feb. 18, 1864, p. 105.

intensive public campaign launched by Spence and intended to be fostered by the Southern Independence Association. By the end of June, 1864, there was almost a complete cessation of Southern meetings, not thereafter renewed, except spasmodically for a brief period in the fall just before the Presidential election in America.[1] Northern meetings were continuous throughout the whole period of the war but were less frequent in 1864 than in 1863. They were almost entirely of two types—those held by anti-slavery societies and religious bodies and those organized for, or by, working men. An analysis of those recorded in the files of *The Liberator*, and in the reports sent by Adams to Seward permits the following classification :[2]

Year.	Number.	Character.	
		Anti-Slavery and Religious	Working-men.
1860	3	3	–
1861	7	7	–
1862	16	11	5
1863	82	26	56
1864	21	10	11
1865	5	4	1

Many persons took part in these meetings as presiding

[1] The first Southern meeting in England I have found record of was one reported in the *Spectator*, Nov. 16, 1861, to honour Yancey on his arrival. It was held by the *Fishmongers of London*. Yancey was warmly received and appealed to his hosts on the ground that the South was the best buyer of English goods.

[2] The 134 meetings here listed represent by no means all held, for Goldwin Smith estimated at least 500 after the beginning of 1862., (*The Civil War in America*, London, 1866.) The list may be regarded as an analysis of the more important, attracting the attention of *The Liberator* and of Adams.

officers or as speakers and movers of resolutions; among them those appearing with frequency were George Thompson, Rev. Dr. Cheever, Rev. Newman Hall, John Bright, Professor Newman, Mr. Bagley, M.P., Rev. Francis Bishop, P. A. Taylor, M.P., William Evans, Thomas Bayley Potter, F. W. Chesson and Mason Jones. While held in all parts of England and Scotland the great majority of meetings were held in London and in the manufacturing districts with Manchester as a centre. From the first the old anti-slavery orator of the 'thirties, George Thompson, had been the most active speaker and was credited by all with having given new life to the moribund emancipation sentiment of Great Britain.[1] Thompson asserted that by the end of 1863 there was a "vigilant, active and energetic" anti-slavery society in almost every great town or city.[2] Among the working-men, John Bright was without question the most popular advocate of the Northern cause, but there were many others, not named in the preceding list, constantly active and effective.[3] Forster, in the judgment of many, was the most influential friend of the North in Parliament, but Bright, also an influence in Parliament, rendered his chief service in moulding the opinion of Lancashire and

[1] At a banquet given to Thompson in 1863 he was declared by Bright to have been the "real liberator of the slaves in the English colonies," and by P. A. Taylor as, by his courage "when social obloquy and personal danger had to be incurred for the truth's sake," having rendered great services "to the cause of Abolition in America."

[2] *The Liberator*, Jan. 15, 1864. Letter to James Buffum, of Lynn, Dec. 10, 1863.

[3] Goldwin Smith's pamphlet: "The Civil War in America: An Address read at the last meeting of the Manchester Union and Emancipation Society" (held on January 26, 1866), pays especial tribute to Thomas Bayley Potter, M.P., stating "you boldly allied yourself with the working-men in forming this association." Smith gives a five-page list of other leading members, among whom, in addition to some Northern friends already named, are to be noted Thomas Hughes, Duncan McLaren, John Stuart Mill. There are eleven noted "Professors," among them Cairnes, Thorold Rogers, and Fawcett. The publicity committee of this society during three years had issued and circulated "upwards of four hundred thousand books, pamphlets, and tracts." Here, as previously, the activities of Americans in England are not included. Thus George Francis Train, correspondent of the *New York Herald*, made twenty-three speeches between January, 1861, and March, 1862. ("Union Speeches in England.")

became to American eyes their great English champion, a view attested by the extraordinary act of President Lincoln in pardoning, on the appeal of Bright, and in his honour, a young Englishman named Alfred Rubery, who had become involved in a plot to send out from the port of San Francisco, a Confederate " privateer " to prey on Northern commerce.[1]

This record of the activities of Northern friends and organizations, the relative subsidence of their efforts in the latter part of 1864, thus indicating their confidence in Northern victory, the practical cessation of public Southern meetings, are nevertheless no proof that the bulk of English opinion had greatly wavered in its faith in Southern powers of resistance. The Government, it is true, was better informed and was exceedingly anxious to tread gently in relations with the North, the more so as there was now being voiced by the public in America a sentiment of extreme friendship for Russia as the " true friend " in opposition to the " unfriendly neutrality " of Great Britain and France.[2] It was a period of many minor irritations, arising out of the blockade, inflicted by America on British interests, but to these Russell paid little attention except to enter formal protests. He wrote to Lyons:

> " I do not want to pick a quarrel out of our many just causes of complaint. But it will be as well that Lincoln and Seward should see that we are long patient, and do

[1] For text of Lincoln's pardon see Trevelyan, *Bright*, p. 296. Lincoln gave the pardon " especially as a public mark of the esteem held by the United States of America for the high character and steady friendship of the said John Bright. . . ." The names of leading friends of the South have been given in Chapter XV.

[2] This was a commonplace of American writing at the time and long after. A Rev. C. B. Boynton published a book devoted to the thesis that England and France had united in a " policy " of repressing the development of America and Russia (*English and French Neutrality and the Anglo-French Alliance in their relations to the United States and Russia*, Cincinnati, C. F. Vest & Co., 1864). Boynton wrote: "You have not come to the bottom of the conduct of Great Britain, until you have touched that delicate and real foundation cause—we are too large and strong a

> nothing to distract their attention from the arduous task they have so wantonly undertaken." [1]

Lyons was equally desirous of avoiding frictions. In August he thought that the current of political opinion was running against the re-election of Lincoln, noting that the Northern papers were full of expressions favouring an armistice, but pointed out that neither the "peace party" nor the advocates of an armistice ever talked of any solution of the war save on the basis of re-union. Hence Lyons strongly advised that "the quieter England and France were just at this moment the better."[2] Even the suggested armistice was not thought of, he stated, as extending to a relaxation of the blockade. Of military probabilities, Lyons professed himself to be no judge, but throughout all his letters there now ran, as for some time previously, a note of warning as to the great power and high determination of the North.

But if the British Government was now quietly operating upon the theory of an ultimate Northern victory, or at least with the view that the only hope for the South lay in a Northern weariness of war, the leading British newspapers were still indulging in expressions of confidence in the South while at the same time putting much faith in the expected defeat of Lincoln at the polls. As always at this period, save for the few newspapers avowedly friendly to the North and one important daily professing strict neutrality—the *Telegraph*—the bulk of the metropolitan press took its cue, as well as much of its war news, from the columns of the *Times*. This journal, while early assuming a position of belief in Southern success, had yet given both sides in the war fair accuracy in its reports—those of the New York correspondent, Mackay, always excepted. But from June, 1864, a change came over the *Times*; it was either itself

[1] Lyons Papers. July 16, 1864. Copy.
[2] Russell Papers. Lyons to Russell, Aug. 23, 1864.

deceived or was wilfully deceiving its readers, for steadily every event for the rest of the year was coloured to create an impression of the unlimited powers of Southern resistance. Read to-day in the light of modern knowledge of the military situation throughout the war, the *Times* gave accurate reports for the earlier years but became almost hysterical; not to say absurd, for the last year of the conflict. Early in June, 1864, Grant was depicted as meeting reverses in Virginia and as definitely checked, while Sherman in the West was being drawn into a trap in his march toward Atlanta.[1] The same ideas were repeated throughout July. Meanwhile there had begun to be printed a series of letters from a Southern correspondent at Richmond who wrote in contempt of Grant's army.

> "I am at a loss to convey to you the contemptuous tone in which the tried and war-worn soldiers of General Lee talk of the huddled rabble of black, white, and copper-coloured victims (there are Indians serving under the Stars and Stripes) who are at times goaded up to the Southern lines. . . . The truth is that for the first time in modern warfare we are contemplating an army which is at once republican and undisciplined."[2]

At the moment when such effusions could find a place in London's leading paper the facts of the situation were that the South was unable to prevent almost daily desertions and was wholly unable to spare soldiers to recover and punish the deserters. But on this the *Times* was either ignorant or wilfully silent. It was indeed a general British sentiment during the summer of 1864, that the North was losing its power and determination in the war,[3] even though it was unquestioned that the earlier "enthusiasm for the slave-

[1] June 3, 1864.

[2] The *Times*, August 4, 1864. Letters dated June 27 and July 5, 1864.

[3] *A Cycle of Adams' Letters*, II, p. 126. Henry Adams to his brother, May 13, 1864. "The current is dead against us, and the atmosphere so uncongenial that the idea of the possibility of our success is not admitted."

holders" had passed away.[1] One element in the influence of the *Times* was its *seeming* impartiality accompanied by a pretentious assertion of superior information and wisdom that at times irritated its contemporaries, but was recognized as making this journal the most powerful agent in England. Angry at a *Times* editorial in February, 1863, in which Mason had been berated for a speech made at the Lord Mayor's banquet, *The Index* declared:

> "Our contemporary is all things to all men. It not only shouts with the largest crowd, according to the Pickwickian philosophy, but with a skill and daring that command admiration, it shouts simultaneously with opposite and contending crowds. It is everybody's *Times*." [2]

Yet *The Index* knew, and frequently so stated, that the *Times* was at bottom pro-Southern. John Bright's medium, the *Morning Star*, said: "There was something bordering on the sublime in the tremendous audacity of the war news supplied by the *Times*. Of course, its prophecies were in a similar style. None of your doubtful oracles there; none of your double-meaning vaticinations, like that which took poor Pyrrhus in."[3] In short, the *Times* became for the last year of the war the Bible of their faith to Southern sympathizers, and was frequent in its preachments.[4]

There was one journal in London which claimed to have equal if not greater knowledge and authority in military matters. This was the weekly *Army and Navy Gazette*, and its editor, W. H. Russell, in 1861 war correspondent in America of the *Times*, but recalled shortly after his famous letter on the battle of Bull Run, consistently maintained after the war had ended that he had always asserted

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 136. Henry Adams to his brother, June 3, 1864.

[2] *The Index*, Feb. 19, 1863, p. 265.

[3] This was written immediately after the battles of Vicksburg and Gettysburg, but the tone complained of was much more marked in 1864.

[4] The *Times* average of editorials on the Civil War ran two in every

the ultimate victory of the North and was, indeed, so pro-Northern in sentiment that this was the real cause of his recall.[1] He even claimed to have believed in Northern victory to the extent of re-union. These protestations after the event are not borne out by the columns of the *Gazette*, for that journal was not far behind the *Times* in its delineation of incidents unfavourable to the North and in its all-wise prophecies of Northern disaster. The *Gazette* had no wide circulation except among those in the service; but its *dicta*, owing to the established reputation of Russell and to the specialist nature of the paper, were naturally quite readily accepted and repeated in the ordinary press. Based on a correct appreciation of man power and resources the *Gazette* did from time to time proclaim its faith in Northern victory,[2] but always in such terms as to render possible a hedge on expressed opinion and always with the assertion that victory would not result in reunion. Russell's most definite prophecy was made on July 30, 1864:

> "The Southern Confederacy, like Denmark, is left to fight by itself, without even a conference or an armistice to

[1] Russell wrote to John Bigelow, March 8, 1865: "You know, perhaps, that, as I from the first maintained the North must win, I was tabooed from dealing with American questions in the *Times* even after my return to England, but *en revanche* I have had my say in the *Army and Navy Gazette*, which I have bought, every week, and if one could be weak and wicked enough to seek for a morbid gratification amid such ruins and blood, I might be proud of the persistence with which I maintained my opinions against adverse and unanimous sentiment" (Bigelow, *Retrospections*, Vol. II, p. 361). Also on June 5, 1865, Russell wrote in his diary: ". . . had the *Times* followed my advice, how different our position would be—not only that of the leading journal, but of England. If ever I did State service, it was in my letters from America." (Atkins, *Life of W. H. Russell*, Vol. II, p. 115.) See also Bigelow, *Retrospections*, I, pp. 344-45. Russell was editor of the *Gazette* on its first appearance as a weekly, January 6, 1860, but left it to go to America. On his return he settled down to his editorial task in November, 1862, and thereafter, throughout the war, the *Gazette* may be regarded as reflecting his views. His entire letters from America to the *Times* constitute a most valuable picture of the months preceding the outbreak of war, but the contempt poured on the Northern army for its defeat at Bull Run made Russell much disliked in the North. This dislike was bitterly displayed in a pamphlet by Andrew D. White ("A Letter to William Howard Russell, LL.D., on passages in his 'Diary North and South'"), published in London in 1863.

[2] June 25, 1864.

> aid it; and it will be strange indeed if the heroism, endurance, and resources of its soldiers and citizens be not eventually dominated by the perseverance and superior means of the Northern States. Let us repeat our profession of faith in the matter. We hold that the Union perished long ago, and that its component parts can never again be welded into a Confederacy of self-governing States, with a common executive, army, fleet, and central government. Not only that. The principle of Union itself among the non-seceding States is so shocked and shattered by the war which has arisen, that the fissures in it are likely to widen and spread, and to form eventually great gulfs separating the Northern Union itself into smaller bodies. But ere the North be convinced of the futility of its efforts to substitute the action of force for that of free will, we think it will reduce the Southern States to the direst misery. . . ." [1]

Such occasional "professions of faith," accompanied by sneers at the "Confederate partisanship" of the *Times*[2] served to differentiate the *Gazette* from other journals, but when it came to description and estimate of specific campaigns there was little to choose between them and consequently little variance in the effect upon the public. Thus a fortnight before his "profession of faith," Russell could comment editorially on Sherman's campaign toward Atlanta:

> "The next great Federal army on which the hopes of the North have so long been fixed promises to become a source of fearful anxiety. Sherman, if not retreating, is certainly not advancing; and, if the Confederates can interfere seriously with his communications, he must fall back as soon as he has eaten up all the supplies of the district. . . . All the enormous advantages possessed by the Federals have been nullified by want of skill, by the interference of Washington civilians, and by the absence of an animating homogeneous spirit on the part of their soldiery." [3]

[1] The *Army and Navy Gazette*, July 30, 1864.
[2] *Ibid.*, June 25, 1864.
[3] *Ibid.*, July 16, 1864. Similar articles and editorials might be quoted from many of the more important papers, but the *Times* and the *Gazette*

Hand in hand with war news adverse to the North went comments on the Presidential election campaign in America, with prophecies of Lincoln's defeat. This was indeed but a reflection of the American press but the citations made in will suffice as furnishing the keynote. I have not examined in detail the files of the metropolitan press beyond determining their general attitude on the Civil War and for occasional special references. Such examination has been sufficient, however, to warrant the conclusion that the *weight* of the *Times* in influencing opinion was very great. Collating statistics given in :

(1) Grant's *The Newspaper Press;* (2) in a speech in Parliament by Edward Banes in 1864 (Hansard, 3rd Ser., CLXXV, p. 295); and (3) in *Parliamentary Papers*, 1861, *Commons*, Vol. XXXIV, "Return of the Registered Newspapers in the United Kingdom . . . from 30 June, 1860, to 30 June, 1861," the following facts of circulation are derived :

(A) *Daily Papers*:

(1) *The Telegraph* (evening), 150,000 (neutral).

(2) *The Standard* (morning and evening), 130,000 (Southern). Under the same management was also *The Herald* (morning), but with small circulation (Southern).

(3) The *Times* (morning), 70,000 (Southern). Grant says: "The prestige of the *Times* was remarkable The same articles appearing in other papers would not produce the same effect as in the *Times*." Of Delane, the editor, Grant declared "His name is just as well-known . . . throughout the civilized world as that of any of our European kings. . . . The *Times* may, indeed, be called the Monarch of the Press." (Grant, II, p. 53.)

(4) *The Morning Advertiser* (circulation uncertain, probably 50,000, but very largely taken in the trades, in public-houses, and in the Clubs (neutral).

(5) *The Daily News* (morning), 6,000 (Northern).

(6) *The Morning Star*, 5,500 (but with evening edition 10,000) (Northern). Grant says that contrary to general belief, John Bright was never a shareholder but at times raised money to meet deficits. *The Star* was regarded as an *anti-British paper* and was very unpopular.

(7) *The Morning Post*, 4,500 (Southern). It was regarded as Palmerston's organ.

(8) *The Morning Chronicle*. Very small circulation in the 'sixties (neutral).

(B) *Weekly Papers*.—No approximate circulation figures are available, but these papers are placed by Grant in supposed order of subscribers.

(1) *Reynolds' Weekly*. Circulation upwards of 350,000. A penny paper, extreme Liberal in politics, and very popular in the manufacturing districts (Northern).

(2) *John Bull* (Southern). "The country squire's paper."

(3) *The Spectator* (Northern).

(4) *The Saturday Review* (Southern).

(5) *The Economist* (Neutral).

(6) *The Press and St. James' Chronicle*. Small circulation (Southern).

In addition to British newspapers listed above as Northern in sentiment *The Liberator* names for Great Britain as a whole *Westminster Review*, *Nonconformist*, *British Standard*, *Birmingham Post*, *Manchester Examiner*, *Newcastle Chronicle*, *Caledonian Mercury*, *Belfast Whig*, and some few others of lesser importance. (*Liberator*, June 20, 1862)

British papers emphasized especially Northern weariness of Lincoln's despotism and inefficiency. Thus, first printed in *The Index*, an extract from a New York paper, *The New Nation*, got frequent quotation:

> "We have been imposed upon long enough. The ruin which you have been unable to accomplish in four years, would certainly be fully consummated were you to remain in power four years longer. Your military governors and their provost-marshals override the laws, and the *echo of the armed heel rings forth as clearly now in America as in France or Austria. You have encroached upon our liberty without securing victory, and we must have both.*" [1]

It was clearly understood that Northern military efforts would have an important bearing on the election. The *Times* while expressing admiration for Sherman's boldness in the Atlanta campaign was confident of his defeat:

> ". . . it is difficult to see how General Sherman can escape a still more disastrous fate than that which threatened his predecessor. He has advanced nearly one hundred and fifty miles from his base of operations, over a mountainous country; and he has no option but to retreat by the same line as he advanced. This is the first instance of a Federal general having ventured far from water communications. That Sherman has hitherto done so with success is a proof of both courage and ability, but he will need both these qualities in a far greater degree if he is forced to retreat." [2]

And W. H. Russell, in the *Gazette*, included Grant in the approaching disaster:

> "The world has never seen anything in war so slow and fatuous as Grant's recent movements, except it be those of Sherman. Each is wriggling about like a snake in the presence of an ichneumon. They both work round and round, now on one flank and then on the other, and on each move meet the unwinking eye of the enemy, ready for his spring and bite.

[1] *The Index*, April 14, 1864, p. 231.

In sheer despair Grant and Sherman must do something at last. As to shelling! Will they learn from history? Then they will know that they cannot shell an army provided with as powerful artillery as their own out of a position. . . . The Northerners have, indeed, lost the day solely owing to the want of average ability in their leaders in the field." [1]

On the very day when Russell thus wrote in the *Gazette* the city of Atlanta had been taken by Sherman. When the news reached England the *Times* having declared this impossible, now asserted that it was unimportant, believed that Sherman could not remain in possession and, two days later, turned with vehemence to an analysis of the political struggle as of more vital influence. The Democrats, it was insisted, would place peace "paramount to union" and were sure to win.[2] Russell, in the *Gazette*, coolly ignoring its prophecy of three weeks earlier, now spoke as if he had always foreseen the fall of Atlanta:

> "General Sherman has fully justified his reputation as an able and daring soldier; and the final operations by which he won Atlanta are not the least remarkable of the series which carried him from Chattanooga . . . into the heart of Georgia." [3]

But neither of these political-military "expert" journals would acknowledge any benefit accruing to Lincoln from Sherman's success. Not so, however, Lyons, who kept his chief much better informed than he would have been if credulous of the British press. Lyons, who for some time had been increasingly in bad health, had sought escape from the summer heat of Washington in a visit to Montreal. He now wrote correctly interpreting a great change in Northern attitude and a renewed determination to persevere in the war until reunion was secured. Lincoln, he thought, was likely to be re-elected:

[1] Sept. 3, 1864.

"The reaction produced by the fall of Atlanta may be taken as an indication of what the real feelings of the people in the Northern States are. The vast majority of them ardently desire to reconquer the lost territory. It is only at moments when they despair of doing this that they listen to plans for recovering the territory by negotiation. The time has not come yet when any proposal to relinquish the territory can be publicly made."[1]

The *Times*, slowly convinced that Atlanta would have influence in the election, and as always clever above its contemporaries in the delicate process of face-about to save its prestige, arrived in October at the point where it could join in prediction of Lincoln's re-election. It did so by throwing the blame on the Democratic platform adopted at the party convention in Chicago, which, so it represented, had cast away an excellent chance of success by declaring for union first and peace afterwards. Since the convention had met in August this was late analysis; and as a matter of fact the convention platform had called for a "cessation of bloodshed" and the calling of a convention to restore peace—in substance, for an armistice. But the *Times*[2] now assumed temporarily a highly moral and disinterested pose and washed its hands of further responsibility; Lincoln was likely to be re-elected:

> For ourselves we have no particular reason to wish it otherwise. We have no very serious matter of complaint that we are aware of against the present Government of America. Allowance being made for the difficulties of their position, they are conducting the war with a fair regard to the rights of neutral nations. The war has swept American commerce from the sea, and placed it, in great measure, in our hands; we have supplied the loss of the cotton which was suddenly withdrawn from us; the returns of our revenue and our trade are thoroughly satisfactory, and we

[1] Russell Papers. Lyons to Russell, Sept. 16, 1864.

have received an equivalent for the markets closed to us in America in the vast impulse that has been given towards the development of the prosperity of India. We see a great nation, which has not been in times past sparing of its menaces and predictions of our ruin, apparently resolved to execute, without pause and without remorse, the most dreadful judgments of Heaven upon itself. We see the frantic patient tearing the bandages from his wounds and thrusting aside the hand that would assuage his miseries, and every day that the war goes on we see less and less probability that the great fabric of the Union will ever be reconstructed in its original form, and more and more likelihood that the process of disintegration will extend far beyond the present division between North and South. . . . Were we really animated by the spirit of hostility which is always assumed to prevail among us towards America, we should view the terrible spectacle with exultation and delight, we should rejoice that the American people, untaught by past misfortunes, have resolved to continue the war to the end, and hail the probable continuance of the power of Mr. Lincoln as the event most calculated to pledge the nation to a steady continuance in its suicidal policy. But we are persuaded that the people of this country view the prospect of another four years of war in America with very different feelings. They are not able to divest themselves of sympathy for a people of their own blood and language thus wilfully rushing down the path that leadeth to destruction.[1]

Sherman's capture of Atlanta did indeed make certain that Lincoln would again be chosen President, but the *Times* was more slow to acknowledge its military importance, first hinting and then positively asserting that Sherman had fallen into a trap from which he would have difficulty in escaping.[2] The *Gazette* called this " blind partisanship,"[3] but itself indulged in gloomy prognostications as to the character and results of the Presidential election, regarding it as certain that election day would see the use of " force,

[1] Oct. 10, 1864.
[2] Nov. 10, 1864.
[3] Nov. 12, 1864.

fraud and every mechanism known to the most unscrupulous political agitation." "We confess," it continued, "we are only so far affected by the struggle inasmuch as it dishonours the Anglo-Saxon name, and diminishes its reputation for justice and honour throughout the world."[1] Again official England was striking a note far different from that of the press.[2] Adams paid little attention to newspaper

[1] *Ibid.*

[2] According to *The Index*, the French press was more divided than was the London press in portrayal of military events in America. The *Siècle* and the *Opinion Nationale* pictured Sherman as about to capture Atlanta. Readers of the *Constitutionel*, *Patrie*, *Moniteur*, and *La France* "know quite well that Sherman has neither occupied the centre, the circumference, nor, indeed, any part of the defences of Atlanta; and that he was completely defeated by General Hood on July 22." (*Index*, Aug. 18, 1864, p. 522.) The Paris correspondent wrote, October 19, after the news was received of Sheridan's campaign in the Shenandoah Valley:

"The *Siècle* is triumphant. According to this humanitarian journal, whose sole policy consists in the expression of a double hatred, part of which it bestows on the priests, and part on the slave-dealers, the American contest has assumed its last phase, the Confederates are running in breathless haste to demand pardon, and true patriotism is at last to meet with its reward. This great and noble result will be due to the Northern generals, *who have carried military glory to so high a pitch without at the same time compromising American Democracy!*

"Your readers will doubtless consider that the writer of the above lines undertakes to speak on a subject of which he knows nothing; but what will they say of a writer who, in the same journal, thus expresses himself relative to the issues of the coming election?

'Lincoln being elected, the following will be the results: The South will lose courage and abandon the contest; the lands reduced to barrenness by servile labour will be again rendered productive by the labour of the freeman; the Confederates, *who know only how to fight, and who are supported by the sweat of others*, will purify and regenerate themselves by the exercise of their own brains and of their own hands. . . .'

"These strange remarks conclude with words of encouragement to the robust-shouldered, iron-fronted, firm-lipped Lincoln, and prayers for the welfare of the American brethren.

"You will not easily credit it, but this article—a very masterpiece of delirium and absurdity—bears the signature of one of the most eminent writers of the day, M. Henri Martin, the celebrated historian of France. (*Index*, Oct. 20, 1864, p. 667.)

A week later *The Index* was vicious in comment upon the "men and money" pouring out of *Germany* in aid of the North. German financiers, under the guise of aiding emigration, were engaged in the prosperous business of "selling white-skinned Germans to cut Southern throats for the benefit, as they say, of the poor blacks." (Oct. 27, 1864, p. 685.) This bitter tone was indulged in even by the Confederate Secretary of State. Benjamin wrote to Slidell, September 20, 1864, that France was wilfully deceiving the South by professions of friendship. The President, he stated, "could not escape the painful conviction that the Emperor of the French, knowing that the utmost efforts of this people are engrossed in the defence of their homes against an atrocious warfare waged by greatly superior numbers, has thought the occasion opportune for promoting his own purposes, at no greater cost than a violation of his faith and duty toward us." (Richardson, II, p. 577.)

utterances, but kept his chief informed of opinions expressed by those responsible for, and active in determining, governmental policy. The autumn "season for speeches" by Members of Parliament, he reported, was progressing with a very evident unanimity of expressions, whether from friend or foe, that it was inexpedient to meddle in American affairs. As the Presidential election in America came nearer, attention was diverted from military events. Anti-slavery societies began to hold meetings urging their friends in America to vote for Lincoln.[1] Writing from Washington, Lyons, as always anxious to forestall frictions on immaterial matters, wrote to Russell, "We must be prepared for demonstrations of a '*spirited foreign policy*' by Mr. Seward, during the next fortnight, for electioneering purposes."[2] Possibly his illness made him unduly nervous, for four days later he was relieved to be asked by Seward to "postpone as much as possible all business with him until after the election."[3] By November 1, Lyons was so ill that he asked for immediate leave, and in replying, "You will come away at once," Russell added that he was entirely convinced the United States wished to make no serious difficulties with Great Britain.

> ". . . I do not think the U.S. Government have any ill-intentions towards us, or any fixed purpose of availing themselves of a tide of success to add a war with us to their existing difficulties. Therefore whatever their bluster and buncome may be at times, I think they will subside when the popular clamour is over." [4]

[1] e.g., Meeting of Glasgow Union and Emancipation Society, Oct. 11, 1864. (*The Liberator*, Nov. 4, 1864.)

[2] Russell Papers, Oct. 24, 1864.

[3] *Ibid.* Lyons to Russell, Oct. 28, 1864.

[4] Lyons Papers. Russell to Lyons, Nov. 19, 1864. Lyons reached London December 27, and never returned to his post in America. Lyons' services to the friendly relations of the United States and Great Britain were of the greatest. He upheld British dignity yet never gave offence to that of America; he guarded British interests but with a wise and generous recognition of the difficulties of the Northern Government. No doubt he was at heart as unneutral as to hope for Northern success, even

In early November, Lincoln was triumphantly re-elected receiving 212 electoral votes to 21 cast for McClellan. No disturbances such as the *Gazette* had gloomily foretold attended the event, and the tremendous majority gained by the President somewhat stunned the press. Having prophesied disorders, the *Gazette* now patted America on the back for her behaviour, but took occasion to renew old "professions of faith" against reunion:

> "Abraham Lincoln II reigns in succession to Abraham Lincoln I, the first Republican monarch of the Federal States, and so far as we are concerned we are very glad of it, because the measure of the man is taken and known. . . . It is most creditable to the law-abiding habits of the people that the elections . . . passed off as they have done. . . . Mr. Lincoln has four long years of strife before him; and as he seems little inclined to change his advisers, his course of action, or his generals, we do not believe that the termination of his second period of government will find him President of the United States."[1]

The *Times* was disinclined, for once, to moralize, and was cautious in comment:

> "Ever since he found himself firmly established in his office, and the first effervescence of national feeling had begun to subside, we have had no great reason to complain of the conduct of Mr. Lincoln towards England. His tone has been less exacting, his language has been less offensive and, due allowance being made for the immense difficulties of his situation, we could have parted with Mr. Lincoln, had such been the pleasure of the American people, without any vestige of ill-will or ill-feeling. He has done as regards this country what the necessities of his situation demanded from him, and he has done no more."[2]

though at first sharing in the view that there was small possibility of reunion, but this very hope—unquestionably known to Seward and to Lincoln—frequently eased dangerous moments in the relations with Great Britain, and was in the end a decided asset to the Government at home.

[1] Nov. 26, 1864.

This was to tread gently ; but more exactly and more boldly the real reaction of the press was indicated by *Punch's* cartoon of a phœnix, bearing the grim and forceful face of Lincoln, rising from the ashes where lay the embers of all that of old time had gone to make up the *liberties* of America.[1]

During the months immediately preceding Lincoln's re-election English friends of the South had largely remained inactive. Constantly twitted that at the chief stronghold of the *Southern Independence Association*, Manchester, they did not dare to hold a meeting in the great Free Trade Hall,[2] they tried ticket meetings in smaller halls, but even there met with opposition from those who attended. At three other places, Oldham, Ashton, and Stockport, efforts to break the Northern hold on the manufacturing districts met with little success,[3] and even, as reported in the *Index*, were attended mainly by "magistrates, clergy, leading local gentry, manufacturers, tradesmen, and cotton operatives," the last named being also, evidently, the last considered, and presumably the least represented.[4] The Rev. Mr. Massie conducted "follow up" Northern meetings wherever the Southern friends ventured an appearance.[5] At one town only, Oldham, described by *The Index* as "the most 'Southern' town in Lancashire," was a meeting held at all comparable with the great demonstrations easily staged by pro-Northern friends. Set for October 31, great efforts were made to picture this meeting as an outburst of indignation from the unemployed. Summoned by

[1] The gradual change in *Punch's* representation of a silly-faced Lincoln to one which bore the stamp of despotic ferocity is an interesting index of British opinion during the war. By 1864 those who watched his career had come to respect Lincoln's ability and power though as yet wholly unappreciative of his still greater qualities.

[2] *The Liberator*, Sept. 23, 1864. Letter from T. H. Barker to Garrison, August 27, 1864.

[3] *Ibid.*, Nov. 4, 1864.

[4] *The Index*, Sept. 29, 1864, p. 618, describing the meeting at Ashton.

[5] *The Liberator*, Nov. 4, 1864.

handbills headed "*The Crisis! The Crisis! The Crisis!*" there gathered, according to *The Index* correspondent, a meeting "of between 5,000 and 6,000 wretched paupers, many of whom were women with children in their arms, who, starved apparently in body and spirit as in raiment, had met together to exchange miseries, and ask one another what was to be done." Desperate speeches were made, the people "almost threatening violence," but finally adopting a resolution now become so hackneyed as to seem ridiculous after a description intended to portray the misery and the revolutionary character of the meeting:

> "That in consequence of the widespread distress that now prevails in the cotton districts by the continuance of the war in America, this meeting is desirous that Her Majesty's Government should use their influence, together with France and other European powers, to bring both belligerents together in order to put a stop to the vast destruction of life and property that is now going on in that unhappy country."[1]

No doubt this spectacular meeting was organized for effect, but in truth it must have overshot the mark, for by October, 1864, 'the distress in Lancashire was largely alleviated and the public knew it, while elsewhere in the cotton districts the mass of operative feeling was with the North. Even in Ireland petitions were being circulated for signature among the working men, appealing to Irishmen in America to stand by the administration of Lincoln and to enlist in the Northern armies on the ground of emancipation.[2] Here, indeed, was the insuperable barrier, in the fall of 1864, to public support of the South. Deny as he might the presence of the "foul blot" in Southern society, Hotze, of *The Index*, could not counteract that phrase. When the Confederate Congress at Richmond began, in

[1] *The Index*, Nov. 3, 1864, p. 699.
[2] *The Liberator*, Nov. 4, 1864.

the autumn of 1864, seriously to discuss a plan of transforming slaves into soldiers, putting guns in their hands, and thus replenishing the waning man-power of Southern armies, Hotze was hard put to it to explain to his English readers that this was in fact no evidence of lowered strength, but rather a noble determination on the part of the South to permit the negro to win his freedom by bearing arms in defence of his country.[1]

This was far-fetched for a journal that had long insisted upon the absolute incapacity of the black race. Proximity of dates, however, permits another interpretation of Hotze's editorial of November 10, and indeed of the project of arming the slaves, though this, early in the spring of 1865, was actually provided for by law. On November 11, Slidell, Mason and Mann addressed to the Powers of Europe a communication accompanying a Confederate "Manifesto," of which the blockade had long delayed transmissal. This "Manifesto" set forth the objects of the Southern States and flatly demanded recognition:

> "'All they ask is immunity from interference with their internal peace and prosperity and to be left in the undisturbed enjoyment of their inalienable rights of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness which their common ancestry declared to be the equal heritage of all parties to the Social compact.'"[2]

Russell replied, November 25:

> "Great Britain has since 1783, remained, with the exception of a short period, connected by friendly relations with both the Northern and the Southern States. Since the commencement of the Civil War which broke out in 1861, Her Majesty's Government have continued to entertain sentiments of friendship equally for the North and for the

[1] *The Index*, Nov. 10, 1864, p. 713.

[2] F. O., Am., Vol. 975. Slidell, Mason and Mann to Russell, Nov. 11, 1864, Paris. Replies were received from England, France, Sweden and the Papal States. (Mason Papers, Mason to Slidell, Jan. 4, 1865).

South; of the causes of the rupture Her Majesty's Government have never presumed to judge; they deplored the commencement of this sanguinary struggle, and anxiously look forward to the period of its termination. In the meantime they are convinced that they best consult the interests of peace, and respect the rights of all parties by observing a strict and impartial Neutrality. Such a Neutrality Her Majesty has faithfully maintained and will continue to maintain."[1]

If *The Index* did indeed hope for results from the "Manifesto," and had sought to bolster the appeal by dilating on a Southern plan to "let the slaves win their freedom," the answer of Russell was disappointing. Yet at the moment, in spite of the effect of Lincoln's re-election, the current of alleged expert military opinion was again swinging in favour of the South. The *Times* scored Russell's answer, portraying him as attempting to pose as "Our Mutual Friend":

"The difficulty, of course, was to be polite to the representatives of the Confederate States without appearing rude to the United States; and, on the other hand, to acknowledge the authority of the United States without affronting the dignity of the Confederates. Between these two pitfalls Lord Russell oscillates in his letter, and now puts his foot a little bit in the hole on one side, and then, in recovering himself gets a little way into the hole on the other side. In this way he sways to and fro for a minute or two, but rights himself at last, and declares he has hitherto stood upright between the two pitfalls, and he will continue to do so. . . . Lord Russell seems to be in danger of forgetting that *neuter* does not mean *both*, but *neither*, and that if, therefore, he would maintain even in words a strict neutrality it is necessary to avoid any demonstrations of friendship to either belligerent."[2]

This was harsh criticism, evincing a *Times* partisanship

[1] F. O., Am., Vol. 975. Draft. Russell to the "Commissioners of the so-called Confederate States," Nov. 25, 1864.

[2] Dec. 1, 1864.

justifying the allegations of the *Gazette*, but wholly in line with the opinion to which the *Times* was now desperately clinging that Grant had failed and that Sherman, adventuring on his spectacular "march to the sea" from Atlanta, was courting annihilation. Yet even Northern friends were appalled at Sherman's boldness and discouraged by Grant's slowness. The son of the American Minister could write, "Grant moves like the iron wall in Poe's story. You expect something tremendous, and it's only a step after all."[1]

The *Times* was at least consistent in prophecies until the event falsified them; the *Gazette* less so. Some six weeks after having acclaimed Sherman's generalship in the capture of Atlanta,[2] the *Gazette's* summary of the military situation was that:

> "... if the winter sees Grant still before Petersburg, and Sherman unable to hold what he has gained in Georgia, the South may be nearer its dawning day of independence than could have been expected a few weeks ago, even though Wilmington be captured and Charleston be ground away piecemeal under a distant cannonade. The position of the Democrats would urge them to desperate measures, and the wedge of discord will be driven into the ill-compacted body which now represents the Federal States of North America."[3]

But on December 17, W. H. Russell again changed his view and foretold with accuracy Sherman's movements toward Savannah. Not so the *Times*, privately very anxious as to what Sherman's campaign portended, while publicly belittling it. December 2, it was noted that Sherman had not been heard from for weeks, having left Atlanta with 50,000 men. December 5, his objective was stated to be Savannah, and while the difficulties to be encountered were

[1] *A Cycle of Adams' Letters*, II, p. 207. Henry Adams to his brother, Oct. 21, 1864.

[2] See *ante*, p. 233.

[3] Nov. 12, 1864.

enumerated, no prophecy was indulged in. But on December 22, Sherman's move was called a "desperate" one, forced by his inability to retreat *northward* from Atlanta:

> "If we turn to military affairs, we are informed that the great feature of the year is Sherman's expedition into Georgia. We are not yet able to say whether Sherman will succeed in escaping the fate of Burgoyne; but we know that his apparent rashness is excused by the fact that Sherman was unable to return on the way by which he came; so that the most remarkable feature of the war, according to the President, is the wild and desperate effort of an out-manœuvred General to extricate himself from a position which, whatever effect it may have had on the election, should never, on mere military grounds, have been occupied at all."[1]

This was followed up four days later by a long and careful review of Sherman's whole western campaign, concluding with the dictum that his sole object now was to escape to some undefended point on the coast where he could be rescued by the Northern navy. The war had taken a definite turn in favour of the South; it was impossible to conceive that Sherman would venture to attack Savannah:

> "For the escape or safety of Sherman and his army it is essential he should reach Beaufort, or some neighbouring point on the sea-coast as rapidly as possible. Delay would be equivalent to ruin, and he will do nothing to create it."[2]

Rarely, if ever, did the *Times*, in its now eager and avowed championship so definitely commit itself in an effort to preserve British confidence in the Southern cause.[3] Even friends of the North were made doubtful

[1] Dec. 22, 1864.

[2] Dec. 26, 1864. But this was in reality a mere "keeping up courage" editorial. See Ch. XVIII, p. 300.

[3] That this was very effective championship is shown by Henry Adams' letter to his brother, Dec. 16, 1864. (*A Cycle of Adams' Letters*, II, p. 232.)

by the positiveness of prediction indulged in by that journal whose opinions were supposed to be based on superior information. Their recourse was to a renewal of "deputations" calling on the American Minister to express steady allegiance to the Northern cause,[1] and their relief was great when the news was received that Savannah had fallen, December 20, without a struggle. The *Times* recorded the event, December 29, but with no comment save that Southern prospects were less rosy than had been supposed. Then ensued a long silence, for this time there was no possibility of that editorial wiggling about the circle from excuses for misinterpretation to a complacent resumption of authoritative utterance.

For the editor, Delane, and for wise Southern sympathizers the fall of Savannah was a much harder blow than the mere loss of prestige to the *Times*.[2] Courage failed and confidence in the South waned—momentarily almost vanished. Nearly two weeks passed before the *Times* ventured to lift again the banner of hope, and even then but half-heartedly.

> "The capture of the city completes the history of Sherman's march, and stamps it as one of the ablest, certainly one of the most singular military achievements of the war.
>
> ". . . The advantage gained for the Federal cause by the possession of Savannah is yet to be shown. To Sherman and his army 'the change of base' is indisputably a change for the better. Assuming that his position at Atlanta was as

"Popular opinion here declares louder than ever that Sherman is lost. People are quite angry at his presumption in attempting such a wild project. The interest felt in his march is enormous, however, and if he arrives as successfully as I expect, at the sea, you may rely upon it that the moral effect of his demonstration on Europe will be greater than that of any other event of the war."

[1] State Department, Eng, Adams to Seward, Dec. 16, 1864. Adams expressed to Seward doubts as to the propriety of his receiving such deputations and making replies to them. *The Index* (Dec. 22, 1864, p. 808) was "indignant" that Adams should presume to "hector and threaten" England through his replies. But Adams continued to receive deputations.

[2] Delane's position on the Civil War and the reasons for the importance of Savannah to him, personally, are described in Ch. XVIII.

desperate as shortness of supplies and an interrupted line of retreat could make it, the command of a point near the sea-coast and free communication with the fleet is obviously an improvement. At the least the army secures full means of subsistence, and a point from which further operations may be commenced. On the other hand, the blow, as far as the Confederate Government is concerned, is mitigated by the fact that Savannah has been little used as a seaport since the capture of Fort Pulaski by the Federals at an early stage of the war.

"... But the fall of the city is a patent fact, and it would be absurd to deny that it has produced an impression unfavourable to the *prestige* of the Confederacy."[1]

Far more emphatic of ultimate Northern victory was the picture presented, though in sarcasm, by the *Times* New York correspondent, printed in this same issue:

"No disappointments, however fast they may follow on the heels of each other, can becloud the bright sunshine of conceit and self-worship that glows in the heart of the Yankee. His country is the first in the world, and he is the first man in it. Knock him down, and he will get up again, and brush the dirt from his knees, not a bit the worse for the fall. If he do not win this time, he is bound to win the next. His motto is 'Never say die.' His manifest destiny is to go on—prospering and to prosper—conquering and to conquer."

[1] Jan. 9, 1865.

CHAPTER XVII

> "I think you need not trouble yourself about England. At this moment opinion seems to have undergone a complete change, and our people and indeed our Government is more moderately disposed than I have ever before known it to be. I hear from a member of the Government that it is believed that the feeling between our Cabinet and the Washington Government has been steadily improving."[1]

THUS wrote Bright to Sumner in the last week of January, 1865. Three weeks later he again wrote in reassurance against American rumours that Europe was still planning some form of intervention to save the South: "*All parties and classes* here are resolved on a strict neutrality. . . ."[2] This was a correct estimate. In spite of a temporary pause in the operations of Northern armies and of renewed assertions from the South that she "would never submit," British opinion was now very nearly unanimous that the end was near. This verdict was soon justified by events. In January, 1865, Wilmington, North Carolina, was at last captured by a combined sea and land attack. Grant, though since midsummer, 1864, held in check by Lee before Petersburg, was yet known to be constantly increasing the strength of his army, while his ability to strike when the time came was made evident by the freedom with which his cavalry scoured the country about the Confederate

[1] Bright to Sumner, Jan. 26, 1865 (Mass. Hist. Soc. *Proceedings*, XLVI, p. 132).

[2] To Sumner, Feb. 17, 1865 (*Ibid.* p. 133).

capital, Richmond—in one raid even completely encircling that city. Steadily Lee's army lost strength by the attrition of the siege, by illness and, what was worse, by desertion since no forces could be spared from the fighting front to recover and punish the deserters. Grant waited for the approach of spring, when, with the advance northwards of the army at Savannah, the pincers could be applied to Lee, to end, it was hoped, in writing *finis* to the war.

From December 20, 1864, to February 1, 1865, Sherman remained in Savannah, renewing by sea the strength of his army. On the latter date he moved north along the coast, meeting at first no resistance and easily overrunning the country. Columbia, capital of South Carolina, was burned. Charleston was evacuated, and it was not until March, in North Carolina, that any real opposition to the northward progress was encountered. Here on the sixteenth and the nineteenth, Johnston, in command of the weak Southern forces in North Carolina, made a desperate effort to stop Sherman, but without avail, and on March 23, Sherman was at Goldsboro, one hundred and sixty miles south of Richmond, prepared to cut off the retreat of Lee when Grant should at last take up an energetic offensive.

In the last week of March, Grant began cutting off supplies to Richmond, thus forcing Lee, if he wished still to protect the Southern capital, to come out of his lines at Petersburg and present an unfortified front. The result was the evacuation of Petersburg and the abandonment of Richmond, Jefferson Davis and his Government fleeing from the city on the night of April 2. Attempting to retreat southwards with the plan of joining Johnston's army, Lee, on April 9, found his forces surrounded at Appomattox and surrendered. Nine days later, on April 18, Johnston surrendered to Sherman at Durham, North Carolina. It was the end of the war and of the Confederacy.

The rapidity with which Southern resistance in arms



THE AMERICAN GLADIATORS—HABET!

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crumbled in 1865 when once Sherman and Grant were under way no doubt startled foreign observers, but in British opinion, at least, the end had been foreseen from the moment Sherman reached the sea at Savannah. The desperate courage of the South was admired, but regarded as futile. Equally desperate and futile was the last diplomatic effort of the Confederate agents in Europe, taking the form of an offer to abolish slavery in return for recognition. The plan originated with Benjamin, Southern Secretary of State, was hesitatingly approved by Davis,[1] and was committed to Mason for negotiation with Great Britain. Mason, after his withdrawal from London, had been given duplicate powers in blank for any point to which emergencies might send him, thus becoming a sort of Confederate Commissioner at Large to Europe. Less than any other representative abroad inclined to admit that slavery was other than a beneficent and humane institution, it was felt advisable at Richmond not only to instruct Mason by written despatch, but by personal messenger also of the urgency of presenting the offer of abolition promptly and with full assurance of carrying it into effect. The instruction was therefore entrusted to Duncan F. Kenner, of Louisiana, and he arrived in Paris early in March, 1865, overcame Mason's unwillingness to carry such an offer to England, and accompanied the latter to London.

The time was certainly not propitious, for on the day Mason reached London there came the news of the burning of Columbia and the evacuation of Charleston. Mason hesitated to approach Palmerston, but was pressed by Kenner who urged action on the theory that Great Britain did not wish to see a reconstruction of the Union.[2] Slidell, in Paris, on receiving Mason's doubts, advised waiting until the Emperor had been consulted, was granted an interview

[1] Dodd, *Jefferson Davis*, p. 343

and reported Napoleon III as ready as ever to act if England would act also, but as advising delay until more favourable news was received from America.[1] But Mason's instructions did not permit delay; he must either carry them out or resign—and Kenner was at his elbow pressing for action. On March 13, therefore, Mason wrote to Palmerston asking for a private interview and was promptly granted one for the day following.

Both personal disinclination to the proposal of abolition and judgment that nothing would come of it made Mason cautious in expressing himself to Palmerston. Mason felt that he was stultifying his country in condemning slavery. Hence in roundabout language, "with such form of allusion to the *concession* we held in reserve, as would make him necessarily comprehend it,"[2] and turning again and again to a supposed "latent, undisclosed obstacle"[3] to British recognition, Mason yet made clear the object of his visit. The word slavery was not mentioned by him, but Palmerston promptly denied that slavery in the South had ever been, or was now, a barrier to recognition; British objections to recognition were those which had long since been stated, and there was nothing "underlying" them. On March 26, Mason called on the Earl of Donoughmore, a Tory friend of the South with whom he had long been in close touch, and asked whether he thought Palmerston's Government could be induced by a Southern abolition of slavery to recognize the Confederacy. The reply was "that the time had gone by now. . . ." This time the words "slavery" and "abolition" were spoken boldly,[4] and Donoughmore was positive that if, in the midsummer of 1863, when Lee was invading Pennsylvania, the South had made its present overture, nothing could have prevented British recognition.

[1] *Ibid.* Slidell to Mason, March 5 and 6, 1865.
[2] *Ibid.* Mason to Slidell, March 15, 1865.
[3] Mason to Benjamin, March 31, 1865. (Richardson, II, pp. 709-17.)

The opinion clashed with Mason's own conviction, but in any case no more was to be hoped, now, from his overture. Only a favourable turn in the war could help the South.

There was no public knowledge in London of this " last card " Southern effort in diplomacy, though there were newspaper rumours that some such move was on foot, but with a primary motive of restoring Southern fighting power by putting the negroes in arms. British public attention was fixed rather upon a possible last-moment reconciliation of North and South and a restored Union which should forget its domestic troubles in a foreign war. Momentarily somewhat of a panic overcame London society and gloomy were the forebodings that Great Britain would be the chosen enemy of America. Like rumours were afloat at Washington also. The Russian Minister, Stoeckl, reported to his Government that he had learned from " a sure source " of representations made to Jefferson Davis by Blair, a prominent Unionist and politician of the border state of Maryland, looking to reconstruction and to the sending by Lincoln of armies into Canada and Mexico. Stoeckl believed such a war would be popular, but commented that " Lincoln might change his mind[1] to-morrow." In London the *Army and Navy Gazette* declared that Davis could not consent to reunion and that Lincoln could not offer any other terms of peace, but that a truce might be patched up on the basis of a common aggression against supposed foreign enemies.[2] Adams pictured all British society as

[1] Russian Archives. Stoeckl to F. O., Jan. 24, 1865. No. 187. It is nteresting that just at this time Gortchakoff should have sent to Stoeckl the copy of a memorandum by one, C. Catacazy, employé of the Foreign Office and long-time resident in the United States, in which was outlined a plan of a Russian offer of mediation. The memorandum specified that such an offer should be based on the idea that the time had come for a complete restoration of the Union and argued that both North and South regarded Russia as a special friend; it was Russia's interest to see the Union restored as a balance to Great Britain. Gortchakoff's comment was favourable, but he left it wholly to Stoeckl's judgment and discretion

now convinced that the end of the war was near, and bitter against the previous tone and policy of such leaders of public opinion as the *Times*, adding that it was being "whispered about that if the feud is reconciled and the Union restored, and a great army left on our hands, the next manifestation will be one of hostility to this country."[1]

The basis of all this rumour was Blair's attempt to play the mediator. He so far succeeded that on January 31, 1865, Lincoln instructed Seward to go to Fortress Monroe to meet "commissioners" appointed by Davis. But Lincoln made positive in his instructions three points:

(1) Complete restoration of the Union.
(2) No receding on emancipation.
(3) No cessation of hostilities "short of an end of the war, and the disbanding of all forces hostile to the Government."

A few days later the President decided that his own presence was desirable and joined his Secretary of State in the "Hampton Roads Conference" of February 3. It quickly appeared that the Confederates did indeed hope to draw the North into a foreign war for a "traditional American object," using the argument that *after* such a war restoration of the Union would be easily accomplished. The enemy proposed was not Great Britain but France, and the place of operations Mexico. There was much discussion of this plan between Seward and Stephens, the leading Southern Commissioner, but Lincoln merely listened, and when pressed for comment stuck fast to his decision that no agreement whatever would be entered into until the South had laid down its arms. The Southerners urged that there was precedent for an agreement in advance of cessation of hostilities in the negotiations between Charles I and the Roundheads. Lincoln's reply was pithy: "I do not profess to be posted in history. On all such matters I turn

you over to Seward. All I distinctly recollect about the case of Charles I is that he lost his head in the end."[1]

When news of the holding of this conference reached England there occurred a panic on the Stock Exchange due to the uncertainty created by the prospect of an immediate end of the American War. "The consternation," wrote Adams, "was extraordinary."[2] What did the United States intend to do? "The impression is now very general that peace and restoration at home are synonymous with war with this country." There existed an "extraordinary uneasiness and indefinite apprehension as to the future." So reported Adams to Seward; and he advised that it might be well for the United States "to consider the question how far its policy may be adapted to quiet this disturbance"; due allowance should be made for the mortification of those leaders who had been so confident of Southern victory and for expressions that might now fall from their lips; it was possible that reassurances given by the United States might aid in the coming elections in retaining the Government in power—evidently, in Adams' opinion, a result to be desired.[3]

Adams' advice as to the forthcoming elections was but repetition of that given earlier and with more emphasis.[4] Apparently Seward was then in no mood to act on it, for his reply was distinctly belligerent in tone, recapitulating British and Canadian offences in permitting the enemy to use their shores, and asserting that the measures now proposed of abrogating the reciprocity treaty of 1854 with Canada and the agreement of 1817 prohibiting armaments on the Great Lakes, were but defensive measures required to protect American soil.[5] These matters Adams had been

[1] Bancroft, *Seward*, II, pp. 410-14.
[2] *A Cycle of Adams' Letters*, II, 256. To his son, Feb. 17, 1865.
[3] *U.S. Messages and Documents*, 1865-66, Pt. I, p. 182. Adams to Seward, Feb. 23, 1865.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 113. Adams to Seward, Feb. 2, 1865.

instructed to take up with Russell, but with discretion as to time and he had ventured to postpone them as inopportune. Professing entire agreement with the justice of Seward's complaints he nevertheless wrote that to press them " at this moment would be only playing into the hands of the mischief-makers, and disarming our own friends."[1] The day before this was written home Seward, at Washington, on March 8, recalled his instruction as to the agreement of 1817, stating that Russell might be informed the United States had no intention of increasing its armaments on the Great Lakes.[2]

Thus there were incidents offering ground for a British excitement over a prospective war with America, even though no such intention was seriously entertained by the North. The British Government did not share this fear, but Delane, of the *Times*, kept it alive in the public mind, and indeed was sincere in efforts to arouse his readers to the danger. " I do not know what grounds Delane has for it," wrote W. H. Russell to his American friend Bigelow, " but he is quite sure Uncle Samuel is about to finish off the dreadful Civil War with another war with us scarcely less horrible."[3] Governmental circles, however, belittled the agitation. Burnley, temporarily representing England at Washington, was assured by Seward, and so reported, that all these rumours of a foreign war were of Southern origin, had in fact been actually elaborated at the Hampton Roads Conference, but were perfectly understood by the North as but part of the Southern game, and that the Southern offer had been flatly refused.[4] In a parliamentary debate in the Commons on March 13, arising out of governmental estimates for military expenditures in Canada, opportunity was given for a discussion of relations with

[1] *Ibid.* p. 199. Adams to Seward, March 9, 1865.
[2] *Ibid.* p. 197. Seward to Adams, March 8, 1865.
[3] March 8, 1865. (Bigelow, *Retrospections*, II, p. 361.)

America. A few Members gave voice to the fear of war, but the general tone of the debate was one of confidence in the continuance of peaceful relations. Bright, in a vigorous and witty speech, threw right and left criticisms of Parliament, the Press, and individuals, not sparing members of the Government, but expressed the utmost confidence in the pacific policy of Lincoln. As one known to be in close touch with America his words carried weight.[1] Palmerston gave assurances that the present relations between the two Governments were perfectly friendly and satisfactory. The effect of the debate, reported Adams, was to quiet the panic,[2] yet at the same time England was now awake to and somewhat alarmed by, America's "prodigious development of physical power during the war." To quiet this, Adams recommended "prudence and moderation in tone."[3]

Thus the actual cessation of hostilities in America and the possible effect of this event on foreign relations had been for some time anticipated and estimated in Great Britain.[4] The news of Lee's surrender, therefore, caused no great surprise since the *Times* and other papers had been preparing the public for it.[5] Newspaper comment on the event followed closely that of the *Times*, rendering honour to

[1] "The speech of Mr. Bright is universally admitted to have been one of the most brilliant specimens of his peculiar style of oratory. In its reminiscences, equally unwelcome to both sides of the House, it was yet received after the fashion of an unpleasant medicine, which has the aid of a strong and savoury medium to overwhelm the nauseous taste." (*U.S. Messages and Documents*, 1865-66, Pt. I, p. 246. Adams to Seward, March 16, 1865.)

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] *Ibid.* p. 262. Adams to Seward, March 24, 1865. Adams wrote of his own situation that it "seems at last to be getting easy and comfortable, so far as freedom from anxiety is concerned." (*A Cycle of Adams' Letters*, II, p. 258. To his son, March 24, 1865.)

[4] Bruce, who succeeded Lyons at Washington, reached New York on April 7. His first letter to Russell from Washington, dated April 14, stated that America was certainly preparing to oust Maximilian in Mexico, and that even the Southern prisoners were eager to join the United States troops in an expedition for this purpose. (Russell Papers.)

[5] *U.S. Messages and Documents*, 1865-66, Part II, p. 323. Adams to

the militant qualities of the South and to Lee, but writing *finis* to the war:

> "Such is the end of the great army which, organized by the extraordinary genius of one man, aided by several other commanders of eminent ability, has done such wonders in this war. Not even the Grand Army of Napoleon himself could count a series of more brilliant victories than the force which, raised chiefly from the high-spirited population of Virginia, has defeated so many invasions of the State, and crushed the hopes of so many Northern generals. Chief and soldiers have now failed for the first and last time. They were victorious until victory was no longer to be achieved by human valour, and then they fell with honour."[1]

The people of the North, also, were complimented for their slowly developed but ultimate ability in war, and especially for "a patience, a fortitude, and an energy which entitle them to rank among the very first of military nations."[2]

No one remained to uphold the Southern banner in Europe save the Confederate agents, and, privately, even they were hopeless. Mason, it is true, asserted, as if bolstering his own courage, that "this morning's" news did not mean an overwhelming disaster; it could not be wholly true; even if true it must mean peace on the basis of separation; finally, "5th. *I know* that no terms of peace would be accepted that did not embrace independence." But at the conclusion of this letter he acknowledged:

> "I confess that all this speculation rests on, what I assume, that Lee surrendered only in expectation of a peace derived from his interview with Grant—and that no terms of peace would be entertained that did not rest on *independence.*"[3]

But Slidell saw more clearly. He replied:

> "I cannot share your hopefulness. We have seen the

[1] April 24, 1865.
[2] *Ibid.*
[3] Mason Papers. Mason to Slidell, April 23, 1865.

beginning of the end. I, for my part, am prepared for the worst. With Lee's surrender there will soon be an end to our regular organized armies and I can see no possible good to result from a protracted guerilla warfare. We are crushed and must submit to the yoke. Our children must bide their time for vengeance, but you and I will never revisit our homes under our glorious flag. For myself I shall never put my foot on a soil from which flaunts the hated Stars and Stripes. . . . I am sick, sick at heart."[1]

The news of Lee's surrender arrived at the same moment with that of a serious injury to Seward in a runaway accident, and in its editorial on the end of the war the *Times* took occasion to pay a tribute to the statesman whom it had been accustomed to berate.

> "There seems to be on the part of President Lincoln a desire to conciliate vanquished fellow-citizens. Under the guidance of Mr. Seward, who has creditably distinguished himself in the Cabinet by his moderate counsels, and whose life will, we trust, be spared at this crisis to the Union, he may by gentle measures restore tranquillity, and perhaps, before his term of office expires, calm in some degree the animosities which have been raised by these years of war."[2]

Nor was this insincere, for Seward had, first in the estimate of British statesmen, more slowly in the press and with the public, come to be regarded in an aspect far different from that with which he was generally viewed in 1861. There was real anxiety at the reports of Seward's accident, but when, in less than a week, there was received also the news of the assassination of Lincoln and of the brutal attack on Seward, all England united in expressions of sympathy and horror. "Few events of the present century," wrote Adams, "have created such general consternation and indignation."[3]

[1] *Ibid.* Slidell to Mason, April 26, 1865.
[2] April 24, 1865.
[3] *U.S. Messages and Documents*, 1865-66, Pt. I, p. 331. Adams to Seward, April 28, 1865.

In Ford's Theatre on the evening of April 14, Lincoln was shot by Booth, a fanatical Southerner, who had gained entrance to the box where the President was sitting. Lincoln died early the next morning. On the same evening, at about ten o'clock, an unknown man was admitted to Seward's house on the plea that he had a message from the physician, passed upstairs, but was stopped by Seward's son at the door of the sick room. Beating the son into semi-unconsciousness with a revolver which had missed fire, the stranger burst open the door, attacked the Secretary as he lay in bed with a bowie-knife, slashing at his throat, until Seward rolled off the bed to the floor. Seward's throat was "cut on both sides, his right cheek nearly severed from his face"; his life was saved, probably, because of an iron frame worn to support the jaw fractured in the runaway accident nine days before.[1] The assailant fought his way out of the house and escaped. For some days Seward's life was despaired of, whether from his injuries or from shock.

These tragic occurrences were the outcome of a revengeful spirit in the hearts of a few extreme Southerners, and in no sense represented the feeling of the South. It was inevitable, however, that abroad so horrible a crime should react both to the detriment of the Confederacy and to the advantage of the North. Sympathy with the North took the form of a sudden exaltation of the personality of Lincoln, bringing out characterizations of the man far different from those which had been his earlier in the war. The presence of a "rural attorney" in the Presidential office had seemed like the irony of fate in the great crisis of 1861. Even so acute an observer as Lyons could then write, "Mr. Lincoln has not hitherto given proof of his possessing any natural talents to compensate for his ignorance of everything but Illinois village politics. He seems to be well meaning

[1] Bancroft, *Seward*, II, p. 417.

and conscientious, in the measure of his understanding, but not much more."[1] But Lyons was no more blind than his contemporaries, for nearly all characterizations, whether American or foreign, were of like nature.

But the slow progress of the years of war had brought a different estimate of Lincoln—a curious blending of admiration for the growth of his personal authority and for his steadiness of purpose, with criticism of his alleged despotism. Now, with his death, following so closely the collapse of the Confederacy, there poured out from British press and public a great stream of laudation for Lincoln almost amounting to a national recantation. In this process of "whitening Abraham's tomb," as a few dyed-in-the-wool Southern sympathizers called it, *Punch* led the way in a poem by Tom Taylor:

"*You* lay a wreath on murdered Lincoln's bier,
You, who with mocking pencil wont to trace,
Broad for the self-complacent British sneer,
His length of shambling limb, his furrowed face."

. . . . . .

"Yes, he had lived to shame me from my sneer,
To lame my pencil and confute my pen—
To make me own this hind of princes peer,
This rail-splitter a true-born king of men."[2]

Less emotional than most papers, but with a truer estimate of Lincoln, stood the *Times*. Severely reprobating the act of Booth and prophesying a disastrous effect in the treatment of the conquered South, it proceeded:

> "Starting from a humble position to one of the greatest eminence, and adopted by the Republican party as a makeshift, simply because Mr. Seward and their other prominent

[1] Russell Papers. Lyons to Russell, April 9, 1861.

leaders were obnoxious to different sections of the party, it was natural that his career should be watched with jealous suspicion. The office cast upon him was great, its duties most onerous, and the obscurity of his past career afforded no guarantee of his ability to discharge them. His shortcomings moreover were on the surface. The education of a man whose early years had been spent in earning bread by manual labour had necessarily been defective, and faults of manner and errors of taste repelled the observer at the outset. In spite of these drawbacks, Mr. Lincoln slowly won for himself the respect and confidence of all. His perfect honesty speedily became apparent, and, what is, perhaps, more to his credit, amid the many unstudied speeches which he was called upon from time to time to deliver, imbued though they were with the rough humour of his early associates, he was in none of them betrayed into any intemperance of language towards his opponents or towards neutrals. His utterances were apparently careless, but his tongue was always under command. The quality of Mr. Lincoln's administration which served, however, more than any other to enlist the sympathy of bystanders was its conservative progress. He felt his way gradually to his conclusions, and those who will compare the different stages of his career one with another will find that his mind was growing throughout the course of it."

. . . . . .

"The gradual change of his language and of his policy was most remarkable. Englishmen learnt to respect a man who showed the best characteristics of their race in his respect for what is good in the past, acting in unison with a recognition of what was made necessary by the events of passing history."[1]

This was first reaction. Two days later, commenting on the far warmer expressions of horror and sympathy emanating from all England, there appeared another and longer editorial :

"If anything could mitigate the distress of the American

sympathy which is expressed by the people of this country. We are not using the language of hyperbole in describing the manifestation of feeling as unexampled. Nothing like it has been witnessed in our generation. . . . But President Lincoln was only the chief of a foreign State, and of a State with which we were not unfrequently in diplomatic or political collision. He might have been regarded as not much more to us than the head of any friendly Government, and yet his end has already stirred the feelings of the public to their uttermost depths."

. . . . . .

". . . a space of twenty-four hours has sufficed not only to fill the country with grief and indignation, but to evoke almost unprecedented expressions of feeling from constituted bodies. It was but on Wednesday that the intelligence of the murder reached us, and on Thursday the Houses of Lords and Commons, the Corporation of the City of London, and the people of our chief manufacturing towns in public meeting assembled had recorded their sentiments or expressed their views. In the House of Lords the absence of precedent for such a manifestation was actually made the subject of remark.

"That much of this extraordinary feeling is due to the tragical character of the event and the horror with which the crime is regarded is doubtless true, nor need we dissemble the the fact that the loss which the Americans have sustained is also thought our own loss in so far as one valuable guarantee for the amity of the two nations may have been thus removed. But, upon the whole, it is neither the possible embarrassment of international relations nor the infamous wickedness of the act itself which has determined public feeling. The preponderating sentiment is sincere and genuine sympathy—sorrow for the chief of a great people struck down by an assassin, and sympathy for that people in the trouble which at a crisis of their destinies such a catastrophe must bring. Abraham Lincoln was as little of a tyrant as any man who ever lived. He could have been a tyrant had he pleased, but he never uttered so much as an ill-natured speech. . . . In all America there was, perhaps, not one man who less deserved to be the victim of this revolution than he who has just fallen."[1]

[1] April 29, 1865.

The Ministry did not wait for public pressure. Immediately on receipt of the news, motions were made, April 27, in both Lords and Commons for an address to the Queen, to be debated "Monday next," expressing "sorrow and indignation" at the assassination of Lincoln.[1] April 28, Russell instructed Bruce to express at Washington that "the Government, the Parliament, and the Nation are affected by a unanimous feeling of abhorrence of the criminals guilty of these cowardly and atrocious crimes, and sympathy for the Government and People of the United States. . . ."[2] Russell wrote here of both Lincoln and Seward. The Queen wrote a personal letter of sympathy to Mrs. Lincoln. Already Bruce had written from Washington that Lincoln "was the only friend of the South in his party,"[3] and he was extremely anxious that Seward's recovery might be hastened, fearing the possibility of Sumner's assumption of the Secretaryship of State. "We miss terribly the comparative moderation of Lincoln and Seward."[4]

The American Minister naturally became the centre toward which the public outpouring of sympathy was directed. "The excitement in this country has been deep and wide, spreading through all classes of society. My table is piled high with cards, letters and resolutions. . . ."[5] Indeed all the old sources of "addresses" to Adams on emancipation and many organizations having no professed interest in that subject now sent to him resolutions—the emancipation societies, of horror, indignation, and even accusation against the South; the others of sympathy,

[1] Hansard, 3d. Ser., CLXXVIII, pp. 1073 and 1081.

[2] *Parliamentary Papers*, 1865, *Commons*, Vol. LVII. "Correspondence respecting the Assassination of the late President of the United States."

[3] Russell Papers. Bruce to Russell, April 18, 1865.

[4] *Ibid.* April 24, 1865.

[5] *A Cycle of Adams' Letters*, II, 267. Charles Francis Adams to his son, April 28, 1865.



BRITANNIA • SYMPATHISES WITH COLUMBIA.

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more moderate in tone, yet all evincing an appreciation of the great qualities of Lincoln and of the justice of the cause of the North, now victorious. Within two weeks Adams reported over four hundred such addresses from Emancipation Societies, Chambers of Commerce, Trades Unions, municipalities, boroughs, churches, indeed from every known type of British organizations.[1]

On May 1 the motion for the address to the Crown came up for debate. In the Lords, Russell emphasized the kindly and forgiving qualities of Lincoln as just those needed in America, and now lost by his death. Derby, for the Opposition, expressed the horror of the world at Booth's act, joined in expressions of sympathy to the United States, but repeated the old phrase about the "North fighting for empire, the South for independence," and hinted that the unusual step now being taken by Parliament had in it a "political object," meaning that the motion had been introduced in the hope of easing American irritation with Great Britain.[2] It was not a tactful speech, but Derby's lieutenant in the Commons, Disraeli, saved his party from criticism by what was distinctly the most thoughtful and best-prepared utterance of the day. Palmerston was ill. The Government speech was made by Grey, who incautiously began by asserting that the majority of the people of Great Britain had always been on the side of the North and was met by cries of "No, no" and "Hear, hear." Disraeli concluded the debate. He said:

> "There are rare instances when the sympathy of a nation approaches those tenderer feelings that generally speaking, are supposed to be peculiar to the individual, and to form the happy privilege of private life; and this is one. Under all circumstances we should have bewailed the catastrophe at Washington; under all circumstances we should have

[1] *U.S. Messages and Documents*, 1865-66, Pt. I, pp. 344, 361. Adams to Hunter, May 4 and May 11, 1865.

shuddered at the means by which it was accomplished. But in the character of the victim, and even in the accessories of his last moments there is something so homely and so innocent that it takes as it were the subject out of all the pomp of history and the ceremonial of diplomacy; it touches the heart of nations, and appeals to the domestic sentiment of mankind.

"Sir, whatever the various and varying opinions in this House, and in the country generally on the policy of the late President of the United States, on this, I think, all must agree, that in one of the severest trials which ever tested the moral qualities of man, he fulfilled his duty with simplicity and strength. Nor is it possible for the people of England, at such a moment, to forget that he sprang from the same fatherland, and spoke the same mother tongue.

"When such crimes are perpetrated the public mind is apt to fall into gloom and perplexity; for it is ignorant alike of the causes and the consequences of such deeds. But it is one of our duties to reassure the country under unreasoning panic or despondency. Assassination has never changed the history of the world. . . .

"In expressing our unaffected and profound sympathy with the citizens of the United States at the untimely end of their elected Chief, let us not, therefore, sanction any feeling of depression, but rather let us express a fervent hope that from out the awful trials of the last four years, of which not the least is this violent demise, the various populations of North America may issue elevated and chastened; rich in that accumulated wisdom, and strong in that disciplined energy which a young nation can only acquire in a protracted and perilous struggle. Then they will be enabled not merely to renew their career of power and prosperity, but they will renew it to contribute to the general happiness of mankind. It is with these feelings, Sir, that I second the Address to the Crown."[1]

Lincoln's assassination served to bring out not only British popular sympathy, but also the certitude that the war was over and the North victorious. But officially the Government had not yet recognized this. Even as early as January, 1865, Seward had returned to the old proposal

[1] *Ibid.*[6] pp. 1242-46.

that the nations of Europe should withdraw their recognition of Southern belligerent rights,[1] and in March he had asked Stoeckl, the Russian Minister, whether Russia would not lead in the suggestion of this measure to England and France.[2] Meanwhile Sherman's army was rapidly advancing northward and reports were arriving of its pillagings and burnings. March 20, Gregory asked in the Commons whether the Government was taking any steps to prevent the destruction of British property and received from Layard an evasive reply. Merely a "confident hope" had been expressed to the United States that "every facility will be given" to British subjects to prove ownership of property.[3] Evidently the Government was not eager to raise irritating questions at a moment when all eyes were strained to observe the concluding events of the war.

Then came the news of Lee's surrender and of the assassination of Lincoln, with the attack on Seward, already incapacitated from active duties. Seward's illness delayed American pressure on England—a fortunate circumstance in the relations with Great Britain in that it gave time for a clearer appreciation of the rapidity and completeness of the collapse of the South. May 15, Lord Houghton asked whether the Government did not intend, in view of recent events in America, "to withdraw the admission of belligerent rights conceded to the so-called Confederate States." Russell promptly objected to the form of the question: England had not "conceded" any rights to the South—she had merely issued a proclamation of neutrality after Lincoln had declared the existence of a war by proclaiming a blockade. England had had no other recourse, unless she chose to refuse recognition of the blockade, and this would have drawn her into the war. As to a withdrawal

[1] Russell Papers. Burnley to Russell, Jan. 16, 1865.
[2] Russian Archives. Stoeckl to F. O., March 1-13, 1865. No. 523.

of the neutrality proclamation this must wait upon official announcement from the United States that the war was at an end. Texas was still in arms and Galveston still blockaded, and for this section the United States would no doubt continue to exercise on neutral vessels a belligerent right of search. It followed that if Great Britain did prematurely withdraw her proclamation of neutrality and the United States searched a British vessel, it would be the exercise of a right of search in time of peace—an act against which Great Britain would be bound to make vigorous protest. Hence England must wait on American action proclaiming the end of the war. Russell concluded by expressing gratification at the prospect of peace.[1]

But matters were not to take this orderly and logical course. Seward, though still extremely weak and confined to his home, was eager to resume the duties of office, and on May 9 a Cabinet was held at his house. A week later Bruce wrote to Russell in some anxiety that America was about to *demand* the withdrawal by Great Britain of belligerent rights to the South, that if Great Britain would but act before such a demand was made it would serve to continue the existing good feeling in America created by the sympathy over Lincoln's death, and especially, that there was a decided danger to good relations in the fact that Confederate cruisers were still at large. He urged that orders should be sent to stop their presence in British colonial ports securing coal and supplies.[2] Three days later Bruce repeated his warning.[3] This was, apparently, a complication unforeseen at the Foreign Office. In any case Russell at once made a complete face-about from the policy he had outlined in reply to Lord Houghton. On May 30 he instructed Cowley in Paris to notify France

[1] *Ibid.* CLXXIX, p. 286.
[2] F. O., Am., Vol. 1018. No. 297. Bruce to Russell, May 16, 1865.

that England thought the time had arrived for recognition that the war was ended and laid special stress upon the question of Confederate cruisers still at sea and their proper treatment in British ports.[1] Thus having given to France notice of his intention, but without waiting for concurrent action, Russell, on June 2, issued instructions to the Admiralty that the war was ended and stated the lines upon which the Confederate cruisers were to be treated.[2] Here was prompt, even hurried, action though the only additional event of war in America which Russell could at the moment cite to warrant his change of policy was the capture of Jefferson Davis. On the same day Russell wrote to Bruce stating what had been done and recognizing the "re-establishment of peace within the whole territory of which the United States, before the commencement of the civil war, were in undisturbed possession."[3]

This sudden shift by the Government did not escape Derby's caustic criticism. June 12, he referred in Parliament to Houghton's previous inquiry and Russell's answer, asking why the Government had not stuck to its earlier position and calling attention to the fact that the United States, while now proclaiming certain ports open to trade, yet specified others as still closed and threatened with punishment as pirates, any vessel attempting to enter them. Derby desired information as to what the Government had done about this remarkable American proclamation. Russell, "who was very imperfectly heard," answered that undoubtedly it was embarrassing that no "regular communication" had been received from America giving notice of the end of the war, but that the two Confederate

[1] *Parliamentary Papers*, 1865, *Commons*, Vol. LVII. "Further Correspondence respecting the Cessation of Civil War in North America." No. 10.

[2] *Ibid.* "Correspondence respecting the Cessation of Civil War in North America."

cruisers still at sea and the entrance of one of them to various Australian ports had compelled some British action. He had consulted Adams, who had no instructions but felt confident the United States would soon formally declare the end of the war. The "piracy proclamation" was certainly a strange proceeding. Derby pushed for an answer as to whether the Government intended to let it go by unnoticed. Russell replied that a despatch from Bruce showed that "notice" had been taken of it. Derby asked whether the papers would be presented to Parliament; Russell "was understood to reply in the affirmative."[1] Derby's inquiry was plainly merely a hectoring of Russell for his quick shift from the position taken a month earlier. But the very indifference of Russell to this attack, his carelessness and evasion in reply, indicate confidence that Parliament was as eager as the Government to satisfy the North and to avoid friction. The only actual "notice" taken by Bruce at Washington of the "piracy proclamation" was in fact, to report it to Russell, commenting that it was "unintelligible" and probably a mere attempt to frighten foreign ship-owners.[2] Russell instructed Bruce not to ask for an explanation since Galveston had been captured subsequent to the date of the proclamation and there was presumably no port left where it could be applied.[3]

In truth the actual events of the closing days of the war had outrun diplomatic action by America. Scattered Southern forces still in the field surrendered with an unexpected rapidity, while at Washington all was temporarily in confusion upon the death of Lincoln and the illness of Seward. Bruce's advice had been wise and the prompt action of Russell fortunate. Seward at once accepted

[1] Hansard, 3rd. Ser., CLXXX, pp. 1-6.

[2] *Parliamentary Papers*, 1865, *Commons*, Vol. LVII. "Correspondence respecting President's Proclamation of 22nd May, 1865. Bruce to Russell, May 26, 1865.

[3] *Ibid.* June 16, 1865.

Russell's notification of June 2 as ending British neutrality. While again insisting upon the essential injustice of the original concession of belligerent rights to the South, and objecting to some details in the instructions to the Admiralty, he yet admitted that normal relations were again established and acknowledged that the United States could no longer exercise a right of search.[1] July 4, Russell presented this paper to Parliament, reading that portion in which Seward expressed his pleasure that the United States could now enter again upon normal relations with Great Britain.[2] Two days later Russell wrote to Bruce that he had not expected Seward to acknowledge the rightfulness of England's neutrality position, pointed out that his Admiralty instructions were misunderstood and were less objectionable than appeared and concluded by the expression of a hope for the "establishment of a lasting and intimate friendship between the two nations."[3]

. . . . . .

Great Britain, wrote the Russian Minister in Washington in January, 1860, was about to experience one of those "strokes of fortune" which occurred but rarely in the history of nations, in the approaching dissolution of the American Union. She alone, of all the nations of the world, would benefit by it in the expansion of her power, hitherto blocked by the might of the United States. Broken into two or more hostile pieces America would be at the mercy of England, to become her plaything. "The Cabinet of London is watching attentively the internal dissensions of the Union and awaits the result with an impatience which it has difficulty in disguising." Great Britain would soon,

[1] *Ibid.* "Further Correspondence respecting the Cessation of Civil War in North America." No. 9. Seward to Bruce, June 19, 1865.

[2] Hansard, 3rd. Ser., CLXXX, p. 1143.

[3] *Parliamentary Papers*, 1865, *Commons*, Vol. LVII. "Further Correspondence respecting the Cessation of Civil War in North America."

in return for cotton, give recognition to the South and, if required, armed support. For this same cotton she would oppose emancipation of the slaves. The break-up of the Union was no less than a disaster for all nations save England, since hitherto the "struggle" between England and the United States "has been the best guarantee against the ambitious projects and political egotism of the Anglo-Saxon race."[1]

This prophecy, made over a year in advance of events, was repeated frequently as the crisis in America approached and during the first two years of the war. Stoeckl was not solitary in such opinion. The French Minister of Foreign Affairs held it also—and the French Emperor puzzled himself in vain to discover why Great Britain, in furtherance of her own interests, did not eagerly accept his overtures for a vigorous joint action in support of the South.[2]

The preceding chapters of this work will have shown how unfounded was such prophecy. Stoeckl was behind the times, knowing nothing, apparently, of that positive change in British policy in the late 'fifties which resulted in a determination to cease opposition to the expansion of American power. Such opposition was then acknowledged to have been an error and in its place there sprang into being a conviction that the might of America would tend toward the greatness of England itself.[3] In the months preceding the outbreak of the Civil War all British governmental effort was directed toward keeping clear of the quarrel and toward conciliation of the two sections. No doubt there were those in Great Britain who rejoiced at the

[1] Russian Archives, Stoeckl to F. O., Dec. 23, 1859/Jan. 4, 1860. No. 146.

[2] *Ibid.* Stoeckl to F. O., Jan. 17-29, 1861. No. 267. He reports that he has seen a confidential letter from Thouvenel to Mercier outlining exactly his own ideas as to England being the sole gainer by the dissolution of the Union.

[3] For an analysis of this change see *The Cambridge History of British Foreign Policy*, Vol II, p. 277, which also quotes a remarkable speech by Disraeli.

rupture between North and South, but they were not in office and had no control of British policy.

The war once begun, the Government, anxious to keep clear of it, was prompt in proclaiming neutrality and hastened this step for fear of maritime complications with that one of the belligerents, the North, which alone possessed a naval force. But the British Ministry, like that of every other European state, believed that a revolution for independence when undertaken by a people so numerous and powerful as that of the South, must ultimately succeed. Hence as the war dragged on, the Ministry, pressed from various angles at home, ventured, with much uncertainty, upon a movement looking toward mediation. Its desire was first of all for the restoration of world peace, nor can any other motive be discovered in Russell's manœuvres. This attempt, fortunately for America and, it may be believed, for the world, was blocked by cool heads within the Ministry itself. There was quick and, as it proved, permanent readjustment of policy to the earlier decision not to meddle in the American crisis.

This very failure to meddle was cause of great complaint by both North and South, each expectant, from divergent reasons, of British sympathy and aid. The very anger of the North at British " cold neutrality " is evidence of how little America, feeling the ties of race and sentiment, could have understood the mistaken view-point of diplomats like Stoeckl, who dwelt in realms of " reasons of state," unaffected by popular emotions. Aside from race, which could be claimed also by the South, the one great argument of the North in appeal to England lay in the cry of anti-slavery. But the leaders of the North denied its pertinence. Itself unsympathetic with the emotions of emancipation societies at home, the British Government settled down by the end of 1862 to a fixed policy of strict neutrality.

is the business of Governments—the preservation of the prosperity and power of the state. With the unexpected prolongation of the war and the British recognition of the Northern " will to conquer " there came, as is evident from a scrutiny of Russell's diplomatic tone and acts, a growing belief that the North might after all succeed in its purpose, at least of subjugating the South. This would mean the possibility of continuing that policy of friendship for a united America which had been determined upon in the 'fifties. Here was no special sympathy, but merely a cool calculation of benefits to Great Britain, but there can be no question that the general attitude of the Government by midsummer of 1863 was distinctly favourable to a restored Union. A " friendly neutrality " began to replace a " cold neutrality."

But it is the business of Governments not merely to guard national interests and prosperity; they also must guard their own authority and seek to remain in political power. Here emancipation, never greatly stirring the leaders, whether Whig or Tory, exercised an increasing pressure by the force of public approval. It made impossible any attempt to overthrow the Ministry on the score of non-interference in America, or of favouritism toward the North. It gave to an enthusiastic and vociferous section of the British public just ground for strong support of Lincoln and his cause, and in some degree it affected governmental attitude.

There was, however, another question, much more vital than emancipation in its relation to British home politics, that ran like a constant thread through the whole pattern of British public attitude toward America. It had always been so since the days of the American revolution and now was accentuated by the American war. This was the question of the future of democracy. Was its fate bound up with the result of that war? And if so where lay British

interest? Always present in the minds of thoughtful Englishmen, appearing again and again through each changing phase of the war, this question was so much a constant that to have attempted discussion of it while other topics were being treated, would have resulted in repetition and confusion. It is therefore made the subject of a separate and concluding chapter.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE KEY-NOTE OF BRITISH ATTITUDE

On May 8, 1865, the news was received in London of Johnston's surrender to Sherman. On that same day there occurred in the Commons the first serious debate in thirty-three years on a proposed expansion of the electoral franchise. It was a dramatic coincidence and no mere fortuitous one in the minds of thoughtful Englishmen who had seen in the Civil War a struggle as fateful in British domestic policy as in that of America herself. Throughout all British political agitation from the time of the American revolution in 1776, there had run the thread of the American "example" as argument to some for imitation, to others for warning. Nearly every British traveller in America, publishing his impressions, felt compelled to report on American governmental and political institutions, and did so from his preconceived notions of what was desirable in his own country.[1] In the ten years immediately preceding the Civil War most travellers were laudatory of American democracy, and one, the best in acute analysis up to the time of Lord Bryce's great work, had much influence on that class in England which was discontented with existing political institutions at home. This was Mackay's *Western World* which, first published in 1849, had gone through four editions in 1850 and in succeeding years was frequently reprinted.[2] Republicanism, Mackay asserted, was no

[1] See my article, "The Point of View of the British Traveller in America," *Pol. Sci. Quarterly*, June, 1914.

[2] Alexander Mackay, *The Western World; or Travels in the United States in 1846-47.*

longer an experiment; its success and permanence were evident in the mighty power of the United States; Canada would soon follow the American example; the "injustice" of British aristocrats to the United States was intentional, seeking to discredit democracy:

> "... Englishmen are too prone to mingle severity with their judgments whenever the Republic is concerned. It is the interest of aristocracy to exhibit republicanism, wherever it is found, in the worst possible light, and the mass of the people have too long, by pandering to their prejudice, aided them in their object. They recognize America as the stronghold of republicanism. If they can bring it into disrepute here, they know that they inflict upon it the deadliest blow in Europe."[1]

On the opposing side were other writers. Tremenheere argued the inapplicability of American institutions to Great Britain.[2] The theoretical bases of those institutions were in some respects admirable but in actual practice they had resulted in the rule of the mob and had debased the nation in the estimation of the world; bribery in elections, the low order of men in politics and in Congress, were proofs of the evils of democracy; those in England who clamoured for a "numerical" rather than a class representation should take warning from the American experiment. Occasionally, though rarely, there appeared the impressions of some British traveller who had no political axe to grind,[3] but from 1850 to 1860, as in every previous decade, British writing on America was coloured by the author's attitude on

[1] *Ibid.* Fourth Edition, London, 1850, Vol. III, p. 24.

[2] Hugh Seymour Tremenheere, *The Constitution of the United States compared with Our Own*, London, 1854.

[3] e.g., William Kelly, *Across the Rocky Mountains from New York to California*, London, 1852. He made one acute observation on American democracy. "The division of parties is just the reverse in America to what it is in England. In England the stronghold of democracy is in the large towns, and aristocracy has its strongest supporters in the country. In America the ultra-democrat and leveller is the western farmer, and the aristocratic tendency is most visible amongst the manufacturers and merchants of the eastern cities." (p. 181.)

political institutions at home. The "example" of America was constantly on the horizon in British politics.

In 1860, the Liberal movement in England was at its lowest ebb since the high tide of 1832. Palmerston was generally believed to have made a private agreement with Derby that both Whig and Tory parties would oppose any movement toward an expansion of the franchise.[1] Lord John Russell, in his youth an eager supporter of the Reform Bill of 1832, had now gained the name of "Finality John" by his assertion that that Reform was final in British institutions. Political reaction was in full swing much to the discontent of Radicals like Bright and Cobden and their supporters. When the storm broke in America the personal characteristics of the two leaders North and South, Lincoln and Davis, took on, to many British eyes, an altogether extreme importance as if representative of the political philosophies of the two sections. Lincoln's "crudity" was democratic; Davis' "culture" was aristocratic—nor is it to be denied that Davis had "aristocratic" views on government.[2] But that this issue had any vital bearing on the quarrel between the American sections was never generally voiced in England. Rather, British comment was directed to the lesson, taught to the world by the American crisis, of the failure of democratic institutions in *national power*. Bright had long preached to the unenfranchised of England the prosperity and might of America and these had long been denied by the aristocratic faction to be a result of democratic institutions. At first the denial was now repeated, the *Saturday Review*, February 23, 1861, protesting that there was no essential connection between the "shipwreck" of American institutions and the movement in England for an expanded franchise. Even, the article

[1] Monypenny, *Disraeli*, IV, pp. 293-4, states a Tory offer to support Palmerston on these lines.

continued, if an attempt were made to show such a connection it would convince nobody since "Mr. Bright has succeeded in persuading a great number of influential persons that the admission of working-men into the constituencies is chiefly, if not solely, desirable on the ground that it has succeeded admirably in America and has proved a sovereign panacea against the war, taxation and confusion which are the curses of old Governments in Europe." Yet that the denial was not sincere is shown by the further assertion that "the shallow demagogues of Birmingham and other kindred platforms must bear the blame of the inference, drawn nearly universally at the present moment, that, if the United States become involved in hopeless difficulties, it would be madness to lower the qualification for the suffrage in England."

This pretended disclaimer of any essential relation between the American struggle and British institutions was not long persisted in. A month later the *Saturday Review* was strong in contemptuous criticism of the "promiscuous democracy" of the North.[1] Less political journals followed suit. The *Economist* thought the people of England would now be convinced of the folly of aping America and that those who had advocated universal suffrage would be filled with "mingled alarm, gratitude and shame."[2] Soon W. H. Russell could write, while still at Washington ". . . the world will only see in it all, the failure of republican institutions in time of pressure as demonstrated by all history—that history which America vainly thought she was going to set right and re-establish on new grounds and principles."[3] "The English worshippers of American institutions," said the *Saturday Review*, "are in danger of losing their last pretext for preferring

[1] March, 30, 1861.
[2] March 16, 1861.

the Republic to the obsolete and tyrannical Monarchy of England. . . . It now appears that the peaceable completion of the secession has become impossible, and it will be necessary to discover some new ground of superiority by which Mr. Buchanan or Mr. Lincoln may be advantageously contrasted with Queen Victoria."[1]

These expressions antedated the news of the actual opening of the war and may be regarded as jeers at Bright and his followers rather than as attempts to read a lesson to the public. No such expressions are to be found in the letters of leading officials though minor ones occasionally indulged in them.[2] As late as June, 1861, Adams declared that while some in England welcomed American disunion as a warning to their countrymen it was evident that but a small number as yet saw the cause of the North as identical with the world progress of free institutions.[3] Evidently he was disappointed that the followers of Bright were not exhibiting more courage and demanding public support of the North as fighting their battle at home. They were indeed strangely silent, depressed no doubt by American events, and discouraged. It required time also to arouse intensity of feeling on the American question and to see clearly the issues involved. Aristocratic Britain was first to declare a definite lesson to be learned, thereby bringing out the fighting qualities of British democracy. Throughout 1861, the comment was relatively mild. In July, *Blackwood's* declared:

> "It is precisely because we do not share the admiration of America for her own institutions and political tendencies that we do not now see in the impending change an event

[1] April 27, 1861.

[2] Bunch wrote to Russell, May 15, 1861, that the war in America was the "natural result of the much vaunted system of government of the United States"; it had "crumbled to pieces," and this result had long been evident to the public mind of Europe. (F. O., Am., Vol. 780, No. 58.)

[3] State Department, Eng., Vol. 77, No. 9. Adams to Seward, June 21,

altogether to be deplored. In those institutions and tendencies we saw what our own might be if the most dangerous elements of our Constitution should become dominant. We saw democracy rampant, with no restriction upon its caprices. We saw a policy which received its impulses always from below . . . nor need we affect particularly to lament the exhibition of the weak point of a Constitution . . . the disruption of which leaves entirely untouched the laws and usages which America owes to England, and which have contributed so powerfully to her prosperity. . . ."

"With a rival Government on the frontier . . . with great principles to be not vapoured about but put to the proof we should probably see the natural aristocracy rise from the dead level of the Republic, raising the national character with its own elevation."[1]

In the same month the *Quarterly*, always more calm, logical and convincing than *Blackwood's*, published "Democracy on its Trial."[2] "The example of America kept alive, as it had created, the party of progress"; now "it has sunk from the decrep tude of premature old age." If England, after such an example, permits herself to be led into democracy she "will have perished by that wilful infatuation which no warning can dispel."

Adams had complained that few British friends of progress identified the cause of the North with their own, but this was true of Americans also. The *Atlantic Monthly* for July 1861, discussed British attitude wholly in terms of cotton supply. But soon there appeared in the British press so many preachments on the "lesson" of America that the aristocratic effort to gain an advantage at home became apparent to all.[3] The *Economist* moralized on the "untried"

[1] I have made an effort to identify writers in *Blackwood's*, but am informed by the editors that it is impossible to do this for the period before 1870, old correspondence having been destroyed.

[2] July, 1861.

[3] The *Atlantic Monthly* for November, 1861, takes up the question, denying that democracy is in any sense "on trial" in America, so far as the permanence of American institutions is concerned. It still does

character of American institutions and statesmen, the latter usually as ignorant as the "masses" whom they represented and if more intellectual still more worthy of contempt because of their "voluntary moral degradation" to the level of their constituents.[1] "The upper and ruling class" wrote Bright to Sumner, were observing with satisfaction, "that democracy may get into trouble, and war, and debt, and taxes, as aristocracy has done for this country."[2] Thus Bright could not deny the blow to democracy; nor could the *Spectator*, upbraiding its countrymen for lack of sympathy with the North: "New England will be justified in saying that Old England's anti-slavery sympathies are mere hollow sentimental pretences, since she can rest satisfied to stuff her ears with cotton against the cries of the slaves, and to compensate her gentle regret over the new impulse given to slavery by her lively gratification over the paralyzing shock suffered by Democracy."[3] This was no taking up of cudgels for the North and "Progress" such as Adams had hoped for. Vigour rested with the opposing side and increased when hopes of a short war vanished. The *Saturday Review* asserted:

> "In that reconstruction of political philosophy which the American calamities are likely to inaugurate, the value of the popular element will be reduced to its due proportions. . . . The true guarantee of freedom will be looked for more in the equilibrium of classes than in the equality of individuals. . . . We may hope, at last, that the delusive confusion between freedom and democracy is finally banished from the minds of Englishmen."[4]

"The real secret," wrote Motley, "of the exultation which manifests itself in the *Times* and other organs over our troubles and disasters, is their hatred, not to America,

[1] Aug. 17, 1861.
[2] Sept. 6, 1861. (Mass. Hist. Soc. *Proceedings*, XLVI, p. 94.)
[3] Sept. 7, 1861.

so much as to democracy in England."[1] It was scarcely a secret in the columns of the journals already quoted. But no similar interpretation had as yet appeared in the *Times* and Motley's implication was justified for it and other leading daily newspapers. The Reviews and Weeklies were for the moment leading the attack—possibly one reason for the slowness in reply of Bright and his followers. Not all Reviews joined in the usual analysis. The *Edinburgh* at first saw in slavery the sole cause of the American dispute,[2] then attributed it to the inevitable failure in power of a federal system of government, not mentioning democracy as in question.[3] *Blackwood's* repeatedly pushed home its argument :

> "Independent of motives of humanity, we are glad that the end of the Union seems more likely to be ridiculous than terrible. . . . But for our own benefit and the instruction of the world we wish to see the faults, so specious and so fatal, of their political system exposed, in the most effective way. . . . And the venerable Lincoln, the respectable Seward, the raving editors, the gibbering mob, and the swift-footed warriors of Bull's Run, are no malicious tricks of fortune played off on an unwary nation, but are all of them the legitimate offspring of the great Republic. . . . dandled and nursed—one might say coddled—by Fortune, the spoiled child Democracy, after playing strange pranks before high heaven, and figuring in odd and unexpected disguises, dies as sheerly from lack of vitality as the oldest of worn-out despotisms. . . . In the hope that this contest may end in the extinction of mob rule, we become reconciled to the much slighter amount of suffering that war inflicts on America."[4]

Equally outspoken were a few public men who early espoused the cause of the South. Beresford Hope, before a "distinguished audience" used language insulting to the

[1] Motley, *Correspondence*, II, p. 35. To his mother, Sept. 22, 1861.
[2] April, 1861.
[3] Oct., 1861.
[4] Oct., 1861. Article "Democracy teaching by Example."

North, fawning upon the South and picturing the latter as wholly admirable for its aristocratic tendencies. For this he was sharply taken to task by the *Spectator*.[1] More sedately the Earl of Shrewsbury proclaimed, "I see in America the trial of Democracy and its failure. I believe that the dissolution of the Union is inevitable, and that men now before me will live to see an aristocracy established in America."[2] In all countries and at all times there are men over-eager in early prophecy on current events, but in such utterances as these there is manifest not merely the customary desire to stand in the limelight of assured knowledge and wisdom, but also the happy conviction that events in America were working to the undoing of the Radicals of Great Britain. If they would not be supine the Radicals must strike back. On December 4, at Rochdale where, as the *Times* asserted, he was sure of an audience sympathetic on purely personal grounds, Bright renewed his profession of faith in the American Republic and sang his accustomed praises of its great accomplishments.[3] The battle, for England, on American democracy, was joined; the challenge issued by aristocratic England, accepted.

But apart from extreme factions at either end of the scale there stood a group holding a middle ground opinion, not yet sure of the historical significance of the American collapse. To this group belonged Gladstone, as yet uncertain of his political philosophy, and regretful, though vainly, it would appear, of the blow to democracy. He wrote his thought to Brougham, no doubt hoping to influence the view-point of the *Edinburgh*.

> "This has without doubt been a deplorable year for poor 'Democracy' and never has the old woman been at a heavier discount since 1793. I see no discredit to the founders of the

[1] Nov. 23, 1861.
[2] Cited by Harris, *The Trent Affair*, p. 28.
[3] Robertson, *Speeches of John Bright*, I, pp. 177 *seq.*

American constitution in the main fact of the rupture. On the contrary it was a great achievement to strike off by the will and wit of man a constitution for two millions of men scattered along a seaboard, which has lasted until they have become more than thirty millions and have covered a whole continent. But the freaks, pranks, and follies, not to say worse, with which the rupture has been met in the Northern States, down to Mr. Chase's financial (not exposition but) exposure have really given as I have said the old lady in question such a heavy blow and great discouragement that I hope you will in the first vigour of your action be a little merciful and human lest you murder her outright."[1]

On this middle group of Englishmen and their moral conceptions the American Minister, Adams, at first pinned his faith, not believing in 1861 that the issues of democracy or of trade advantage would lead Great Britain from just rules of conduct. Even in the crisis of the *Trent* affair he was firm in this opinion:

"Much as the commercial and manufacturing interests may be disposed to view the tariff as the source of all our evils, and much as the aristocratic classes may endeavour to make democracy responsible for them, the inexorable logic of events is contradicting each and every assertion based on these notions, and proving that the American struggle is, after all, the ever-recurring one in human affairs between right and wrong, between labour and capital, between liberty and absolutism. When such an issue comes to be presented to the people of Great Britain, stripped of all the disguises which have been thrown over it, it is not difficult to predict at least which side it will *not* consent to take.[2]

April, 1861, saw the beginning of the aristocratic challenge on American democracy and December its acceptance by Bright. Throughout 1862 he practically deserted his seat in Parliament and devoted himself to

[1] Gladstone Papers, Dec. 27, 1861.

[2] State Dept., Eng., Vol. 78, No. 95. Adams to Seward, Dec. 27, 1861. As printed in *U.S. Messages and Documents*, 1862-63, Pt. I, p. 14. Adams'

stirring up labour and radical sentiment in favour of the North. In January, 1862, a mass meeting at New Hall, Edgware Road, denounced the daily press and was thought of sufficient moment to be reported by Adams. A motion was carried :

> "That in the opinion of this meeting, considering the ill-disguised efforts of the *Times* and other misleading journals to misrepresent public opinion here on all American questions . . . to decry democratic institutions under the trials to which the Republic is exposed, it is the duty of the working-men especially as unrepresented in the National Senate to express their sympathy with the United States in their gigantic struggle for the preservation of the Union. . . ."[1]

The daily press was, in fact, now joining more openly in the controversy. The *Morning Post*, stating with conviction its belief that there could be no re-union in America, added :

> ". . . if the Government of the United States should succeed in reannexing them [the Southern States] to its still extensive dominions, Democracy will have achieved its grandest triumph since the world began. It will have demonstrated to the ample satisfaction of its present and future proselytes that it is even more puissant in war than in peace ; that it can navigate not only the smooth seas of unendangered prosperity, but can ride safely through the fiercest tempests that would engulf every other craft laden with human destinies ; that it can descend to the darkest depths of adversity, and rise from them all the stronger for the descent. . . . And who can doubt that Democracy will be more arrogant, more aggressive, more levelling and vulgarizing, if that be possible, than it ever had been before."[2]

By midsummer, 1862, Adams was more convinced than in 1861 that the political controversy in England had an important bearing on the attitude toward America. Even the alleged neutrality of *Fraser's Magazine* seemed turning

[1] *Ibid.*, No. 110, Enclosure, Adams to Seward, Jan. 21, 1862.

to one-sided presentation of the "lesson" of America. Mill's defence of the North, appearing in the February number, was soon followed in July by the first of a series of articles, "Universal Suffrage in the United States and Its Consequences," depicting the war as the result of mob rule and predicting a military despotism as its inevitable consequence. The Liberals were losing strength, wrote Adams:

> "That the American difficulties have materially contributed to this result cannot be doubted. The fact that many of the leading Liberals are the declared friends of the United States is a decided disadvantage in the contest now going on. The predominating passion here is the desire for the ultimate subdivision of America into many separate States which will neutralize each other. This is most visible among the conservative class of the Aristocracy who dread the growth of liberal opinions and who habitually regard America as the nursery of them."[1]

From all this controversy Government leaders kept carefully aloof at least in public expression of opinion. Privately, Russell commented to Palmerston, "I have been reading a book on Jefferson by De Witt, which is both interesting and instructive. It shows how the Great Republic of Washington degenerated into the Democracy of Jefferson. They are now reaping the fruit."[2] Was it mere coincidence or was there significance in an editorial in Palmerston's alleged "organ," the *Morning Post*:

> "That any Englishman has looked forward with pleasure to the calamities of America is notoriously and demonstrably

[1] State Dept., Eng., Vol. 80, No. 206. Adams to Seward, Aug. 8, 1862. Of this period in 1862, Rhodes (IV, 78) writes that "the most significant and touching feature of the situation "was that the cotton operative population was frankly on the side of the North.' Lutz, *Die Beziehungen zwischen Deutschland und den Vereinigten Staaten während des Sezessionskrieges*, pp. 49-53, makes an interesting analysis of the German press, showing it also determined in its attitude by factional political idealisms in Germany.

[2] Palmerston MS., Aug. 24, 1862.

> false. But we have no hesitation in admitting that many thoughtful Englishmen who have watched, in the policy of the United States during the last twenty years, the foreshadowing of a democratic tyranny compared with which the most corrupt despotisms of the Old World appear realms of idyllic happiness and peace, have gratefully recognized the finger of Providence in the strife by which they have been so frightfully rent asunder. . . ."[1]

In October the heavy artillery of the Conservatives was again brought into action and this time with more explicit diagnosis than heretofore. "For a great number of years," said the *Quarterly*, "a certain party among us, great admirers of America . . . have chosen to fight their English battles upon American soil." Now the American Government "has disgracefully and ignominiously failed" at all points. It is evident that "political equality is not merely a folly, it is a chimera."[2] At last, in November, the *Times* openly took the position which its accusers declared to have been the basis of its editorial utterances almost from the beginning of the Civil War.

> "These are the consequences of a cheap and simple form of government, having a rural attorney for Sovereign and a city attorney for Prime Minister. We have already said that if such a terrible exposure of incapacity had happened in England we should at the earliest moment possible have sent the incapables about their business, and put ourselves in the hands of better men. . . ."
>
> "This Republic has been so often proposed to us as a model for imitation that we should be unpardonable not to mark how it works now, when for the first time it has some work to do. We believe that if the English system of Parliamentary action had existed in America, the war could not have occurred, but we are quite sure that such Ministers would have long since been changed."[3]

[1] Aug. 30, 1862.
[2] October, 1862. "The Confederate Struggle and Recognition."
[3] Nov. 4, 1862.

In addition to a Conservative ringing the changes upon the failure of democracy, the open friends of the South dilated also upon the "gentlemanly" characteristics of Southern leaders and society. This was the frequent burden of articles in *The Index* in the early weeks of its publication. To this was soon added a picture of Northern democracy as composed of and controlled by the "immigrant element" which was the source of "the enormous increase of population in the last thirty years" from revolutionary areas in Europe. "Germans, Hungarians, Irish carried with them more than their strong arms, they imported also their theories of equality. . . . The revolutionary party which represents them is at this moment master in the States of the North, where it is indulging in all its customary licence."[1] This fact, complained *The Index*, was not sufficiently brought out in the English press. Very different was the picture painted by Anthony Trollope after a tour of the Western states:

> "... this man has his romance, his high poetic feeling, and above all his manly dignity. Visit him, and you will find him without coat or waistcoat, unshorn, in ragged blue trousers and old flannel shirt, too often bearing on his lantern jaws the signs of ague and sickness; but he will stand upright before you and speak to you with all the ease of a lettered gentleman in his own library. All the odious incivility of the republican servant has been banished. He is his own master, standing on his own threshold, and finds no need to assert his equality by rudeness. He is delighted to see you, and bids you sit down on his battered bench, without dreaming of any such apology as an English cotter offers to a Lady Bountiful when she calls. He has worked out his independence, and shows it in every easy movement of his body. He tells you of it unconsciously in every tone of his voice. You will always find in his cabin some newspaper, some book, some token of advance in education. When he questions you about the old country he astonishes you by the extent of his knowledge.

[1] *The Index*, Nov. 20, 1862, p. 63. (Communication.)

I defy you not to feel that he is superior to the race from whence he has sprung in England or in Ireland."

. . . . . .

"It is always the same story. With us there is no level of society. Men stand on a long staircase, but the crowd congregates near the bottom, and the lower steps are very broad. In America men stand upon a common platform, but the platform is raised above the ground, though it does not approach in height the top of our staircase. If we take the average altitude in the two countries, we shall find that the American heads are the more elevated of the two."[1]

A comparison of dates shows that the unanimity of conservative and aristocratic expression on the failure of American democracy and its lesson to England was most marked and most open at the moment when the Government was seriously considering an offer of mediation in the war. Meanwhile the emancipation proclamation of September, 1862, had appeared. It did not immediately affect governmental attitude, save adversely to the North, and it gave a handle for pro-Southern outcry on the score of a "servile war." Indeed, the radicals were at first depressed by it; but when months passed with no appearance of a servile war and when the second emancipation proclamation of January, 1863, further certified the moral purpose of the North, a great element of strength was added to the English advocates of democracy. The numerous "addresses" to Lincoln exhibited both a revived moral enthusiasm for the cause of anti-slavery and were frequently combined with a laudation of American political institutions. The great mass-meeting at Exeter Hall, January 29, 1863, was described by the correspondent of an American paper as largely deriving its strength from the universal dissatisfaction

[1] Anthony Trollope, *North America*, London, 1862, Vol. I, p. 198. The work appeared in London in 1862, and was in its third edition by the end of the year. It was also published in New York in 1862 and in Philadelphia in 1863.

of the lower orders of the English people with their existing conditions under the Crown:

> "The descendants of the Roundhead commoners, chafing under the limitations of the franchise, burdensome taxation, the contempt with which they are regarded by the lords of the soil, the grievous effects of the laws of entail and primogeniture, whereby they are kept poor and rendered liable to starvation and pauperism—these have looked to America as the model democracy which proves the poor man's capacity for self-government." The meeting was called for seven o'clock but at half after five the hall was filled, and at six crowded. A second hall was filled and outdoor meetings of two thousand people organized in Exeter Street. "All working-class England was up in arms, not so much against slavery as against British oligarchy."[1]

The correspondent further reported rumours that this meeting had caused anxious consideration to the managers of the *Times*, and the decision to step more warily. No doubt this was exaggeration of the political character and effect of the meeting, but certain it is that the political element was present joining hands with anti-slavery enthusiasm. Also it is noteworthy that the last confident and vigorous expression of the "failure" of democracy, from sources professedly neutral, appeared immediately after the St. James' Hall meeting, but was necessarily written before that meeting took place. *Blackwood's*, in its issue of February, 1863, declared, as before: "Every sensible man in this country now acknowledges . . . that we have already gone as far toward democracy as is safe to go. . . . This is the great moral benefit which we have derived from the events in America." John Blackwood was an intimate friend of Delane, editor of the *Times*, holding similar views on political questions; but the *Times* was suddenly grown cautious in reading English

[1] *The Liberator*, March 13, 1863, quoting a report in the *New York Sunday Mercury*.

political lessons from America. In truth, attack now rested with the Radicals and Bright's oratory was in great demand.[1] He now advanced from the defensive position of laudation of the North to the offensive one of attacking the Southern aristocracy, not merely because it wished to perpetuate African slavery, but because it desired to make all the working-classes as subservient to it as was the negro.[2] It was now Radical purpose to keep the battle raging and they were succeeding. Bigelow believed that the United States might well recognize its opportunity in this controversy and give aid to its friends:

> "After all, this struggle of ours both at home and abroad is but a struggle between the principle of popular government and government by a privileged class. The people therefore all the world over are in a species of solidarity which it is our duty and interest to cultivate to the utmost."[3]

But Adams gave contrary advice. Wholly sympathetic with the democratic movement in England as now, somewhat to his surprise, developed, he yet feared that the extremes to which Bright and others were going in support of the North might create unfortunate reactions in the Government. Especially he was anxious that the United States should not offer opportunity for accusation of interference in a British political quarrel. It is noteworthy that while many addresses to Lincoln were forwarded by him and many were printed in the annual publication of diplomatic correspondence, those that thus appeared dealt almost exclusively with

[1] Lord Salisbury is quoted in Vince, *John Bright*, p. 204, as stating that Bright "was the greatest master of English oratory that this generation—I may say several generations—has seen. I have met men who have heard Pitt and Fox, and in whose judgment their eloquence at its best was inferior to the finest efforts of John Bright. At a time when much speaking has depressed, has almost exterminated, eloquence, he maintained that robust, powerful and vigorous style in which he gave fitting expression to the burning and noble thoughts he desired to utter."

[2] Speech at Rochdale, Feb. 3, 1863. (Robertson, *Speeches of John Bright*, I, pp. 234 *seq.*)

[3] Bigelow to Seward, Feb. 6, 1863. (Bigelow, *Retrospections*, I, p. 600.)

emancipation. Yet Adams was also forwarding addresses and speeches harping on American democracy. A meeting at Edinburgh, February 19, found place, in its emancipation aspect in the United States documents,[1] but the burden of that meeting, democracy, did not. It was there proclaimed that the British press misrepresented conditions in America, " because the future of free political institutions, as sketched in the American Declaration of Independence and in the State Constitutions of the Northern States, would be a standing argument against the expansion of the franchise and the enjoyment of just political rights among us, as well as a convenient argument in favour of the continued domination of our aristocratic parties."[2] The tide of democratic feeling was rising rapidly in England. On March 26, Adams wrote to Seward of a recent debate in Parliament that that body was much more judicious in expressions on America than it had been before 1862. "It will not escape your observation that the question is now felt to be taking a shape which was scarcely anticipated by the managers [of the *Times*] when they first undertook to guide the British mind to the overthrow of free institutions in America."[3]

On the evening of the day on which this was written there occurred the greatest, most outspoken, and most denunciatory to the aristocracy, of the meetings held to support the cause of the North. This was the spectacular gathering of the Trades Unions of London at St. James' Hall, on March 26, usually regarded as the culminating effort in Bright's tour of England for the cause of democracy, but whose origin is somewhat shrouded in mystery. Socialist tradition claims that Karl Marx conceived the idea

[1] *U.S. Messages and Documents*, 1863, Pt. I, p. 123.

[2] State Dept., Eng., Adams to Seward. No. 334. Feb. 26, 1863. enclosing report of the Edinburgh meeting as printed in *The Weekly Herald, Mercury and News*, Feb. 21, 1863.

of the meeting and was responsible for its organization.[1] The press generally reported it as a "Bright Meeting." Adams wrote to Seward of the pressure put on him by Professor Beesly, of the University of London, to send a representative from the American Ministry, Beesly expanding upon the importance and high standing of the Trades Unions. To this Adams demurred but finally sent his son to sit in the audience and report the proceedings.

Whatever its origin there can be no doubt that this was the most important of all pro-Northern meetings held in England during the Civil War, nor that its keynote was "America fighting the battle of democracy." Save for some distinguished speakers those in attendance consisted almost wholly of three thousand picked representatives of the Trades Unions of London. Adams transmitted to Seward his son's report of the meeting, its character, composition, names of speakers and their emphatic expressions of friendship for the North,[2] but it is again noteworthy that Henry Adams' clear analysis of the real significance of the meeting was not printed in the published diplomatic correspondence. Giving due praise to the speeches of Bright and Beesly, and commenting on press assertions that "the extraordinary numbers there were only brought together by their curiosity to hear Mr. Bright," Henry Adams continued: "That this was not the case

[1] Spargo, *Karl Marx*, pp. 224-5. Spargo claims that Marx bent every effort to stir working men to a sense of class interest in the cause of the North and even went so far as to secure the presence of Bright at the meeting, as the most stirring orator of the day, though personally he regarded Bright "with an almost unspeakable loathing." On reading this statement I wrote to Mr. Spargo asking for evidence and received the reply that he believed the tradition unquestionably well founded, though "almost the only testimony available consists of a reference or two in one of his [Marx's] letters and the ample corroborative testimony of such friends as Lessner, Jung and others." This is scant historical proof; but some years later in a personal talk with Henry Adams, who was in 1863 his father's private secretary, and who attended and reported the meeting, the information was given that Henry Adams himself had then understood and always since believed Marx's to have been the guiding hand in organizing the meeting.

[2] *U.S. Messages and Documents*, 1863, Pt. I, p. 162. (Adams to Seward,

must have been evident to every person present. In fact, it was only after he closed that the real business of the evening began." Then followed speeches and the introduction of resolutions by " Mr. Howell, a bricklayer . . . Mr. Odgers, a shoemaker . . . Mr. Mantz, a compositor. . . Mr. Cremer, a joiner, who was bitter against Lord Palmerston . . . Mr. Conolly, a mason . . ." and other labouring men, all asserting " that the success of free institutions in America was a political question of deep consequence in England and that they would not tolerate any interference unfavourable to the North." No one, the report emphasized, " could doubt what was intended."

> " The meeting was a demonstration of democratic strength and no concealment of this fact was made. If it did not have a direct political bearing on internal politics in England it needed little of doing so. There was not even a profession of faith in the government of England as at present constituted. Every hostile allusion to the Aristocracy, the Church, the opinions of the ' privileged classes,' was received with warm cheers. Every allusion to the republican institutions of America, the right of suffrage, the right of self-taxation, the ' sunlight ' of republican influence, was caught up by the audience with vehement applause. It may therefore be considered as fairly and authoritatively announced that the class of skilled workmen in London—that is the leaders of the pure popular movement in England—have announced by an act almost without precedent in their history, the principle that they make common cause with the Americans who are struggling for the restoration of the Union and that all their power and influence shall be used on behalf of the North."[1]

Bright's words of most scarifying indictment of " Privilege," and his appeal to workers to join hands with their fellows in America have been given in a previous

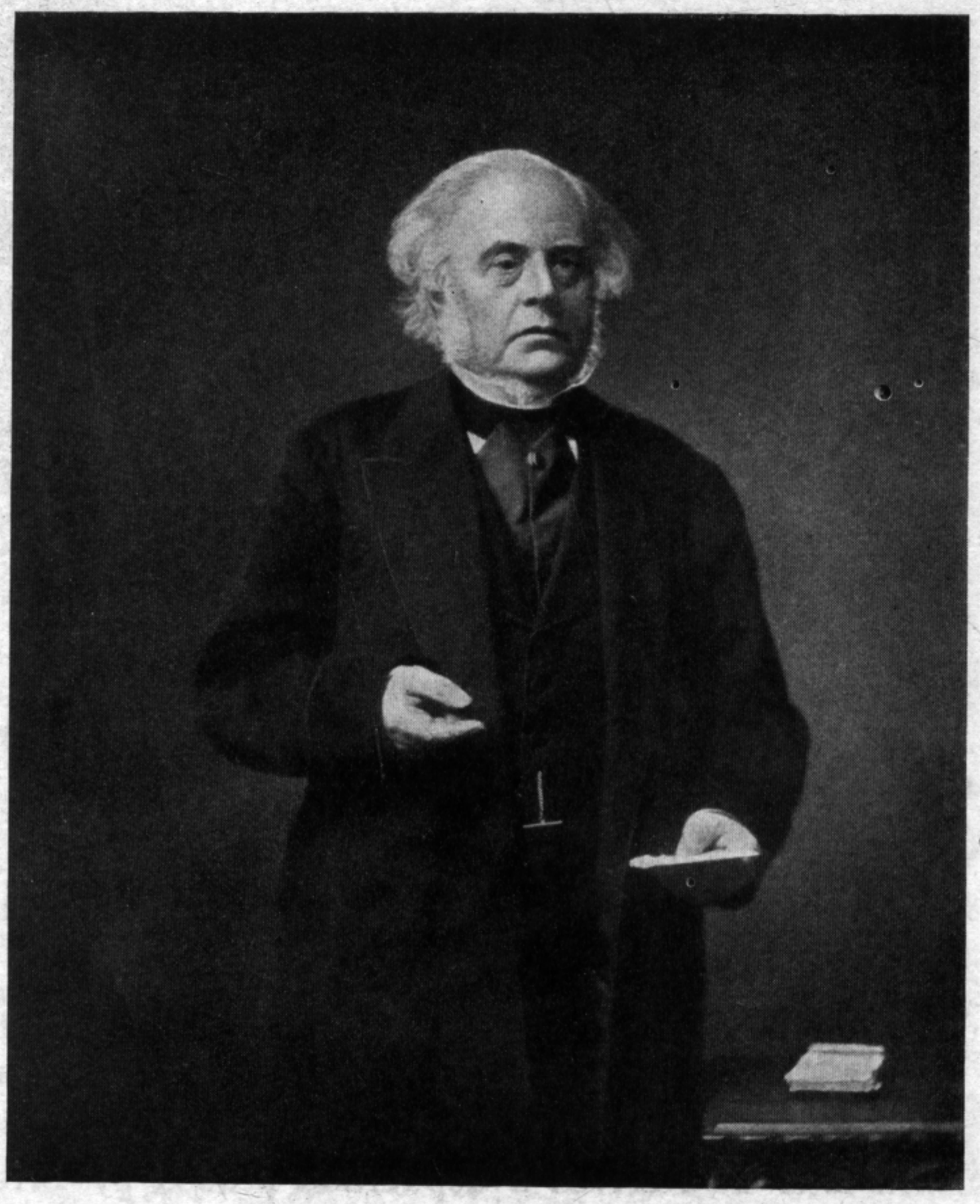
[1] State Dept., Eng., Vol. 82, No. 358. Adams to Seward, March 27, 1863, enclosing report by Henry Adams. There was also enclosed the printed report, giving speeches at length, as printed by *The Bee Hive*, the organ of the London Trades Unions.

chapter.[1] Evidently that appeal, though enthusiastically received for its oratorical brilliance, was unneeded. His was but an eloquent expression of that which was in the minds of his audience. Upon the American Minister the effect was to cause him to renew warnings against showing too keen an appreciation of the support of political radicalism in England. The meeting, he wrote, had at once stirred anxiety in Parliament and verged :

> " . . . much too closely upon the minatory in the domestic politics of this Kingdom to make it easy to recognize or sympathize with by Foreign Governments. . . . Hence it seems to me of the greatest consequence that the treatment of all present questions between the two nations should be regulated by a provident forecast of what may follow it [the political struggle in England] hereafter. I am not sure that some parties here would not now be willing even to take the risk of a war in order the more effectually to turn the scale against us, and thus, as they think, to crush the rising spirit of their own population. That this is only a feeling at present and has not yet risen to the dignity of a policy may be true enough ; but that does not the less impose upon the Government at home a duty so to shape its actions as, if possible, to defeat all such calculations and dissipate such hopes. . . . We owe this duty not less to the great body of those who in this kingdom are friends to us and our institutions, than to ourselves." [2]

Thus Adams advised his Government to tread lightly in respect to democratic agitation in England. Over a month later he received a deputation headed by Bright, come to present to him the resolutions passed at the Trades Unions' meeting. The deputation expressed fears that a rupture was imminent in the relations of Great Britain and America, and that this would have a disastrous influence on the aspirations of working-class Europe. Adams replied in general terms of appreciation for the sympathies expressed

[1] See *ante*, p. 132.
[2] State Dept., Eng., Vol. 82, No. 360. Adams to Seward, April 2, 1863.



JOHN BRIGHT

(From a photograph taken of him in the attitude in which he usually spoke)

(From Trevelyan's "Life of John Bright")

by the meeting but carefully avoided specific comment on its democratic purpose. "He was too prudent," said the *Times* in reporting the deputation, "to appraise the importance of the particular demonstration to which his notice was invited . . ." and his reply was given favourable comment.[1] This reply, wrote Adams, "appears to have had a sedative effect."[2] Meanwhile, Bright continued his preachment to the English people though modifying his tone of fierce accusation against "privilege," and confining himself to declaring the interest of the unenfranchised in the American conflict. In a speech before the Union and Emancipation Society of London, on June 16, he asserted for the "twenty millions of people in this country" as yet without representation in Parliament, "I say that these have an interest, almost as great and direct as though they were living in Massachusetts or New York, in the tremendous struggle for freedom which is now shaking the whole North American Continent."[3] Like utterances were repeated at further public meetings and so insistent were they as to require reply by the conservative faction, even if, as was supposed, the effect of the Trades' Union attitude had been to give a halt to the vehemence of those who had been sounding the "lesson" of American failure in democracy. Bright became the centre of attack. The *Times* led.

> "His is a political fanaticism. He used to idolize the Constitution of the United States as the one great dominant Democracy of the world. He believes in it still, and, if it must go, he is ready to idolize its memory. For this he gives up all his most cherished notions and all his less absorbing principles. . . ."
>
> "Yet Mr. Bright is consistent. He has one master passion

[1] May 5, 1863.

[2] *U.S. Diplomatic Correspondence*, 1863, Ft. I, p. 243. Adams to Seward, May 7, 1863.

[3] Robertson, *Speeches of John Bright*, I, p. 264. In a letter to Bigelow, March 16, 1863, Bright estimated that there were seven millions of men of twenty-one years of age and upward in the United Kingdom, of whom slightly over one million had the vote. (Bigelow, *Retrospections*, I, p. 610.)

> and his breast, capacious as it is, can hold no more. That master passion is the love of that great dominant Democracy. He worshipped it while rising to its culminating point, and he is obliged to turn right round to worship it while setting. He did not himself know, until tested by this great trial, how entirely his opinions as to war and peace, and slavery and freedom, and lust of conquest and hatred of oppression, were all the mere accidents which hung loosely upon him, and were capable of being detached at once in the interest of the ruling passion of his soul for that great dominant Democracy. Nor need we wonder; for if that great Democracy has been a failure, then men will say that the life of Mr. John Bright up to this time has been but a foolish dream." [1]

Evidently Bright's speeches were causing anxiety and bitterness; but an "if" had crept into the estimate of the future of American democracy, caused less by the progress of the war than by the rising excitement of democratic England. The *Times* editorial just quoted appeared when the faith was generally professed that Lee was about to end the war through the invasion of Pennsylvania. In the reaction created by the arrival of the news of Gettysburg and Vicksburg, Adams still again warned his Government against either a belligerent or interfering attitude toward Great Britain, but stated plainly that Northern victory was of supreme importance in Europe itself. "We have a mission to fulfill. It is to show, by our example to the people of England in particular, and to all nations in general, the value of republican institutions." There was still a general belief in the incompetency of those institutions. "The greatest triumph of all would be to prove these calculations vain. In comparison with this, what would be the gain to be derived from any collision with the powers of Europe?"[2]

[1] July 2, 1863. The editorial was written in connection with Roebuck's motion for mediation and is otherwise interesting for an attempt to characterize each of the speakers in the Commons.

[2] *U.S. Diplomatic Correspondence*, 1863, Part I, p. 319. To Seward,

It is strange that with so clearly-expressed a division of English opinion on American democracy few in America itself appreciated the significance of the British controversy. J. M. Forbes, who had been on a special mission to England, wrote to Lincoln, on his return :[1]

> " Our friends abroad see it ! John Bright and his glorious band of English Republicans see that we are fighting for Democracy or (to get rid of the technical name) for liberal institutions ; the Democrats and the liberals of the old world are as much and as heartily with us as any supporters we have on this side.
>
> Our enemies too see it in the same light ; the Aristocrats and the Despots of the old world see that our quarrel is that of the People against an Aristocracy."[2]

But there are few similar expressions and these few nearly always came from men who had been abroad and had thus come into direct contact with British political movements. Meanwhile, Lee's retreat from Pennsylvania had produced a like retreat in the opinions on the failure of democracy earlier confidently held by the professedly neutral press. In September, having arrived at the point by the usual process of gradually facing about, the *Times* was bold enough to deny that England had any personal feeling or concern about democracy in America or that this had anything to do with English attitude on the war.[3] Thenceforth neither the *Times* nor any of the leading papers saw fit to revive with vigour the cry of " democracy's failure," no matter how persistent in proclaiming ultimate victory for the South. Aristocratic exultation had given place to alarm and it seemed wiser, if possible, to quiet the issue.[4] Not so the

[1] See *ante*, p. 130, *note* 2.

[2] MS. letter, Sept. 8, 1863, in possession of C. F. Adams, Jr.

[3] Sept. 24, 1863.

[4] Even the friendly Russian Minister in Washington was at this time writing of the " rule of the mob " in America and trusting that the war, " the result of democracy," would serve as a warning to Europe. (Russian Archives, Stoeckl to F. O., Nov. 29-Dec. 11, 1864, No. 1900.)

Radicals, who made every effort to keep the issue alive in the minds of the British public, and whose leaders with less violence but increased firmness debated the question in every public meeting favourable to the North.[1] Many Conservatives, Adams reported, were now anxiously sitting on the fence yet finding the posture a difficult one because of their irritation at Bright's taunts.[2] Bright's star was rising. "The very moment the war comes to an end," wrote Adams, "and a restoration of the Union follows, it will be the signal for a reaction that will make Mr. Bright perhaps the most formidable public man in England."[3]

The continuation of the controversy was not, however, wholly one-sided. In the silence of the daily press it seemed incumbent upon the more eager and professed friends of the South to take up the cudgels. Hence, in part, came the organization of the Southern Independence Association and the attempt to hold public meetings favourable to the South, in the early months of 1864. Much talk had been spent on the "British issue" involved in the war; there was now to be vigorous work to secure it.[4] *The Index* plunged into vigorous denunciation of "The Manchester School, which, for convenience and truth, we had better for the future call the American School." Even the Government was attacked for its complacence under the "American danger" and for retaining as a member Milner-Gibson, who, in a recent speech, had shown that he shared Bright's views on democracy:

> "That gentleman [Bright] could not be asked to enter the Cabinet in person. The country abhorred him; Parliament despised him; his inveterate habits of slander and vitupera-

[1] State Dept., Eng., Vol. 84, Nos. 557 and 559. Adams to Seward, Dec. 17, 1863. Adams repeated his advice to "keep out of it."

[2] *Ibid.* Vol. 85, No. 587. Adams to Seward, Jan. 29, 1864. Adams here expressed the opinion that it was partly the aristocratic antipathy to Bright that had *produced* the ill-will to the United States.

[3] *Ibid.*

[4] See Ch. XV.

tion, his vulgarity, and his incurable want of veracity, had made him so hateful to the educated classes that it would have required no common courage to give him office; his insolent sneers at royalty would have made his appointment little less than a personal insult to the Queen; and his bad temper would have made him an intolerable colleague in the Council. But Mr. Bright had another self; a faithful shadow, which had no ideas, no soul, no other existence but what it borrowed from him, while its previous life and education had accustomed it to the society of statesmen and of gentlemen."[1]

Such expressions gained nothing for the Conservative cause; they were too evidently the result of alarm at the progress of Radical and pro-Northern sentiment. Goldwin Smith in a "Letter" to the Southern Independence Association, analysed with clarity the situation. Answering criticisms of the passionate mob spirit of Northern press and people, he accused the *Times* of having

"... pandered to the hatred of America among the upper classes of this country during the present war. Some of us at least had been taught by what we have lately seen not to shrink from an extension of the suffrage, if the only bad consequence of that measure of justice would be a change in government from the passions of the privileged class to the passions of the people. ... History will not mistake the meaning of the loud cry of triumph which burst from the hearts of all who openly or secretly hated liberty and progress, at the fall, as they fondly supposed, of the Great Republic." British working men "are for the most part as well aware that the cause of those who are fighting for the right of labour is theirs, as any nobleman in your Association can be that the other cause in his."[2]

The question of democracy as a political philosophy and as an institution for Great Britain was, by 1864, rapidly coming to the front in politics. This was very largely a result of the American Civil War. Roebuck, after the failure of his

[1] *The Index*, Jan. 28, 1864, p. 58.

[2] Goldwin Smith, *A Letter to a Whig Member of the Southern Independence Association*, London, 1864, pp. 14, 68, and 71.

effort for mediation in 1863, was obsessed with a fear of the tendency in England. "I have great faith in my countrymen," he wrote, "but the experience of America frightens me. I am not ashamed to use the word *frightened*. During my whole life I have looked to that country as about to solve the great problem of self-government, and now, in my old age, the hopes of my youth and manhood are destroyed, and I am left to reconstruct my political philosophy, and doubt and hesitation beset me on every point."[1] More philosophically Matthew Arnold, in 1864, characterized the rule of aristocracy as inevitably passing, but bent his thought to the discovery of some middle ground or method—some "influence [which] may help us to prevent the English people from becoming, with the growth of democracy, *Americanized*."[2] "There is no longer any sort of disguise maintained," wrote Adams, "as to the wishes of the privileged classes. Very little genuine sympathy is entertained for the rebels. The true motive is apparent enough. It is the fear of the spread of democratic feeling at home in the event of our success."[3]

The year 1864 had witnessed a rapid retreat by wiser Conservative elements in proclaiming the "lesson" of American democracy—a retreat caused by alarm at the vigour with which Radicals had taken up the challenge. Conservative hopes were still fixed upon Southern success and Conservative confidence loudly voiced. Even the pride of the *Times* in the accuracy of its news and in its military forecasts was subordinated to the purpose of keeping up the courage of the faction it represented.[4] Small wonder, then, that Delane, on receiving the news of Sherman's arrival before Savannah, should be made physically ill and write to Dasent: "The American news is a heavy blow

[1] Leader, *Roebuck*, p. 299. To William Ibbitt, April 26, 1864.
[2] Arnold, *Mixed Essays*, p. 17. (N. Y., Macmillan, 1883.)
[3] State Dept., Eng., Vol. 86, No. 709. Adams to Seward, June 9, 1864.
[4] See *ante*, Ch. XVI.

to us as well as to the South." The next day he added: "I am still sore vexed about Sherman, but Chenery did his best to attenuate the mischief."[1] "Attenuation" of Northern progress in arms was, indeed, attempted, but the facts of the military situation were too strong for continued concealment. From January, 1865, only the most stubborn of Southern friends could remain blind to the approaching Northern victory. Lord Acton, a hero-worshipper of the great Confederate military leader, "broke his heart over the surrender of Lee," but was moved also by keen insight as to the political meaning of that surrender.[2]

So assured were all parties in England that the great Civil War in America was closing in Northern victory that the final event was discounted in advance and the lines were rapidly being formed for an English political struggle on the great issue heralded as involved in the American conflict. Again, on the introduction of a motion in Parliament for expansion of the franchise the ultra-Conservatives attempted to read a "lesson" from America. The *Quarterly* for April, 1865, asserted that even yet "the mass of educated men in England retain the sympathy for the South which they have nourished ever since the conflict assumed a decided shape." America was plainly headed in the direction of a military despotism. Her example should warn England from a move in the same direction. "The classes which govern this country are in a minority," and should beware of majority rule. But events discredited the prophecy of a military despotism. The assassination of Lincoln gave opportunity not merely for a general outpouring of expressions of sympathy but also to the Radicals a chance to exalt Lincoln's leadership in democracy.[3]

[1] Dasent, *Delane*, II, pp. 135-6. Delane to Dasent, Dec. 25 and 26, 1864. The *Times* on December 26 pictured Sherman as having *escaped* to the sea, but on the 29th acknowledged his achievements.

[2] *Lord Acton's Letters to Mary Gladstone*, p. 183.

[3] These were not confined to Great Britain. The American Legation in Berlin received addresses of sympathy from many organizations, especially

In July Great Britain was holding elections for a new Parliament. Not a single member who had supported the cause of the North failed of re-election, several additional Northern "friends" were chosen, and some outspoken members for the South were defeated. Adams thought this a matter deserving special notice in America, and prophesied a new era approaching in England:

"As it is, I cannot resist the belief that this period marks an era in the political movement of Great Britain. Pure old-fashioned conservatism has so far lost its hold on the confidence of the country that it will not appear in that guise any more. Unless some new and foreign element should interpose, I look for decided progress in enlarging the popular features of the constitution, and diminishing the influence of the aristocracy. . . . It is impossible not to perceive traces of the influence of our institutions upon all these changes. . . . The progress of the liberal cause, not in England alone, but all over the world, is, in a measure, in our hands."[1]

The "Liberal progress" was more rapid, even, than Adams anticipated. Palmerston, ill for some months past, died on October 18, 1865. Russell succeeded him as head of the Ministry, and almost immediately declared himself in favour of Parliamentary reform even though a majority in both Houses was still opposed to such a measure. Russell's desertion of his earlier attitude of "finality" on franchise expansion correctly represented the acceptance, though unwillingly, by both political parties of the necessity of reform. The battle, long waged, but reaching its decisive moment during the American Civil War, had finally gone

labour unions. One such, drawn by W. Liebknecht, A. Vogt, and C. Schilling read in part: "Members of the working-class, we need not affirm to you the sincerity of these our sympathies; for with pride we can point to the fact, that, while the aristocracy of the Old World took openly the part of the southern slaveholder, and while the middle class was divided in its opinions, the working-men in all countries of Europe have unanimously and firmly stood on the side of the Union." (*U.S. Diplomatic Correspondence*, 1865, Pt. IV, p. 500.)

[1] *U.S. Messages and Documents*, 1865, Pt. I, p. 417. Adams to Hunter, July 13, 1865.

against Conservatism when Lee surrendered at Appomatox. Russell's Reform Bill of 1866 was defeated by Tory opposition in combination with a small Whig faction which refused to desert the "principle" of aristocratic government—the "government by the wise," but the Tories who came into power under Derby were forced by the popular demand voiced even to the point of rioting, themselves to present a Reform Bill. Disraeli's measure, introduced with a number of "fancy franchises," which, in effect, sought to counteract the giving of the vote to British working-men, was quickly subjected to such caustic criticism that all the planned advantages to Conservatism were soon thrown overboard, and a Bill presented so Radical as to permit a transfer of political power to the working classes.[1] The Reform Bill of 1867 changed Great Britain from a government by aristocracy to one by democracy. A new nation came into being. The friends of the North had triumphed.

Thus in addition to the play of diplomatic incidents, the incidental frictions, the effect on trade relations, the applications of British neutrality, and the general policy of the Government, there existed for Great Britain a great issue in the outcome of the Civil War—the issue of the adoption of democratic institutions. It affected at every turn British public attitude, creating an intensity and bitterness of tone, on both sides, unexampled in the expressions of a neutral people. In America this was little understood, and American writers both during the war and long afterwards, gave little attention to it.[2] Immediately upon the conclusion of the war, Goldwin Smith, whose words during the conflict were bitter toward the aristocracy, declared that

[1] Disraeli was less disturbed by this than were other Tory leaders. He had long before, in his historical novels, advocated an aristocratic leadership of democracy, as against the middle class. Derby called the Bill "a leap in the dark," but assented to it.

[2] Pierce, *Sumner*, IV, pp. 151-153, summarizes the factors determining British attitude and places first the fear of the privileged classes of the example of America, but his treatment really minimizes this element.

"the territorial aristocracy of this country and the clergy of the Established Church" would have been excusable "if they could only have said frankly that they desired the downfall of institutions opposed to their own, instead of talking about their sympathy for the weak, and their respect for national independence, and their anxiety for the triumph of Free Trade."[1] This was stated before the democratic hope in England had been realized. Three years later the same staunch friend of the North, now removed to America and occupying a chair of history at Cornell University, wrote of the British aristocracy in excuse of their attitude: "I fought these men hard; I believed, and believe now, that their defeat was essential to the progress of civilization. But I daresay we should have done pretty much as they did, if we had been born members of a privileged order, instead of being brought up under the blessed influence of equality and justice."[2]

Such judgment and such excuses will appear to the historian as well-founded. But to Americans who conceived the Civil War as one fought first of all for the preservation of the nation, the issue of democracy in England seemed of little moment and little to excuse either the "cold neutrality" of the Government or the tone of the press. To Americans Great Britain appeared friendly to the dissolution of the Union and the destruction of a rival power. Nationality was the issue for the North; that democracy was an issue in America was denied, nor could it, in the intensity of the conflict, be conceived as the vital question determining British attitude. The Reform Bill of 1867 brought a new British nation into existence, the nation decrying American institutions was dead and a "sister democracy" holding

[1] Goldwin Smith, "The Civil War in America: An Address read at the last meeting of the Manchester Union and Emancipation Society." (Jan. 26, 1866.) London, 1866. pp. 71-75.

[2] Goldwin Smith, *America and England in their present relations*, London, 1869, p. 30.

out hands to the United States had replaced it, but to this the men who had won the war for the North long remained blind. Not during the generation when Americans, immersed in a life and death struggle for national existence, felt that "he who is not for me is against me," could the generally correct neutrality of the British Government and the whole-hearted support of Radical England be accepted at their true value to the North. For nearly half a century after the American Civil War the natural sentiments of friendship, based upon ties of blood and a common heritage of literature and history and law, were distorted by bitter and exaggerated memories.

INDEX

ABERDEEN, LORD, i. 10, 13, 14, 15; ii. 117 *note*[1]

Acton, Lord, ii. 301

Adams, Brooks, *The Seizure of the Laird Rams*, cited, ii. 120 *note*[1], 125 *note*[1], 147 *note*[1], 150 *note*[1]

Adams, Charles Francis, i. 49, 62-3, 80-1; attitude in the early days of the American crisis, 49 *and note*, 55, 63; appointed American Minister in London, 62, 80-1, 96; impressions of English opinion on the crisis, 96, 97, 98, 107; alarm at Seward's Despatch No. 10, i. 127; attitude of, to the Palmerston-Russell ministry, 170; controversy on General Butler's order, 302-5; reports to Seward on British public meetings on Emancipation Proclamation, ii. 107 *and note*[2], 223; view of the popular manifestations on Emancipation, 108; view as to decline of British confidence in the South, 184; and the London Confederate States Aid Association, 191, 192; receives deputations of allegiance during rumours before the fall of Savannah, 245 *and note*[1]; quoted on rumours in Britain of possible reunion and foreign war, ii. 251-2, 253; on effect in England of the Hampton Roads Conference, 253; advice of, to Seward on attitude to be observed to Britain, 253-255; attitude to Seward's complaints of British and Canadian offences, 253-4; comments of, on parliamentary debate and Bright's speech of confidence in Lincoln, 255 *and note*[1]; on feeling in Britain over Lincoln's assassination and the attempt on Seward, 257, 262-3; receives addresses of sympathy from British organizations, 262-3; and formal declaration of the end of the war, 268; faith of, in ultimate British opinion on the issues in the Civil War, ii. 283; views of, on the political position in relation to democracy, 290, 294, 296, 298 *note*[1]; quoted on the rising of democratic feeling in Britain, 291; disappointed in attitude of British friends of progress, 278, 279, 280; report of, on London mass meeting in favour of the North, 284; and the Trades Unions of London meeting, 292, 294-5; quoted on John Bright, 298; on the attitude of the privileged classes to democracy, 298 *note*[2], 300; on the influence of American institutions on the political movement in Great Britain, 302

Diplomatic action and views of, in regard to:
- *Alabama* case: ii. 35, 120 *and note*[2], 121, 131
- British Foreign Enlistment Act, i. 135, 148-9; ii. 201-2
- Bunch controversy, i. 186, 187, 190, 193, 195
- Confederate Commissioners: representations on intercourse with, i. 105-6, 107
- Confederate Cotton Loan: reported connection with, ii. 161 *and note*[4]; views on, 179
- Confederate Shipbuilding in England: protests against, ii. 118, 128, 131, 137, 143, 145 *note*[2]; and U.S. Navy Department plan to stop, 130 *note*[1]; Laird Rams incident, 144, 146, 147 *note*[1], 150
- Cotton: report on British position, ii. 99
- Declaration of Paris negotiation: action on proposed convention, i. 141-69 *passim*; view of American intention, 144, 169; failure of his negotiation, 137, 145-6, 169-71
- Gladstone and Lewis speeches, ii. 55
- Irish emigrants, enlistment of, ii. 201-2

Mediation: presents the "servile war" threat against, ii. 18-19, 95; view of England's reply to French proposals on, 71; advantages of an anti-slavery avowal, 98-9
Neutrality Law, *See* British Foreign Enlistment Act *supra*
Privateering Bill, ii. 122-3, 125, 127; advises against issue of privateers, 131
Proclamation of Neutrality, The: representations on, i. 98-100, 101, 105, 107 *and note*[2], 300-1; despatch on settlement of peaceful policy, 134; protests against British recognition of belligerency, 159; advice to Seward on, 275
Roebuck's motion: report on, ii. 144
"Servile War" threat, ii. 18-19, 95 *and note*[4]
Slavery: urges Northern declaration on, ii. 98-9; comments on *Times* criticism of anti-slavery meetings, 108
Southern Ports: plan of collecting duties at, ii. 198
Trent Affair, the: interviewed by Palmerston, i. 208-9; statement on the *James Adger*, 209-10; suspicion of British policy in, 218; views on public opinion in, 222-3; officially states Wilkes acted without authorization, 226; report on English hope of peaceful settlement, 228, 229; on British opinion after settlement of, 238, 240; on effect of, in Great Britain, 243; view of popular attitude in Britain in the crisis of, ii. 283

Appreciation and criticisms on:
Characterized in *The Index*, ii. 196
Lord Lyons', report on, i. 62-3; opinion on, ii. 71 *note*[4]
Lord Russell's view of his diplomacy, ii. 128
Tory approval of, ii. 197

Otherwise mentioned, i. 1, 2, 129, 198, 263, 274, 276; ii. 31, 100
Neutrality, i. 109, 110; view of the delay in his father's journey to England, 112 *note*; view on Seward's attitude in Declaration of Paris negotiation, 138, 153-6; examination of British action in the negotiation, 154-5; review of the *Trent* affair, cited, 203 *note*, *et seq. passim*; on American feeling over seizure of Mason and Slidell, 218; and the Hotze materials, ii. 154 *note*
Adams, E. D.:
British Interests and Activities in Mexico, cited ii. 117 *note*[1]
"The Point of View of the British Traveller in America," cited, i. 23 *note*; ii. 274 *note*[1]
Adams, Henry, i. 138; ii. 292 *note*[1]; view of, on W. E. Forster, i. 58 *note*[2]; on British Proclamation of Neutrality, 110; on American exultation in *Trent* affair, 223; on British attitude in *Trent* affair, 230; view of Gregory's speech on the blockade, 270; on British view of prospects in the War, 297; on possibility of intervention, ii. 23; on advantage of a Northern declaration on slavery, 23; on the Trades Unions of London meeting, 292 *and note*,[1] 293
"Declaration, The, of Paris," 1861 . . . reviewed, 146 *et seq.*, 153; view of Russell's policy in, 146-150, 159; view of Lyons, 147, 150
Education of Henry Adams quoted, i. 149 *note*[2]; ii. 172 *note*[2]; cited, ii. 50 *note*[1]
Adams, John (Second President of the U.S.), i. 62, 81
Adams, John Quincy, i. 11, 20, 62, 81
African Slave Trade, attitude of the South to, i. 85-6; ii. 88; suppression of, international efforts for, i. 8-10; punishment to slave traders in American law, 9; American attitude to right of search, 9, 10, 219; British anti-slavery policy, 31-2; wane of British interest in, 10, 32; ii. 90; Slave Trade Treaty signed, i. 10, 275, 276; ii. 90, 91
Agassiz, L., i. 37 *note*.
Akroyd, Edward, ii. 193 *note*.
Alabama, The, ii. 35, 116, 119-120;

departure, 119, 120 *and note*,[3] 133; Russell's private feelings as to, 121, 124; public opinion in Great Britain on, 129-130; Palmerston's defence of Government action on, 134-5; American anger over, 119, 127; measures against, 121-3, 127; New York Chamber of Commerce protest on, 126; claim for damages on account of, 151 *note*[1]; mentioned, i. 138; ii. 129 *note*,[1] 131, 134, 136, 145, 146
Alexandra case, The:
Seizure of the vessel, ii. 136, 139, 140, 152, 161 *note*[4]; public approval, 136; law actions on, 136 *note*[3], 142, 149, 152, 185, 195; American anxiety at Court decision, 143; final result, 196 *note*[3]
America, Central: British-American disputes in, i. 16, 17
American:
Civil War: i. 86, 87 *and note*[3], 99; British public and official views at the commencement of, 40-60; origins of: American and British views, i. 47-8; efforts at compromise, 49; British official attitude on outbreak of, 73; European opinion of, after duration of three years, ii. 219; compared with the Great War in Europe, 219; British attitude to democracy as determining attitude to the War, i. 77; ii. 303-5; bearing of, on democracy in Great Britain, 299
Union, The: British views of, i. 15; prognostications of its dissolution, 36, 37
War of Independence, i. 2-3, 17; adjustments after the Treaty of Peace, 3; as fostering militant patriotism, 7, 8 *note*; commercial relations after, 17-18
"War of 1812" i. 4, 7, 18; causes leading to, 5-7; New England opposition to, 7, 18; effect of, on American National unity, 7
See also under United States
Anderson, Major, Northern Commander at Fort Sumter, i. 117
Anderson's Mission, ii. 53 *note*[3]; reports, ii. 53 *and note*[3]
Andrews, Governor of Massachusetts, i. 219-20
Anthropological Society of London, ii. 222
Antietam, defeat of Lee by McClellan at, ii. 43, 85, 105; effect of, on Lord Palmerston, 43
Archibald, British Consul at New York, i. 63, 64
Argyll, Duke of, i. 179, 212; anti-slavery attitude of, i. 179, 238; ii. 112; views of, in *Trent* crisis, i. 212, 215, 229, 238; on calamity of war with America, 215, 238; on Northern determination, ii. 30
Arkansas joins Confederate States, i. 172
Army and Navy Gazette, The, ii. 228, 229: attitude in the conflict, 229-30, 236; on the Presidential election, 235-6, 238; summary of military situation after Atlanta, 243; on "foreign war" rumours, 251; cited or quoted, 68, 166, 232-3, 243. (*See also under* Russell, W. H.)
Arnold, Matthew, views on the secession, i. 47; on British "superiority," 258; on the rule of aristocracy and growth of democracy, ii. 300
Arnold, *The History of the Cotton Famine*, ii. 6 *note*[3], 10, 11; quoted: first effects of the war on the cotton trade, 9-10; cotton operatives' song, 17 *note*[3]; on the members for Lancashire, 26-7
Ashburton, Lord, i. 13; Ashburton Mission, i. 13
Aspinwall and Forbes, Mission of, in England, ii. 130 *note*[3]
Atlanta, captured by Sherman, ii. 233-5; effect of, on Northern attitude, 233-4; effect of, on Lincoln's re-election, 235
Atlantic Monthly, The, ii. 109 *note*[3]; 279 *and note*[3]

BAGLEY, Mr., ii. 224
Balch, *The Alabama Arbitration*, cited, ii. 129 *note*[1]
Baligny. *See* Belligny
Bancroft, Frederic, cited, i. 117 *note*; analysis of Seward's object in Declaration of Paris negotiation, 190-3; view on Russell's aims in, 152 *and note*[3]
Life of Seward, cited or quoted, i. 106 *note*[1], 118 *note*, 130 *note*[3]; 132 *note*[3], 138, 150-3, 186 *notes*, 191 *note*[4], 196 *note*[1], 200 *note*[3], 213 *note*[4], 231 *note*[2], 280

and note[1], 281[2]; iii. 1-2, 96, 99 *note*[3], 143 *note*[3], 253 *note*[1], 258 *note*[1]
Banks, Governor, i. 37 *note*
Baring, ii. 96 *note*[3]
Bath, Marquis of, ii. 193 *note*
Beals, Mr., ii. 191
Bedford, Duke of, i. 96 *and note*[3]
Bee Hive, The, cited, ii. 293 *note*
Beecher, Henry Ward, ii. 184 *and note*[3]
Beesly, Professor, speech of, at Trades Unions of London Meeting, ii. 292
Belfast Whig, The, i. 70 *note*[1]; 231 *note*
Belligny, French Consul at Charleston, i. 185 *note*[1], 186, 188, 189, 191 *and note*[4]
Bell's Weekly Messenger, quoted, ii. 194
Benjamin, Confederate Secretary of State, ii. 5; Mercier's interview with, i. 284, 285; report of, to Slidell on Mercier's visit, 284 *note*[1]; instructions of, to Slidell offering commercial advantages for French intervention, ii. 24 *and note*[3]; on idea of Confederate loan, 158-9; recalls Mason, 179; and recognition of the Confederacy, 217; on the attitude of France to the Confederacy, 236 *note*[1]; plan of offering abolition of slavery in return for recognition, 249; otherwise mentioned, i. 292; ii. 88 *note*[3], 148, 154 *note*[1], 213 *note*[1]
Bentinck, i. 268, 269
Bernard, Montague:
Neutrality, The, of Great Britain during the American Civil War, quoted, i. 100 *and note*[1], 137-8; ii. 118; cited, i. 171 *note*[1], 245 *note*[2], 246 *note*[1], 263 *notes*; ii. 136 *note*[3]; on the American representations on the British Proclamation of Neutrality, i. 100; on Declaration of Paris negotiations, 137-8; on the Blockade, 263 *and notes*
"Two Lectures on the Present American War": on recognition, cited, i. 183
Bigelow, John, ii. 71 *note*[3]:
France and the Confederate Navy, cited, ii. 57 *note*[2]
Retrospections of an Active Life, cited, i. 56 *note*, 217 *note*[3]; ii. 71 *note*[3], 88 *note*[3], 128 *note*[3], 130 *note*[3]; Gladstone and the Cotton Loan, 163 *note*[3]; U.S. stimulation of immigration, 200 *note*[1]; cited, 229 *note*[1]; Quoted, ii. 254; advice of, on the political position in Britain; quoted, 290; cited, 295 *note*[3]
Billault, M., i. 288, 289 *and note*[1]
Birkbeck, Morris, *Letters from Illinois*, quoted, i. 25
Birmingham Post, The, i. 70 *note*[1]; ii. 231 *note*; letters of S. A. Goddard in support of emancipation in, ii. 108-9
Bishop, Rev. Francis, ii. 224
Bismarck, ii. 203
Black, Judge, American Secretary of State, i. 52, 244
Blackwood, John, political views of, ii. 289
Blackwood's Magazine, ii. 279 *note*[1]; on cotton and the blockade, 10; on French mediation proposals, 68; on the Emancipation Proclamation, 103; on democracy as cause of the war, 278-9, 281, 289
Blair, member of the United States Cabinet, i. 130 *note*[1], 231; ii. 85, 251, 252
Blockade of Southern Ports, the: Lincoln's declaration on, i. 83, 89, 90, 92, 111, 121, 122, 244, 245; commencement of, i. 245; method of warning at the port, 245, 246; as involving hardship to British merchants, 245-6; effectiveness of, 252-71 *passim*; effect on British Trade, 252, 254, 263; effect on Cotton Trade, 262; ii. 8, 9; statistics as to effectiveness, i. 268 *note*[3]
Southern Ports Bill, i. 246 *et seq.*
Stone Boat Fleet, Blockade, i. 258 *et seq.*, 269, 302
British attitude to, i. 95, 244, 245, 246, 263 *and note*[3], 267, 270; ii. 5, 265; Parliamentary debate on, i. 267 *et seq.*; Gregory's motion 268 *et seq.*; press attitude, 246; Bright's view, ii. 14, 15
Confederate representations on, i. 265
Napoleon's view of, i. 290
Booth, assassinator of Lincoln, ii. 258, 259, 263
Border States, The: efforts at compromise, i. 49; sympathies in, 173; the "Border State policy" of Lincoln, 173, 176, 272 *note*[1]; ii. 82; and Confiscation Bill, Lincoln's fears, 82;

attitude of, to emancipation, ii. 83, 84, 87; not affected in Proclamation of Emancipation, 86
Bourke, Hon. Robert, ii. 187, 193
Boynton, Rev. C. B., *English and French Neutrality, etc.*, cited and quoted, ii. 225 *note*[2]
Bright, John, i. 58 *note*[2], 77; quoted on *Times* attitude towards the United States, 55 *note*[2]; view of the Northern attempt at reconquest, 72; views of, on the Proclamation of Neutrality, 108, 110; speech on *Trent* affair, 221-2; letter to Sumner on *Trent* affair, influence on Lincoln, 232; speech on Britain's attitude on conclusion of *Trent* affair, 241-2; view on the war as for abolition, 241; on distress in Lancashire, ii. 13, 14; view of the blockade, 14, 15; on the cotton shortage, 15; and Gladstone's Newcastle speech, 48; view of Emancipation Proclamation, 48 *note*[2], 105-6, 111-12; on England's support if emancipation an object in the war, 88-9; the escape of the *Alabama*, 120; at Trades Unions of London meeting, 132-3, 134, 291-3; support of the North, 132, 283-4, 290, 291, 295; on the interests of the unenfranchised in the American conflict, 132, 295; on the unfriendly neutrality of the Government, 134; rebuked by Palmerston, 135; trouncing of Roebuck, 172 *and note*[2]; on Britain's neutrality (Nov., 1863), 184; championship of democratic institutions, i. 221-2; ii. 132-3, 276-7, 282, 283; popularity of, as advocate of Northern cause, 224, 225; influence of, for the North, i. 58 *note*[2]; ii. 224; Lincoln's pardon of Alfred Rubery in honour of, 225 *and note*[1]; quoted on feeling of the British Government and people towards United States in Jan., 1865, etc., 247; confidence of, in pacific policy of Lincoln, 255 *and note*[1]; quoted on the ruling class and democracy, 280; attack on Southern aristocracy by, 290; heads deputation to Adams, 294; eulogy of George Thompson by, 224 *note*[1]
Adams' opinion on, ii. 298; view of, in *The Index*, ii. 298-9; Laird's view of, ii. 134; Karl Marx's view of, 292 *note*[1]; Lord Salisbury, quoted on the oratory of, 290 *note*[1]; the *Times* attack on, 295-6
Otherwise mentioned, i. 69, 179, 289; ii. 68, 69, 132 *note*[1] 172 *note*[1], 186, 187, 191, 278, 281. (See also under *Morning Star*)
British, *See also under* Great Britain
British emigration to America, i. 23 *et seq.*, 35; effect of American political ideals on, 23, 24, 25, 26
British Foreign Enlistment Act, ii. 116-7, 118; application of, in American crisis, question in Commons, i. 94; Russell's idea of amending, ii. 124, 196; Russell's advice to Palmerston on, 131; debate in Parliament on, 132, 133-4, 135; Forster and the violation of, 133; Government reply to Liverpool shipowners on, 142; *Kearsarge* incident, 202
British Press. *See under names of Papers and under subject headings*
British Standard, The, i. 70 *note*[1]
British travellers' views on America, i. 23 *and note*, 24, 28, 30; ii. 274-5
Brooks, i. 80
Brougham, i. 94 *note*[2]; ii. 282
Brougham, Lord, i. 19
Brown, John, raid of, i. 33 *note*[2]
Browning, Robert, pro-Northern sentiment of, i. 70; on stone-boat blockade, 256; on Slavery a factor in the struggle, 238-9; on British dismay at prospect of war in *Trent* crisis, 240; mentioned, 228 *note*[4]
Bruce, —, British Ambassador in Washington, ii. 255 *note*[4]; report of American intentions against France in Mexico, 255 *note*[4]; comment of, on Lincoln, Seward and Sumner, 262; warns Russell of probable American demands at end of war, 266, 268; attitude to "piracy" proclamation, 268. Otherwise mentioned, ii. 262, 269.
Brunow, Baron de, Russian Ambassador: on British policy, i. 50-1, 74; interpretation of Russell's "three months" statement, 272 *note*[1]; report of, on Russell's mediation plan, ii. 45 *note*[2]; interview of, with Russell on joint mediation offer, 73 *note*[1]

Bryce, Lord, i. 30 ; ii. 188 *note*[3], 274
Buchanan, President, i. 16, 49, 52, 117, 259 ; ii. 278
Buckingham, James Silk, *America, Historical, Statistic and Descriptive*, cited, i. 29
Buckley, Victor, ii. 120 *note*[3]
Bull Run, Northern defeat at, i. 135, 154, 176, 201 ; as affecting Seward's policy, considered, 154, 155-6 ; effect of, in Great Britain: press views, 176, 177-8, 179 ; official views, 178, 179 *and note*[1] ; public opinion, 201
Bullock, Captain J. D., Confederate Agent in Britain, ii. 118, 129, 145 ; on the proposed use of the Laird rams, 122 *note*[1], 143 ; shipbuilding contracts of, ii. 156, 157 ; *Secret Service under the Confederacy*, cited, ii. 118, 149 *note*
Bunch, —, British Consul at Charleston, description of Jockey Club dinner, i. 43 ; on Southern anti-British sentiment, 44 *note*[2], ii. 71 *note*[2] ; instructions to, on the secession, i. 53 *note*[1] ; appeal of, to Judge Black on seizure of Federal customs house, 52 ; characterizations of Southern leaders, 59 ; view of President Davis, 59; views on the South and secession, 59, 93 ; characterizations of Southern Commissioners, 63 ; negotiations of, with the Confederates on Declaration of Paris, 168 *note*[4], 184-6, 188, 193 ; attitude of, to the South, 185 *and note*[4], 193, 195 *note*[2] ; American complaints of, 187, 189, 193-4 ; recall of exequatur of, 184, 187 *et seq.*, 193, 194-5, 201 ; defence of his action in the Mure case, 187, 188, 192, 199 ; subsequent history of, 195 *note*[2] ; view of, as scapegoat, 195 *note*[2] ; on attitude to the Blockade, 252 *note*[1], 253 *note*[2], 268 ; on Southern intentions, 252 *note*[2] ; view of Southern determination, 252 *note*[2] ; on Southern views of England's necessity for cotton, 63, 252 *note*[2] ; ii. 4, 5 ; on effect of the blockade on Southern cotton industry, 9 *note*[2] ; on burning of Mississippi cotton, 16 *note*[1], 17 *note*[4] ; on the American system of government as the cause of the Civil War, 278 *note*[5]
British attitude to the controversy over, i. 188-9, 190, 191, 194 ;
French attitude, i. 189, 191 *and note*[4], 192, 201 *note*
Lyons' views on Bunch controversy, i. 187, 193, 194 *and note*[1]
Russell's views, i. 187, 190, 193, 194 *and note*[4]
Otherwise mentioned, i. 66 ; ii. 88
Burnley, British Ambassador, report of, on prospective war with America, ii. 254
Butler, General, order to Federal soldiers in New Orleans, i. 302-4, 305 ; ii. 68 ; Palmerston and Adams controversy on, i. 302-5 ; Lord Russell's advice to Palmerston, 303, 304

CAIRNES, Professor, ii. 224 *note*[2] ; pamphlet by, on "Slave Power," 112
Caledonian Mercury, The, i. 70 *note*[1] ; ii. 231 *note*
California, acquisition of, by U.S., i. 15, 16
Callahan, —, *Diplomatic History of the Southern Confederacy*, cited, i. 261 *note*, 289 *note*[2] ; ii. 167 *notes*, 169 *note*[4]
Campbell, Lord, i. 271, 292 ; ii, 28, 77, 169, 172, 193
Canada :
Rebellion of 1837 in, i. 4, 109 ; ii. 117 ; British fear of American attack on, i. 4 ; sentiment in, as affected by the American Wars against England, 8 *note* ; suggestions of annexation to Northern States of the U.S., 54-5 ; "compensation" in, idea in British press, 54-5 ; and in views of American political leaders, 55 ; Gladstone's idea regarding, ii. 69-70 ; military defence of, in *Trent* crisis, i. 213, 241-2 ; views in, on *Trent* affair, 222 *note* ; on British policy and defence, 222 *note* ; view of the *Times* in, 222 *note*
Free Trade policy and, a Southern premonition as to, i. 22
Reciprocity Treaty of, with U.S., ii. 198, 253-4
Otherwise mentioned, ii. 251, 254, 275
Canning, i. 11, 12, 20
Cardwell, ii. 64
Carolina, North, joins Confederate States, i. 172

Carolina, South, secession of, i. 41, 43, 44, 55; ii. 3-4; seizes Federal customs at Charleston, i. 52; requests Federal relinquishment of Fort Sumter, 117
"Caroline" affair, The, i. 109
Case, Walter M., *James M. Mason—Confederate Diplomat*, cited and quoted, i. 261 *note*; ii. 161 *and note*[2]
Catacazy, C., and mediation by Russia, ii. 251 *note*[1]
Cecil, Lord Eustace, ii. 187, 189, 193
Cecil, Lord Robert, supports Gregory's motion on blockade, i. 268; supports Roebuck's motion, ii. 171, 175-6; on Committee of Southern Independence Association, 187, 193
Charleston, S.C.:
Sentiment to Great Britain in, i. 43, 44 *note*; seizure of customs house at, 52 British appeal on question of port dues at, 52, 244; "Stone Boat" blockade of harbour at, 253; evacuation of, ii. 248, 249
Charleston *Mercury*, "King Cotton" theory of, ii. 5
Chase, Secretary of Treasury, i. 115, 121; ii. 72, 283; quarrel with Seward, 72
Chase, W. H. (of Florida), quoted, ii. 4
Chattanooga, ii. 185
Cheever, Rev. Dr., ii. 224
Chenery, ii. 301
Chesney, Captain, cited, ii. 165
Chesson, F. W., ii. 224
Chicago Convention, the, i. 175
Chicago abolitionists, Lincoln and, ii. 49 *note*[2]
Chicamauga, Rosencrans defeated at, ii. 184
Chittenden, cited, ii. 130 *note*[2]
Christian IX, of Denmark, ii. 203
Clanricarde, Lord, ii. 168
Clarendon, Earl of, i. 199 *note*[2], 215; ii. 3, 51-8 *passim*, 63, 203 *note*[2]; on Russell's mediation project and Lewis' Hereford speech, quoted, 57-8
Clayton-Bulwer Treaty: Seward's attack on British interpretation of, i. 113
Cobden, i. 77; quoted, on the *Times*, 222 *note*; opinion of Seward, 222 *note*; and Sumner, 222 *note*; on Palmerston's action in *Trent* affair, 226 *note*[2]; letter to Sumner read at American Cabinet meeting, 232
Otherwise mentioned, i. 289; ii. 26, 67, 80, 95 *and note*[2], 166, 276
Collie, ii. 189
Collier, legal advice of, on *Alabama*, ii. 118-9
Columbia District, freeing of slaves in, ii. 83
Columbia, S.C., burning of, ii. 248, 249
Combe, George, *Notes on the United States, etc.*, cited, i. 29
Confederate Commissioners to Europe, the: Bunch's characterization of, i. 63; unofficial interview with Russell, 85-6, 106, 158; protest against closing of British ports, 170 *note*[2]; replaced by "Special Commissioners," 203; attempt to make use of the *Trent* affair, 214; British attitude to, not modified by *Trent* affair, 235; policy of, with regard to recognition and the blockade, i. 264-5, 267, 273, 300; acquire a "confidential" document, 265 *and note*[2]; hopes of, from Parliament, 265, 266, 272; instructions of the first Commissioners, ii. 4 *and note*[2]; failure of the first Commission, 4-5; suggest a treaty on African Slave Trade, 88 *note*[2]; slavery abolition offer, 249
Confederate Agents' correspondence, collections of, i. 261 *note*[1]
See also under personal names
Confederates, *See under* Southern States
Confiscation Bill, The, ii. 82, 84, 85, 86, 92, 95; Lincoln's attitude to, 82, 84; Lord Russell's comment on, 97
Constitutionel, The, cited, ii. 236 *note*[2]
Continental Press and American News, ii. 71 *note*[2]
Corcoran, ii. 169
Cotton supplies and slavery, i. 13; in British-American commercial relations, 21, 22; British manufacturers' dependence on, 22; effect of the Civil War on, 55, 246; ii. 53; the crop of 1860 . . . ii, 7
Blockade, The, and, i. 252 *and note*[2], 253; ii. 9; effect of, on price, i. 262, 270; Napoleon's views on, 290
England, need of, for, i. 196-7, 200 *note*[1], 294, 296; ii. 17,

99; cotton famine in, 294; ii. 6, 11 *et seq.*, 16 *note*[3]; cotton manufacturing industry of, in 1860-1 . , . ii. 6-7, 8; first effects of the war on, 8, 9, 10. *See also under* Lancashire.
France, necessity of, for cotton, i. 279, 290, 293, 294, 296, 300; ii. 17; Mercier's plan to relieve, i. 196-201
Gladstone's Newcastle speech, effect of, on price of, ii. 48; "King Cotton" theory, i. 63; ii. 1 *et seq.*; belief of the South in cotton as a weapon of diplomacy, 2-3, 4, 5
Southern orders for destruction of, ii. 16, 17 *note*[4]; effect of, on British officials, 17
Cowley, Lord, British Ambassador in Paris, i. 88; reports French agreement with British policy on Southern belligerent rights, 88; in the Declaration of Paris negotiations, 88, 143, 156, 157, 158, 162, 167; conversations with Thouvenel in Bunch affair, 189; disturbed at French evasion of direct support, 189, 192, 201 *note*[1]; in *Trent* affair fears war with America, 214; communications on Southern Ports Bill, 247 *and note*[3]; view of French attitude on Southern Ports Bill, 247; on French policy in Mexico, 260, 261 *note*; ii. 46; quoted, on Thouvenel's view on mediation in Feb., 1862 . . . i. 266 *note*[1]; on Mercier's Richmond visit, i. 288; statement of, to Lindsay, after interview with Napoleon, 290; on the possibility of reunion, 290; on the blockade, 290-1; denial of Napoleon's "offer" to England, 290, 291; reports of, on Lindsay's mission, 291-2, 293, 295 *note*[1]; conversations with Thouvenel on Lindsay, 291, 293-4; Napoleon's letter to, on Lindsay, quoted, 295 *note*[2]; interview with Thouvenel on Russell's mediation plan, ii. 38, 39 *and note*, 46; on Napoleon's suggestion of joint mediation, 59; instructed to notify France of England's view of the war as ended and of attitude to Confederate cruisers, 256-7
Otherwise mentioned, i. 218 *note*
Crawford, Consul-General at Havana, ii. 148
Crimean War: Anglo-French agreement regarding neutral commerce, i. 139
Crittenden, i. 49

Daily Gazette, The, cited, ii. 109 *note*
Daily News, attitude of, during the American Civil War, i. 69-70 *and note*[1] 176, 181-2; ii. 230 *note*[2], on Lincoln's message to Congress, i. 176; letters of W. W. Story in, 228
Daily Telegraph, cited, ii. 50 *note*[1]; attitude and circulation of, 189 *note*[1], 226, 230 *note*[2]
Dallas, American Minister to Great Britain, i. 62; lack of instructions on American intentions, 62, 108, 112; communications with Lord Russell, 62, 66, 74; despatches to Seward on Russell's intentions, 66-7; Russell's pledge of delay to, 67, 84, 85, 107, 108; report on proposed British joint action with France, 84-5, 86
Otherwise mentioned, i. 74, 96, 156 *note*[1]
Dana, R. H., cited, i. 218; *The Trent Affair*, cited, 203 *note*, 205 *note*[1], 237 *note*
Danish question, The, ii. 203-5, 214
Darwin, Charles, quoted, i. 180 *and note*[4]
Davis, Bancroft, *Times* correspondent in New York, i. 56
Davis, Jefferson, personal characteristics of, i. 59, 81, 82; ii. 276; attitude of, in the opening of the crisis, i. 49; elected President of the Southern Government, 59, 81; foreign policy of, 81-2; aristocratic views of, on government, ii. 276; proclamation of, on marque and privateering, i. 83, 89, 90, 92, 111, 121, 122, 141, 160; defensive measures of, in the South, 172; on Bunch's negotiations on Declaration of Paris, 186; replaces Confederate agents to Europe, 203; and the African Slave Trade, ii. 88 *note*[1]; proclamation of retaliation against Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation, 106 *and note*[4]; on England's conduct towards the South, 184; on Southern disorganization, 219; flight of, from Richmond, 248; approves plan of offering abolition of slavery in return for recognition, 249; capture of, 267

British views on, ii. 276
Bunch's characterization of, i. 59, 185 *note*[4]
Gladstone's Newcastle speech on, ii. 47
Otherwise mentioned, i. 163 *note*[1], 185 *note*[4], 254, 265 *note*[2], 283; ii. 5, 6, 176 *note*[2], 251, 252, 285
Dayton, American Minister at Paris, i. 129, 142, 143, 145, 150, 151, 163, 165, 167 *note*[2], 168, 200, 231, 300
de Brunow, Russian Ambassador. *See under* Brunow
de Flahault, French Ambassador. *See under* Flahault
Debats: French press views on military situation, cited, ii. 174 *note*[2]
De Bow's Review, eulogies of the South in, quoted, ii. 2, 3, 4; on cotton and slavery, 3; view of England's action on blockade, 4
Declaration of Paris, The, i. 102, 139-40; attitude of United States to, 140-1, 156; American offer of adherence during the Civil War, 104, 137, 141-2, 150, 151
Declaration of Paris Negotiation, The, i. 137 *et seq.*, 184, 201; British suggestion to France in, i. 88, 91, 142, 146-7, 156, 157 *and note*[2]; American offer of adherence, 104, 137, 141-2, 150, 151; convention agreed between Britain, France, and America, 142-3; addition of a declaration in support of British neutrality proposed by Lord Russell, 143-6, 149, 151, 154, 168, 170, 201; American rejection of convention, 145, 168, 201
American argument at Geneva on effect of British diplomacy in, i. 146 *note*[2]
Confederates: approach of, in the negotiation, i. 161, 164, 165, 166, 168 *note*[4], 184-6, 188, 192, 193; Confederate Congress resolution of approval in, 186
Convention, the, proposed by U.S. Cowley's opinion on, i. 167 *and note*[2]; Thouvenel's opinion on, 167; Palmerston's suggestion on, 167 *and note*[4]
Seward's motives in, *See under* Seward
Delane, editor of the *Times*: Palmerston's letters to, on American rights in interception of Confederate Commissioners, i. 207-8, 209; close relations of, with Palmerston, 229 *note*[2]; ii. 145; anticipations of Southern victory, ii. 204 *and note*[2]; on prospective war with America, 254; effect of Sherman's arrival at Savannah on, 245 *and note*[2], 300-1
Otherwise mentioned, i. 177, 178, 180; ii. 65, 289
de Lhuys, M. Drouyn, French Premier, ii. 59 *and note*[4], 60, 63 *note*[1], 168
Democratic element in British Society: lack of press representation, i. 24, 41
Democracy: British views on American institutions, i. 24, 28, 30, 31; ii. 274-5; view of the American struggle as a failure of, 276 *et seq. passim*; Press comments on the lesson from failure of American democratic institutions, 279, 280, 281, 285, 286, 297; bearing of the Civil War on, 299; aristocratic and conservative attitude to, 286, 287, 297, 298, 300, 301; rise of democratic feeling in Great Britain, 291; effect of the Reform Bill of 1867, 304
Derby, Lord (Leader of the Opposition), i. 76, 77, 79, 94 *and note*[2], 240, 241; attitude to recognition and mediation, i. 240; ii. 51, 52, 53, 54, 77; attacks governmental policy in relation to Laird Rams and Southern shipbuilding, 149-50, 197; approves attitude to Napoleon's mediation proposals, 154-5; speech in motion for address to the Crown on Lincoln's assassination, 263; attacks Government on American "piracy proclamation" at end of the war, 267-8; attitude to expansion of the franchise, i. 77; ii. 276, 303 *and note*[1]
Otherwise mentioned, i. 292, 295; ii. 51 *note*[2], 166, 210, 214
Dial, The, i. 70 *note*[1]
Disraeli, Benjamin (Tory leader in the Commons), i. 79; on *Trent* affair, 241; connection with Lindsay's motion, 292, 295, 296, 306; ii. 213 *and note*[1]; approval of neutrality, ii. 77, 174 *note*[1]; in Roebuck's motion, 153, 171, 174; attitude to stoppage of Southern shipbuilding, 197; speech of, on the motion for the

Address to the Crown on Lincoln's assassination, 263-4; Reform Bill of (1867) . . . 303 *and note*[1]
Mentioned, ii. 270 *note*[2]
Donoughmore, Earl of, ii. 204 *and note*[1]; reply to Mason, 250-1
D'Oubril, ii. 59 *note*[4], 62 *note*[3]
Doyle, Percy, i. 218 *note*[1]
Dublin News, quoted, i. 45, 46 *note*[1]
Dubuque Sun, The, ii. 22 *note*
Dudley, U.S. Consul at Liverpool, ii. 118, 130 *note*[1], 144, 145 *note*[2]
Dufferin, Lord, i. 240
Duffus, R. L., "Contemporary English Popular Opinion on the American Civil War," i. 41 *note*[1]; quoted, 41, 48; cited, 70 *note*[1]; ii. 112 *note*[1]
Dumping of British goods: effect on American feeling, i. 19, 21
Dunfermline, Lady, i. 224 *note*[3]

Economist, The: attitude in the struggle, i. 41, 54, 57, 173-4; ii. 15, 173, 231 *note*; cited or quoted: on Lincoln's election, i. 39 *and note*[1]; on impossibility of Northern reconquest, 57; on secession an accomplished fact, 174; ii. 79; on Bull Run, i. 179; on cotton shortage, i. 55; ii. 14, 15; on servile insurrection, 79; on Cotton Loan, 160, 162; on Roebuck's motion, 173; on extension of the franchise, 277; on American institutions and statesmen, 279-80
Edinburgh Review, The: attitude to slavery, i. 33, 45; ii. 281; attitude in the conflict, i. 42; ii. 50 *note*[3], 68; on recognition, 46 *note*[3]; on the Emancipation Proclamation, 103; on the causes of the war, 281
Elliot, chargé, i. 14
Elliott, E. N., editor of *Cotton is King and Pro-Slavery Arguments*, ii. 3 *note*[3]
Emancipation, Proclamation of: ii. 74, 78, 80, 86 *and note*[1], 91; idea of military necessity for, 81, 82, 85, 87; Lincoln's alleged purpose in, 87; purpose of, according to Seward, 99-100; viewed as an incitement to servile insurrection, 49, 74, 98, 101, 103 *note*[3]
American reception of, ii. 101, Press denunciation of, 102-5, 106; public meetings in favour of, 106 *and note*[3], 107, 108; English women's support of, 109; Nonconformist support, 109, 110; Emancipation societies support of, 110
Confiscation Bill, *See that heading*
See also Border States *and sub-heading under* Lincoln
Emigration, British, to America, i. 23-4; ii. 200-1; *Kearsarge* incident, 200-1
England: cotton famine. *See under* Cotton.
See Great Britain
Erlanger & Co. and Confederate Cotton Loan, ii. 158-60, 161, 162 *and note*[3]
European opinion of the Civil War after duration of three years, ii. 219
Eustis, i. 204, 234 *note*[3]
Evans, William, ii. 224
Everett, Edward, Russell's letter to, on Proclamation of Neutrality, i. 166 *note*[3]
Ewart, question by, in the House of Commons, on Privateers, i. 90
Expatriation, American and British views on, i. 16

FAIRFAX, Lieut., of the *San Jacinto*, i. 205
Farnall's "Reports on Distress in the Manufacturing Districts," ii. 12 *note*, 20
Fawcett, Prof., ii. 224 *note*[3]
Featherstonaugh, G. W., *Excursion through the Slave States*, cited, i. 29
Federals. *See under* Northern
Ferguson, Sir James, i. 268; ii. 175
Ferrand, attack by, on cotton manufacturers in the Commons, ii. 164
Fishmongers of London: Meeting in honour of Yancey, ii. 223 *note*[1]
Fitzgerald, Seymour, i. 306; ii. 25
Fitzwilliam, Hon. C., ii. 193
Flahault, M. de, French Ambassador, i. 88, 197, 260 *note*[1], 288, 291, 293; ii. 19 *note*[3], 45
Forbes, J. M., and Aspinwall, Mission of, in England, ii. 130 *note*[2], 297
Forbes, J. M., quoted on the Civil

Forster, William E., i. 58 *and note*[2]; a friend of the North, 58 *note*[2]; ii. 224; quoted, on Harriet Martineau, i. 70 *note*[2]; question in Commons on privateering, 94, 157; speech against Gregory's motion on blockade, 268, 270; speech on mediation and intervention in debate on Lindsay's motion, ii. 22; close touch with Adams, 22, 36; attacks Government in debate on Southern shipbuilding, 133; rebuked by Palmerston, 135; in Roebuck's motion, 171-2, 175; comment on Southern meetings, 190 *and note*[2]
Fort Donelson, Confederate reverse at, i. 272, 273 *note*[1], 274
Fort Henry, Confederate reverse at, i. 272, 273 *note*[1], 274
Fox, G. V.: *Confidential Correspondence*, cited, i. 257 *note*[2], 268 *note*[2]; ii. 120 *note*[2]; quoted, on Confederate ironclads in England, 130 *note*[2]
France: Naval right of search exercised by, i. 6; and American contentions on neutral rights, 18
Confederate Cotton Loan, attitude to, ii. 160 *note*[2]
Cotton: lack of, i. 279, 290, 293-4, 296, 300; ii. 17
Mediation and armistice, attitude to British unofficial overture on, ii. 38-9, 45-6, 59-60
Ministerial crisis, ii. 39, 45, 59
Neutrality of, i. 299; Northern sentiment on, ii. 225 *and note*[2]
Policy in the Civil War: joint action of, with Great Britain, i. 84, 88, 156, 166 *note*[1], 196, 249-50, 252, 259, 260, 284, 294; ii. 28, 75, 198; break in, 77
Press of, and the events in U.S., ii. 174 *note*[2], 236 *note*[2]
See also under Mercier, Napoleon, Thouvenel, *and under subject-headings*
Fraser's Magazine, ii. 284; J. S. Mill's articles in, i. 240, 242; ii. 81, 90, 285
Fraser, Trenholm & Company: Confederate financial agents in Liverpool, ii. 156, 157
Frederick VII of Denmark: and Schleswig-Holstein, ii. 203
Free Trade, i. 21; ii. 304
Freeman, E. A., *History of Federal Government*, cited, ii. 152-3
Fremont, ii. 82
Gallenga, —, *Times* correspondent in New York, i. 189
Galt, Sir J. T., i. 221 *note*[1]; 222 *note*
Galveston, Tex. i. 253 *note*[1]; ii. 266, 268
Garrison, W. L., American abolitionist, editor of the *Liberator*, i. 31, 33, 46 *and note*[1]
Garrison, *Garrison*, cited, ii. 91 *note*[1], 111 *note*[2]
Gasparin, Count, cited, ii. 92 *notes*
Geneva Arbitration Court: American complaint of British Neutrality, in, i. 138; American argument before, on Declaration of Paris, 146 *note*[2]
German opinion on the Civil War, i. 178 *note*[2]; ii. 111 *note*[2]; press attitude, 285 *note*[1]
Germany: the *Index* quoted on "aid given by, to the North," ii. 236 *note*[2]
Gettysburg, Battle of, ii. 143, 176 *note*[2], 185, 296
Gladstone, Thomas, letters of, to the *Times*, i. 32, 33
The Englishman in Kansas, i. 32 *note*
Gladstone, W. E., i. 76, 78; fear of war with America in *Trent* affair, 215; influence of the commercial situation on, ii. 26; attitude to intervention, 26, 27, 30-1, 48, 57; Newcastle speech, 47 *and note*[2], 48, 49, 50 *and note*[1], 51 *and notes*, 55, 58; memorandum in reply to Lewis, 57; supports Napoleon's suggestion on armistice and blockade, ii. 64, 69; account of Cabinet discussion on Napoleon's suggestion, 65 *and note*[1]; idea of offering Canada to the North, 69, 70 *and note*[1]; and the Confederate Cotton Loan, 163 *note*[2]; reply of, in Roebuck's motion, 170-1; quoted, on the American dispute as a blow to democracy, 282-3
Otherwise mentioned, i. 179, 200 *note*[1], 224, 266; ii. 59, 66, 77, 80
Goddard, S. A., ii. 108
Letters on the American Rebellion, cited, ii. 108 *note*[2], 109 *note*[1]
Godkin, E. L., *Daily News* correspondent, i. 70 *and note*[2]
Golder, Dr. F. A., cited, i. 53 *note*[2]. "The Russian Fleet and the Civil War," cited, i. 227 *note*[1]; ii. 129 *note*[1]

Goodenough, Captain, report of, on American readiness for foreign war, ii. 199 *note*[3]
Gorgas, Col., ii. 5 *note*[1]
Gortchakoff, comment of, on Russell's mediation plan, ii. 45 *note*[3]; and idea of Russian mediation, 251 *note*[4]; mentioned, i. 164 *note*[1]; ii. 59 *note*[4], 66 *note*[3], 70 *note*[3]
Grant, General, capture of Forts Henry and Donelson by, i. 273 *note*[1], 274; victory at Shiloh, 278; captures New Orleans, 279; Western campaign of, ii. 164, 166, 184-5; capture of Vicksburg by, 176 *note*[3], 185; advance to Richmond, 217, 219; siege of Southern lines at Petersburg, 217; capture of Petersburg and Richmond by, 247-8; *Times* report of reverses to, 212, 227, 243; condition of his army, Southern account in *Times*, 227; W. H. Russell's comment on Grant's campaign, 232-3; Henry Adams, quoted, on, 243
Otherwise mentioned, ii. 215, 249, 256
Grant's *The Newspaper Press*, cited and quoted, ii. 231 *note*
Granville, Lord, i. 76, quoted, 199 *note*[3]; on difficulties in Washington and attitude of neutrality, 241; opposition of, to Russell's mediation plan, ii. 42 *and note*[3], 43, 44, 46; mentioned, i. 94 *note*[3]; ii. 203 *note*[3]
Grattan, Thomas Colley, quoted, i. 36; *Civilized America*, i. 36 *note*[1]
Great Britain:
Citizenship, theory of, i. 5-6
Colonial system: trade basis of, i. 17, 20, 21
Commercial relations with America after independence, i. 17 *et seq.*, 22
Franchise, expansion of the, in, i. 26, 28; ii. 274, 276-7, 301, 302, 303, 304; effect of the American example on political agitation in, 274; connection of the American struggle with the franchise movement in, 276, 277, 278, 286; Radical acceptance of the challenge on democracy, 282, 283, 290, 298, 300; aristocratic and conservative attitude to democracy, 286, 287, 298, 300, 301
Policy toward America: conditions affecting, i. 2 *et seq.* 35; ii. 270; the right of search controversy, i. 6-10; territorial expansion 13-15, 16; extension of slavery, 13, 15; Mexican War, 15-16; commercial interests, 19-22; in the Civil War, 50-4, 58, 59, 79, 84, 136, 178, 199; ii. 270-2; influence of democracy in determining, ii. 303-5; policy of joint action with France, *see under* France. *See also under* Lyons, Russell, *and subject-headings*.
Public opinion and governmental policy of, in relation to America, i. 15, 22, 24, 26, 28, 30
Public opinion and official views in, at the opening of the Civil War, i. 40-60; doubts of Northern cause, 48, 50; attitude to recognition of the South, 53 *note*[1], on secession, 54, 55, 57
Trade: exclusive basis in, i. 17, 20, 21; effect of American retaliatory system on, 20; free trade theory, 21; ii. 304; hopes from cotton interests, i. 22
Working classes in: Northern sympathies of, ii. 284, 285 *note*[1]
See also subject-headings
Great Lakes: Armaments agreement, i. 4; ii. 253, 254
Greeley, Horace, editor of *New York Times*, attack on Seward by, i. 280 *note*[1]; and Mercier's proposal of mediation, ii. 75; Lincoln's reply to, on emancipation, 92-3
Gregg, Percy, ii. 154 *note*[1]
Gregory (Liberal-Conservative, friend of the South), i. 90, 91 *note*[1], 267; motion of, for recognition of the South, 85, 91, 108; advice to Mason on blockade question, 267; motion to urge the blockade ineffective, 268-72; speech in Parliament on distress in Lancashire, ii. 21, 22 *and note*; quoted on attitude of Parliament to intervention and recognition, 155; view of Roebuck's motion, 175; question of, on the destruction of British property in America, 265; mentioned, i. 292; ii. 153, 164

Greville, Charles, quoted, ii. 3
Greville. Colonel, ii. 193 *note*
Grey, Sir George, i. 163, 207; ii. 171, 269
Grimes, Senator, on the purpose of the Privateering Bill, ii. 123-4
Gros, Baron, ii. 167, 168-9, 170
Grote, George, quoted, i. 1

HALIBURTON, T. C., ii. 187, 193 *note*
Hall, Capt. Basil, *Travels in North America*, cited, i. 26-7
Hall, Rev. Newman, ii. 111, 224
Hamilton, R. C., "The English Press and the Civil War," i. 38 *note*[3]
Hamilton, Capt. Thomas, *Men and Manners in America*, quoted, i. 27
Hammond, E., Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, i. 189; enquiry as to possible action of American Navy to intercept Southern Commissioners, 206-7, 210, 211 *and note*[1]; on Foreign Enlistment Act, ii. 142; letter of, to Lyons, on seizure of Laird Rams, 147 *note*[4]; quoted, on public opinion and Napoleon's proposal of mediation, 66; mentioned, i. 256; ii. 45
Hammond, Senator, of S. Carolina, quoted, ii. 2-3
"Hampton Roads Conference," The ii. 252-3
Harcourt, Sir William, quoted, on Lord Russell's statesmanship during the American Civil War, i. 1; letters of, in the *Times* on questions of International Law, i. 222 *note*; ii. 63 *and note*[3]; *and see under* "Historicus"
Hardwicke, Earl, i. 94 *note*[3]
Harris, T. L., *The Trent Affair*, cited, i. 203 *note*, 205 *note*[1], 217 *note*[1], 227 *note*[1], 231 *note*[3]; ii. 282 *note*[3]; citations of anti-Americanism in *Times*, i. 217 *note*[1]
Hawthorne, Julian, cited, i. 47
Head, Sir Edmund, Governor of Canada, i. 129, 197 *note*[3]
Hertslet, *Map of Europe by Treaty*, cited, i. 94 *note*[3]
"Historicus," Letters of, to the *Times*, cited and quoted, i. 222 *note*; ii. 63, 104, 138 *note*[1]
Holmes, O. W., i. 37 *note*
Hood, General, ii. 236 *note*[3]
Hope, A. J. Beresford, ii. 187, 189, 193 *note*, 281-2
Hopwood, i. 305; ii. 11, 18, 21
Horsfall, Mr., ii. 153
Horton, Wilmot, i. 23; Committee on Emigration to America, 23, 24
Hotze, H., Confederate agent, quoted on effect of *Trent* affair, i. 243; descriptive account of his activities, ii. 154 *note*[1]; and the "foul blot" phrase, 240; and the Southern arming of negroes, 241; mentioned, ii. 68 *note*[1], 180 *note*[3], 213
Hotze Papers, The, ii. 154 *note*[1], 180 *note*[3], 185 *note*[1]
Houghton, Lord, ii. 265-6, 267
Hughes, Thomas, i. 181; ii. 224 *note*[3]
Hunt, James, *The Negro's Place in Nature*, cited, ii. 222
Hunt's Merchants Magazine, cited ii. 8 *note*[3], 14 *note*[1]
Hunter, Confederate Secretary of State, i. 264
Hunter, General, issues order freeing slaves, ii. 84
Hunter, Mr., editor of the *Herald*, ii. 213 *and note*[1]
Huse, Caleb, ii. 120 *note*[3], 159
Huskisson, cited, i. 20
Huxley's criticism of Hunt's *The Negro's Place in Nature*, ii. 222

IMPRESSMENT by Britain: a cause of irritation to America, i. 6, 7, 8, 16
Index, The, ii. 33 *and note*[3]; agitation of, for recognition of the South and mediation, 33-4, 153-4; on Gladstone's Newcastle speech, 51 *note*[3]; views of, on Lord Russell and his policy, 51 *note*[3], 55 *and note*[4], 68, 69, 165, 196, 197; on reply to French joint mediation offer, 68-9; on Laird Rams, 150 *note*[3]; quoted on Government attitude to the belligerents, 154, 164-5; connection with Hotze, 154 *note*[1]; and the fall of Vicksburg, 165, 178 *and note*[4]; on French press and policy of France, 174 *note*[3], 180; reports of, on Southern meetings and associations, 188, 190 *and notes*, 194 *and note*[3], 195, 239 *and note*[4], 240; comments on the Palmerston-Mason interview, 215-6; criticism of Palmerston's reply to deputation on mediation, 216; view of mediation, 217; defence of slavery in the South, 220-2, 240-1; criti-

cism of the *Times*, 228; quotations from the French press on the war, 236 *note*[2]; and the Presidential election, 236 *note*[2]; on Germany's aid to the North, 236 *note*[2]; on reception of Northern deputations by Adams, 245 *note*[1]; on characteristics of Southern leaders and society, 287; view of Northern democracy, 287; denunciation of the Manchester School 298-9; cited, ii. 181 *note*[2], 186, 190 *note*[2], 199 *note*[4], 232, 241 *note*[1], 242; quoted, 192, 193 *note*[1]
Ionian Islands, control of, i. 79
Ireland:
Irish emigration to America, i. 29; ii. 200, 201; enlistments in, for Northern forces, 200, 201; the *Kearsarge* incident, 201-2; petitions circulated in, in support of the North, 240
Italy, disturbances in, ii. 29

JACKSON, Stonewall, exploits of, in Virginia: effect of, on Russell and Palmerston, ii. 38
Jackson, W. A., ii. 191
James, *William Wetmore Story and his Friends*, quoted, i. 228 *and note*[4]; cited, 256 *note*[4]
James Adger, The, American warship, i. 208, 209, 210, 211 *note*[1]
Jameson, Professor J. F., ii. 154 *note*[1]
Japan:
Seward's suggestion of a naval demonstration against, i. 126 *note*[1]
Jefferson, President, i. 7, 11, 18
Jewett, J. P., quoted, ii. 111 *note*[2]
John Bull, ii. 231 *note*; quoted, on slavery not an issue, i. 179; Bull Run, a blow to democracy, i. 179-80
Johnston, General: campaign against Sherman, ii. 248, 274
Jones, Mason, pro-Northern speaker, ii. 193-4, 195, 224
Juarez (Mexican leader), ii. 198
"Justicia," letters of, in the *Times*, i. 217

KANSAS border struggles, i. 32
Kearsarge incident, The, ii. 201-2
Kelly, William, *Across the Rocky*
Kennedy, William, *Texas, etc.*, cited, i. 29
Kenner, Duncan F., Confederate Commissioner, ii. 249-50
Kentucky, effect of "border state policy" on, i. 173
Kinglake, views of, on Roebuck's motion, ii. 175

La France, cited, ii. 236 *note*[2]
Laird Brothers: builders of the *Alabama* and *Laird Rams*, ii. 120, 121-2, 129; prosecution of, demanded, 136; officially ordered not to send Rams on trial trip, 146, 149; Government's correspondence with, 146 *and note*[2], 149-50
Laird, speech of, in reply to Bright's attack on the Government, ii. 134
Laird Rams, the, ii. 121-2, 123, 124, 137, 140 *et seq.*, 196; description and purpose of, 122 *and note*[1]; British Government position, 133, 134; rumours regarding, 142-3; seizure of, 145-50, 179-80, 182; suit for damages, 151 *note*[1]; British Government purchase of, 151 *note*[1]; U.S. Navy plan to purchase, 130 *note*[2]; usual historical treatment of the incident, 141, 147 *and note*[1]
Lamar, Confederate representative: account of Roebuck and Bright, ii. 172 *note*[2]
Lancashire:
Cotton trade, distress in, ii. 6, 11 *et seq.*, 21, 26, 29, 31, 240; attitude in, to Government policy, 10, 11, 13-15; attitude of the "Cotton Lords" to, 10, 16; Farnall report on, 12, 20; Northern sympathies of cotton operatives, 13 285 *note*[1]
Cotton factories, statistics, ii 6
Cotton manufacturers, attack on in Commons, ii. 163-4
Lane, Franklin K., Letters of, cited ii. 129 *note*[1]
Layard, reply of, on Roebuck's motion, ii. 171, 173; on destruction of British property in America, 265
Le Siècle, cited, ii. 174 *note*[2], 236 *note*[2]
Lee, General, turns back McClellan's advance on Richmond, ii. 1;

sylvania, 163 *note*[1], 164, 176; defeats Hooker at Chancellorsville, 164; retreat from Gettysburg, 163 *note*[1], 178, 179, 297; defence of Richmond, 185, 217, 247, 248; surrender, 248, 255, 256-7, 265, 301, 303
Times, quoted or cited, on his campaign, ii. 227, 256, 296
Lees, Mr., ii, 220
Lemprière, Dr., i. 180; ii. 191
Lewis, Sir George Cornewall, i. 76, 78 *and note*, 94; ii. 52; views of, on the Civil War, ii. 50 *and note*[2], 51; article on "The Election of President Lincoln and its Consequences," i. 78 *note*; fears war with America in *Trent* affair, 215, 226; objections of, to mediation, ii. 44-6; Hereford speech of, in reply to Gladstone, 50 *and note*[1], 51, 55, 58; view of the Emancipation Proclamation, 52; action of, on Russell's proposed intervention, 52 *et seq.*, 73-4; memorandum of, on British policy in opposition to Russell, 62-3; account of Cabinet discussion on Napoleon's armistice suggestion, 63-5; Hereford speech, effect on Adams, ii. 55; Palmerston's views on Lewis' attitude to recognition, 56; Russell's reply to Lewis, 56, 57
Liberator, The, Garrison's abolition organ, i. 31, 33 *and note*[1]; 46 *and note*[1], 47; cited or quoted, 70 *note*[1]; ii. 106 *note*[2], 107, 109 *note*[1]; 111 *note*[2], 130, 184 *note*[2], 189 *note*[2], 191 *note*[2], 194, 223 *and note*[1], 224 *note*[1], 237 *note*[1], 239 *notes*, 240 *note*[2], 289
Liebknecht, W., ii. 301 *note*[2]
Lincoln, President, i. 115
  Characteristics of, i. 115, 119, 120, 127-8; influence of, in Britain, ii. 276
  Election and inauguration, i. 36, 38, 39, 48, 51, 64, 82, 110, 115; inaugural address, 38, 50, 71, 175; personal view of terms of election, 49; popular views on 79, 114, 115
  Decision to reinforce Fort Sumter, i. 117, 118, 119, 120; and defend Federal forts, 118; attitude to Seward's foreign war policy, 119-20, 136; reply to Seward's "Some Thoughts for the President's Consideration," 119-20, 124; modifies Despatch No. 10, 126-7; attitude to Schleiden's Richmond visit, 121 122; emergency measures of, 172, 173
  Policy and views of, on :—
    Blockade proclamation, i. 83, 110, 111, 244. *See heading* Blockade
    Border State policy of, i. 173, 176, 272 *note*[1]; ii. 82
    Confiscation Bill, attitude to, ii. 82, 84
    Emancipation Proclamation of, *See that heading*
    Hampton Roads, Conference at, ii. 252-3
    Intervention, on, ii. 36
    Piracy proclamation, i. 83, 111, 160
    Servile insurrection, ii. 83
    Slavery: inaugural address on, i. 38, 50, 71, 175; view of the terms of his election regarding, 49; denial of emancipation as an issue, 239; ii. 88; reply to Chicago abolitionists on, ii. 49 *note*[2]; declarations on, 78; conversations with Sumner on, 82; attitude to emancipation, 82, 83-4, 96; and anti-slavery sentiment, 83; denial of, as a cause of the war, 88; reply to Schurz on emancipation, 72; reply to Greeley, 93, 94; orders of, as to liberated slaves, 100
    Trent affair; attitude to release of envoys, i. 231 *and note*[1]; British view of, in, i. 225, 226, 230
    Union, the: efforts to preserve, i. 49, 121; efforts to restore, ii. 82, 83, 93-5; reply to Greeley on, 92-3
  Attitude of, to England, i. 301; curtails authority of General Butler, 305; settles quarrel between Seward and Chase, ii. 72; letter to Manchester supporters of the North, 109; drafts resolution for use in British public meetings on slavery, 113; British addresses to, 288, 290-1
  Re-election, ii. 226, 234, 235, 238; expectations of his defeat, 226, 231; British Press views on, 234-5, 238; *Punch* cartoon, 239 *and note*[1]: complaints of his despotism and

inefficiency in press, ii. 176, 232; his terms to the South, 251, 252
Assassination of, ii. 257-8, 265; political effect of, in Britain, 301, and in Germany, 301 *note*²; British sympathy, 259-64
Appreciations of, ii. 258-61
British opinion of, during the War, ii. 239 *note*¹
Bright's confidence in, ii. 255 *and note*¹
Lyons' view on, i. 51; ii. 258-9
Press views, i. 38-9; ii. 102-5 *passim*
Schleiden's view of, i. 116
Influence of Bright's letters on, i. 232; pardons Rubery in honour of Bright, ii. 225 *and note*¹
Otherwise mentioned, i. 59, 81, 149, 223; ii. 39, 68, 91, 109 *note*², 126, 225, 251, 278, 281, 297
Lindsay, William Schaw; descriptive account of, i. 267, 289; on the blockade and French attitude to intervention, 267; project of mediation of, 279; account of interview with Napoleon III, 289-90; interview with Cowley, 290-1; second interview with Napoleon, 291; effect of interviews on Confederate Commissioners, 292; refused an interview by Russell and Palmerston, 294-5, 296; third interview with Napoleon, 295; interview with Disraeli, 295, 296; proposed motion in Parliament, 301-2, 305-6, 307; account of a letter to Russell in explanation of his proposed motion, 305 *and note*²; introduces motion in Parliament on mediation, ii. 18, 20, 21-23; withdrawal of, 23, 34; with Roebuck interviews Napoleon on recognition, 166, 167, 168, 169, 172, 173, 174-5, 177; suggestion by, on Confederate finance, 156; proposes a further recognition motion, 178 *note*¹; connection with Southern Independence Association, 193, 195, 204, 205-206, 211; hopes of, from attack on Government policy in detaining Southern vessels, 185, 195, 196; hopes from Napoleon and from Southern victory, 204; fresh agitation for mediation and recognition, 205-6, 209, 210; interviews Palmerston, 206-7, 209; urges Mason to interview Palmerston, 207, 208, 209; interview with Lord Russell 209-10, 212-13; use of the Danish question, 206, 210; hopes from Disraeli, 213; postponement of his motion, 214, 215, 218
Friendship with John Bright, ii. 172 *note*¹; otherwise mentioned, i. 197, 268; ii. 25, 181
Lindsay & Co., ii. 157
Liverpool: change of feeling in, over the *Alabama*, ii. 129-30
Liverpool Post, The, cited on the Emancipation Proclamation, ii. 103
Liverpool Shipowners' Association, urges remonstrance on closing of Charleston Harbour by "Stone Boats," i. 256
London Chronicle, The, quoted, i. 46
London Confederate States Aid Association, ii. 191, 192 *and note*², 195
London Emancipation Society, ii. 91, 110; distinguished members of, 91 *note*¹
London Gazette, The, i. 94
London Press, The, quoted i. 54-5, 68
London Review, The, cited, i. 46 *and note*¹
Longfellow, H. W., i. 37 *note*, 55 *note*²
Lothian, Marquis of, ii. 187, 193 *note*
Lousada, letter to Lyons on *Trent* affair, quoted, i. 220 *note*²
Lowell, J. R., i. 37 *note*, 236
Lushington, Dr., i. 207
Lutz, Dr. Ralph H., cited, i. 117 *note*; ii. 111 *note*,² 121 *note*¹
Die Beziehungen zwischen Deutschland, etc., cited, i. 117 *note*; ii. 285 *note*¹
Lyons, Lord, British Minister in Washington, i. 42, 51, 114; attitude in the American dispute, 51, 53, 88 *note*², 93 *and note*² 254; ii. 237 *note*⁴; on Southern clamour at Lincoln's election, i. 51; views on the personnel of the Northern Government, i. 59-60; view of Seward, 59, 60, 65, 114, 129; ii. 72; fears from Seward's foreign war policy, i. 60, 128-36 *passim*; efforts to prevent interruption of commerce with the South, i. 64, 65, 66, 72, 73, 244; views on the American controversy, 72, 73; advises joint action

with France, 84; receives instructions on British policy, 87; and course of action if disavowed by America, i. 190; suspicion of French policy, 201 *and note*; survey of the situation after Shiloh, 278; farewell interview with Lincoln, 301; opinion of Adams, ii. 71 *note*[4]; views on Lincoln and Davis' proclamations, 106; friendliness of Seward to, 72, 141, 176 *note*[1]; report of improved relations on seizure of Laird Rams, 147, 182; report on "scare" at Lee's advance, 176 *note*[1]; view after Gettysburg, 176 *note*[1]; protests against Russell's motion to withdraw belligerent rights to the North, 182, 183; attitude to American public animosity towards Great Britain, 197, 198; on Seward's plan to collect import duties at Southern ports, 198; description of American readiness for foreign war, 183 *and note*[1], 199; on arrogance of American ministers, 199; advises quiet attitude towards the North, 226; view of Northern determination 226, 233; view of Lincoln's chances of re-election, 226, 233; on effect of the fall of Atlanta, 234; advice on Seward's demonstrations for electioneering purposes, 237; illness of, 233, 237; return to London, 237 *note*[4]; appreciation of diplomatic service of, 237 *note*[4]

Diplomatic action and views of, in regard to:
- Belligerent rights to the South, i. 87; attitude to request for withdrawal, i. 274-5; ii. 198
- Blockade, i. 64, 65, 66, 72, 73, 244-5; ii. 226; and legislative closing of Southern ports, i. 244, 246; communications with Seward on, 244, 245, 246, 250, 257; opinion on, 254
- Southern Ports Bill, i. 246-50 *passim*

Bunch controversy, i. 184 *et seq.*; view on Bunch's conduct, 187; conferences with Seward in, 191-2, 193, 194 *and note*[1]; comment on Bunch's explanation, 192-3; attitude to American decision in, 193, 194

Cotton, i. 54 *note*[1], 64, 196-7; ii. 20 *and note*[4]

Declaration of Paris negotiations: alarmed by Seward's attitude, i. 151, 163 *notes*; view of Seward's refusal to see the despatch, 153 *and note*[1]; communications with Confederates in, 161, 163 *notes*, 164, 165, 166, 168 *note*[4], 185, 188; view on the American proposal, 154, 162, 164

Emancipation, as an issue, i. 223

Emancipation proclamation, ii. 106, 113, 114 *and note*

Intervention, i. 197; ii. 26, 36; fears commercial influence on policy, 26; *See also* Mediation *infra*

Irish emigrants: enlistment of, ii. 201

Mediation, i. 284, 286, 297, 298-9; ii. 23, 37 *note*[1], 70; summary of Mercier's plan of, i. 298-9; report on French isolated offer of, ii. 75-6; on Russian suggestion of, 76

Mercier's Richmond visit, i. 281 *et seq. passim*; ii. 24 *note*[1], comment on the result of, i. 286; effect of, on, 287; comment on newspaper report of, 287

Privateering Bill, ii. 125, 126, 127

Proclamation of Neutrality, presentation of, to Seward, i. 102, 103, 132, 133, 163 *note*[2], 164, 184

Recognition of the South, i. 65, 66, 73, 197, 198; ii. 70

Seward's foreign war policy, i. 60, 128-9, 130, 132, 133, 136; advice to Russell on, 128-9, 131; anxiety as to Canada, 128, 129, 131

Slave Trade Treaty, i. 276

Slavery, i. 52, 73, 93 *and note*[1]; account of changes in Northern feeling on, 223

Southern Commissioners, i. 65, 72

Southern shipbuilding, ii. 127, 139-141; on American War feeling over, 139-40

Trent affair, i. 210, 211, 221; instructions in, 212-4; anxiety for Canada in, 221

Otherwise mentioned, i. 43, 57, 59, 74, 242, 243; ii. 147 *note*[4], 170

Lytton, Bulwer, on dissolution of the Union, cited, i. 182

McClellan, General: advance of, on Richmond, i. 276, 279, 297, 298, 301; ii. 1, 33; defeat of, by Lee, 1, 18, 33; rumoured capture of, 20, 21 *note*; Adams' opinion on rumours, 20, 21 *note*; British newspaper reports of capture of, 20, 21 *note*; removal of, 30; defeats Lee at Antietam, 43, 85; fails to follow up his victory, 43, 105; as candidate in Presidential election, 234 *note*[3], 238
McFarland, i. 204, 234 *note*[3]
McHenry, George, *The Cotton Trade*, cited, ii. 6 *note*[3], 13 *note*[2], 185 *note*[3]
Mackay, Alexander, *The Western World*, cited and quoted, i. 30; ii. 274-5
Mackay, Charles, i. 37 *and note*, 46 *note*[4]; as *Times* correspondent in New York, ii. 176 *notes*; 189, 226
Forty Years' Recollections, cited, ii. 176 *note*[3]
"John and Jonathan" poem, quoted, i. 37 *note*
Life and Liberty in America, quoted, i. 37 *note*
Mackay, Dr., editor of the *London Review*, i. 46 *note*[4]
McKenzie, (Canadian Rebellion, 1837), i. 4
McLaren, Duncan, ii. 224 *note*[3]
McRea, opinion of, on Hotze and Slidell, ii. 180 *note*[3]
Madison, President, i. 11
"Madison's War," i. 4
Maine, State of: boundary controversy, i. 4, 9
Malmesbury, Lord, i. 79, 84, 149; ii. 25, 167
Manchester Emancipation Society, The, ii. 110, 224 *note*[3]
Manchester Examiner and Times, i. 70 *note*[1]; ii. 231 *note*; cited, ii. 136 *note*[3]
Manchester Guardian, The, ii. 231 *note*; cited, 181 *note*[3]
Manchester Southern Club, The: meeting of, and list of delegates, ii. 190 *and note*[3]
"Manchester Union and Emancipation Society," The, ii. 110; leading members and activities of, ii. 224 *note*[3]
Mann, Southern Commissioner to London, i. 63, 82, 85 *notes*; 264, 265, ii. 24 *note*[1], 241
See also under heading Confederate Commissioners
Marchand, Captain, of the American ship, *James Adger*, i. 208; instructions of, to intercept the *Nashville*, 209, 210, 211 *note*[1]
Marcy, Secretary of State, and the Declaration of Paris, i. 140-1
Marryat, Captain Frederick: *A Diary in America*, etc., cited and quoted, i. 27
Martin, M. Henri. ii. 236 *note*[3]
Martin, T. P., theses of, on Anglo-American trade relations, ii. 8 *note*[3]
Martineau, Harriet: faith of, in democracy, i. 27; ardent advocate of the North, 70 *and note*[3]; view of slavery as cause of the Civil War, ii. 79-80
Marx, Karl, and the Trades Unions of London meeting, ii. 291, 292 *and note*[1]
Maryland, and the Union: effect of "border state" policy, i. 173
Mason, James M., Special Commissioner of the Confederates to Britain, i. 183 *note*[3], 203; relations with Spence, 183 *note*[3], 266 *note*[3]; captured in the *Trent*, 204 *et seq.*, 234 *and note*[3]; reception of, in England, 264; interview with Russell, 265-6, 267, 268; statistics of, on the blockade, 268 *and note*[3]; effect of the failure of Gregory's motion on, 272, 273; hope in a change of Government, 273; views of, on capture of New Orleans, 296; comment of, on mediation after the Northern successes, 300, and Lindsay's motion, 305, 306-7; on the state of the cotton trade in England, ii. 10; request to Lord Russell for recognition of the South, 25, 28; and Slidell's offer to France, 24 *and note*[3]; refused an interview: appeals to Russell for recognition, 27; view of the Emancipation Proclamation, 104; nominates Spence as financial adviser in England, 156; and Confederate cotton obligations, 157, 158, 159; and Confederate Cotton Loan, 161, 162; in Roebuck's motion, 167, 168-9, 172-3; opinion of Napoleon, 172-3; recall of, 179, 181-2; determines to remain in Europe,

182; hope from a change of Government, 185, 213-4; demonstration against, after a Southern meeting, 191; representations on *Kearsarge* enlistment of Irishmen, 201; interview with Palmerston suggested to, 207, 208-9, 214-5; returns to London, 212; opinion of Palmerston and Russell's attitude in interview with Lindsay, 213; suggests Disraeli to handle Lindsay's motion, 213; protests against clause in Southern Independence Association address, 220; attitude of, to slavery, 249, 250; interview of, with Palmerston, on Confederate offer to abolish slavery, 250; interview with Earl of Donoughmore, 250-1; quoted on Lee's surrender, 256
Correspondence of, i. 261 *note*
Otherwise mentioned, i. 255, 263 *note*[2], 267, 292; ii. 19, 31, 147, 154 *note*[1], 185, 186, 195, 206, 241
Mason Papers, cited, i. 261 *note*[1]; ii. 24, *et passim*
Massie, Rev., ii. 110, 190 *note*[2], 239
Maximilian, Archduke, i. 260; ii. 255 *note*[4]
Melish, John, *Travels*, quoted, i. 25
Mercier, French Minister in Washington: with Lyons attempts official presentation to Seward of Proclamations of Neutrality, i. 96 *note*[1], 102, 103, 132, 164; in Declaration of Paris negotiations 157, 158, 162, 163 *note*[3], 165; negotiations with Confederates, 163 *notes*, 164, 165, 184, 185, 191 *note*[4]; plan for recognition of Southern independence, 192; plan to relieve French need for cotton, 196-201; supports British demands in *Trent* affair, 230; on withdrawal of belligerent rights to South, 275; efforts for mediation, 279, 298, 300; ii. 36, 37 *note*[1], 41, 70 *note*[2], 71 *note*[1] 75, 76 *note*[1]; idea of an armistice, 41, 47
Richmond visit, i. 280 *et seq.*, ii. 24 *note*[2] 95; Seward's acquiescence in, i. 280, 281, 282; consultation with Lyons on, 281-2, 283; result of, 284-5; report to Thouvenel on, 285; effect of, on Lyons and Russell, 287; *New York Times* report and London, 287-8; ii. 95; effect of, on Confederate agents, i. 288
Southern Ports Bill, attitude to, i. 247 *note*[1], 248 *note*[2], 249; views of, on recognition, 285-6; belief of, in ultimate Southern success, 298; and isolated French offer of mediation, ii. 75; proposes Russo-French mediation, 76 *note*[1]; precautions of, during Lee's northern advance, 176 *note*[2]
Bancroft quoted on, i. 280
Otherwise mentioned, i. 166 *note*[1], 191; ii. 23, 40, 155, 270 *note*[2]
Merrimac, The, i. 276, 277
Mexican War of 1846, i. 7, 15, 206
Mexico, British influence in, i. 13; revolt of Texas from, 12-15; ii. 117 *note*[1]; contract of, for ships and equipment in Britain, 117 *note*[1]; British policy towards, after revolt of Texas, i. 13-14; war with United States, 1846 . . . 7, 15, 206; expectation in, of British aid, 15; loss of California by, 15; joint action of France, Great Britain and Spain against, for recovery of debts, 259-60; designs of France in, 260; ii. 46; American idea to oust France from, 198, 251, 252, 255 *note*[4]
Mill, J. S., ii. 224 *note*[3]; article in defence of the North contributed to *Fraser's Magazine*, cited or quoted, i. 240, 242; ii. 80-1, 90, 285; on *Trent* affair, i. 240, 242; on slavery, i. 240; ii. 80-1
Milne, Admiral, i. 211; Lyons' letter to, on Southern shipbuilding in Britain and American letters of marque, ii. 140, 141 *and note*
Milner-Gibson, i. 226; ii. 36; attack on, by *The Index*, 298
Milnes, Monckton, i. 268
Missouri, State of, and the Union: effect of the "border state" policy, i. 173
Mobile, Ala., i. 253 *note*[1]
Mocquard: note of, on Napoleon's proposal on recognition in Roebuck's motion, ii. 167, 168, 169, 170
Monck, Viscount, ii. 140; approves seizure of Laird Rams, 147
Monitor, The: duel of with the *Merrimac*, i. 276; effect of, in

Monroe Doctrine, The, i. 11, 12, 259; as a medium for American territorial expansion, 12
Monroe, President, i. 11
Monson, cited, i. 93
Montagu, Lord Robert, ii. 170; amendment of, on Roebuck's motion, 170, 171
Montgomery, Ala., i. 81, 82
Moore, *Digest of International Law*, cited, i. 137, 145, 195 *note*[2], 212 *note*[3]
Morehead, ex-Governor of Kentucky: speech of, at Liverpool, accusing Lincoln of treachery, ii. 105
Morning Herald, The, ii. 67, 68 *note*[1], 231 *note*; quoted, 67-8; cited, 215
Morning Post, The, i. 229; ii. 231 *note*; in *Trent* crisis, i. 226 *note*, 229; views on the conflict and democratic tyranny, 229; ii. 284, 285-6; on the war and the cotton industry, ii. 10; on Gladstone's Newcastle speech, 49 *note*[1], 55 *note* [1]
Morning Star, The, i. 69, 70 *note*[1], 179; ii. 191 *note*[2], 231 *note*; criticism of *Times* war news in, 228
Motley, J. L., United States Minister at Vienna: letter of, analysing nature of the American constitution, i. 174-6; urges forward step on slavery, ii. 98; reply to Seward on effect of Northern attempt to free slaves, 99; quoted on the hatred of democracy as shown in the British Press, 280-1; otherwise mentioned, i. 190 *note*[2], 191
Causes, The, of the American Civil War, i. 174, 175
Correspondence, i. 179 *note*[2], 184; ii. 33, 98 *note*[4], 106 *note*[1], 280-1
Motley, Mrs., i. 179
Mure, Robert: arrest of, i. 186-8, 192, 193 *note*[1], 201; Lyons' views on, 187-8

NAPIER, Lord, ii. 63, 66
Napoleon I., Emperor, i. 4, 8; and American contentions on neutral rights, i. 18
Napoleonic Wars, i. 4-7, 23
Napoleon III., Emperor:
American policy of, ii. 39; differences with Thouvenel on, ii. 19 *and note*[2] 39,
Blockade, view of, on the, i. 290
British policy: vexation at, i. 295
Confederate Cotton Loan, attitude to, ii. 160 *note*[2]
Mediation: hopes for, ii. 23, 59; suggests an armistice for six months, 59, 60 *et seq.*, 69; request for joint action by Russia and Britain with France on, 60; British views on, 60-65; British reply, 65 *and note*[1], 66, 152, 155; Russian attitude to, 59 *note*[4], 63 *and note*[4], 64, 66; offers friendly mediation, 75-6
Interview with Lindsay on, i. 289 *et seq.*; reported offer on, to England, 290, 291
Interviews with Slidell on, ii. 24, 57 *note*[2], 60
Mercier's Richmond visit, connection of with, i. 287, 288; displeasure at, 288
Mexican policy of, i. 259-61; ii. 163, 198
Polish question, ii. 163, 164
Recognition: private desires for, ii. 20; endeavours to secure British concurrence, 19-20, 38; reported action and proposals in Roebuck's motion, 166-77 *passim*; interview with Slidell on abolition in return for recognition, 249-50

Otherwise mentioned, i. 114, 191; ii. 32, 54, 71, 180, 204, 270
Benjamin's view of, ii. 236 *note*[2]
Mason's opinion of, ii. 172-3
Palmerston's views of, ii. 59
National Intelligencer, The, i. 297; ii. 49 *note*[2]
Neumann, Karl Friedrich: History of the United States by, cited, ii. 111 *note*[2]
Neutrality, Proclamations of:
British i. 93, 94-6, 100, 110, 111, 134, 157, 168, 174; statements on British position, 99, 111, 163 *note*[2]; ii. 265; British Press views on, i. 136 *note*
French, i. 96 *note*[1], 102
American attitude to, i. 96-110 *passim*, 132, 135, 136, 142, 174; British-French joint action, 102, 132 *and note*[1]; Seward's refusal to receive officially, 102, 103, 132 *and note*[2]; 133, 164, 169; view of, as hasty and premature,

107-8, 109, 110, 112; Seward's view of, 134-5; modern American judgment on, 110
New England States, The, i. 17, 18; opposition of, to war of 1812 . . . i. 7
New Nation, The (New York), quoted on Lincoln's despotism, ii. 232
New Orleans, i. 253 *note*[1]; capture of, 279, 296; ii. 16; effect of, on Confederates, i. 296; Seward's promises based on, ii. 16, 26
New York, rumour of Russian fleet in harbour of, ii. 129
New York Chamber of Commerce, The, protest by, on the *Alabama*, ii. 126
New York City: anti-British attitude of, i. 29; idea of separate secession, 83
New York Herald, The, i. 56, 255; ii. 199 *note*[4]
New York Times, The, attack on W. H. Russell in, i. 178 *note*[2]; quoted on *Trent* affair, 220 *note*[1]; report of Mercier's Richmond visit, 287
Newcastle, Duke of, Seward's statement to, i. 80, 114, 216, 227
Newcastle Chronicle, The, i. 70 *note*[1]; ii. 231 *note*
Newfoundland fisheries controversy, i. 4
Newman, Professor, ii. 224
Newton, Dr., in *Cambridge History of British Foreign Policy*, cited, i. 35 *note*
Nicaragua, i. 16
Nicolay and Hay, *Lincoln*, cited, i. 126 *note*[2], 138, 146 *note*[3]
Nonconformist, The, i. 70 *note*[1]; ii. 231 *note*
Nonconformist sympathy with emancipation proclamations, ii. 109-10
Norfolk, Va., i. 253 *note*[1]
"No 290," Confederate War Vessel. See *Alabama*
Northern States:
  Army, foreign element in, ii. 200 *note*[1]
  Emancipation: identified with, ii. 220
  Immigration and recruiting in, ii. 200
  "Insurgent" Theory, of the Civil War, i. 96, 102, 103 *and note*[1] 111, 246
  Intervention: determination to resist, ii. 35-6, 71
  Public and Press views in, at the outbreak of the struggle, i. 42
  Union, the: determination to preserve, i. 54, 55, 173, 236; ii. 226
  Western and Eastern States attitude to the War, compared, ii. 53

Opinion Nationale, The, cited, ii. 174 *note*[2], 236 *note*[2]
Oregon territory controversy, i. 15
Oreto, The, Confederate steamer, ii. 118, 123, 131, 136
Ottawa Sun, The, cited, ii. 70 *note*[1]
Ozanne, Rev. T. D., *The South as it is, etc.*, quoted, ii. 195 *note*[1]

Page, Captain, instructions to, on the use of the Laird Rams, ii. 122 *note*[1]
Pakenham, British Minister to Mexico, i. 13-14
Palmer, Roundell, Solicitor-General, i. 268, 271
Palmerston, Lord: Coalition Government of, in 1859 . . . i. 76, 77, 78; on Seward's attitude, 130; on reinforcement of Canada, 130-1; statement of reasons for participation in Declaration of Paris, 139; suggests method of approach in Declaration of Paris negotiations, 156 *note*[1]; on the object of the belligerents, 178; on British policy and the cotton shortage, 199-200; on possible interception of Mason and Slidell, 207-8, 209; action of, in *Trent* affair, 226 *note*[2], 229, 241; statement of, on British neutrality, 241; interview with Spence, 266; refusal to interview Lindsay, 295-6; letters to Adams on General Butler's order, 302-5; reply to Hopwood on mediation, ii. 18; definition of British policy in debate on Lindsay's motion, 22-3; sneers at the silent cotton manufacturers, 26; views of, on mediation, 31; participates in Russell's mediation plan, 34, 36, 40-44, 46, 51, 54, 56, 73; traditional connection with Lewis' Hereford speech, 50 *and note*[1]; 51 *note*[2]; on the folly of appealing to the belligerents, 56, 59, 73; opinion

French proposals for armistice, 60-1; on British position in regard to slavery, 61, 78-9; approves Russell's speech on Confederate shipbuilding, 131; defends Government procedure in *Alabama* case, 134-5: accusation of, against Forster and Bright, 135; attitude to seizure of Laird Rams, 145; on the use of Napoleon's name in Roebuck's motion, 174-5, 177; the crisis over Danish policy of, 203-4, 210, 214, 216; interviews with Lindsay, 206-8, 209, 210, 213; consents to interview Mason 207; opinion of, on the ultimate result of the Civil War, 209,215; attitude to resolution of Southern Societies, 211; interview with Mason, 214-5; reply to joint deputation of Southern Societies, 216; reply to Mason's offer on abolition, 250; assurances on relations with America after Hampton Roads Conference, 255; attitude to expansion of the franchise, 276 *and note*[1]; death of, 302

Characteristics of, as politician, ii. 134
Cobden quoted on, i. 226 *note*[1]
Delane, close relations with, i. 229 *note*[1]
Index: criticism of, in the, ii. 216
Press organ of, i. 229
Otherwise mentioned, i. 96, 168, 194, 262; ii. 19, 68, 90, 112, 168, 170, 173, 185, 188, 190, 249, 263, 285, 293

Papineau, Canadian rebellion, 1837 . . . i. 4
Papov, Rear-Admiral, ii. 129 *note*[1]
Paris, Congress of (1856), i. 139
Peabody, George, quoted, i. 227
Peacocke, G. M. W. ii. 187, 193 *note*
Persigny, i. 303; conversation with Slidell on intervention, ii. 19
Petersburg, evacuation of, ii. 248
Phinney, Patrick, and the enlistment of Irishmen in the Northern army, ii. 202 *and note*[1]
Pickens, Governor of S. Carolina, i. 120, 185, 186 *and note*[1]
Pickett Papers quoted, i. 243; ii. 155; cited, i. 261 *note*, ii. 69 *note*[1]
Poland: France, Russia, Great Britain and the Polish question, ii. 129, 163, 164
Polland, *The Lost Cause*, quoted on attitude of England on the cotton question, ii. 5-6
Potter, Thomas Bayley, ii. 164, 224, *and note*[1]
Prescott, i. 37 *note*
Press, British, the attitude of, in the American Civil War. *See under Names of Newspapers, Reviews, etc.*
Prim, Spanish General, commanding expedition to Mexico, i. 259
Prince Consort, The, i. 76, 213, 224-5; influence of, on Palmerston's foreign policy, 224; policy of conciliation to United States, 228
Adams, C. F., quoted on, 225, 228
Privateering, i. 83 *et seq.*, 153 *et seq. passim*
Russian convention with U.S. on, i. 171 *note*[1]
Southern Privateering, i. 85, 89, 153, 156, 164, 165, 167, 171 *note*[1], 186. Proclamation on, *see under* Davis.
British attitude to, i. 86, 89-92, 95, 158, 160, 161, 163, 166; Parliamentary discussion on, 94, 95, 157; closing of British ports to, 170, *and note*[1]
French attitude to, i. 157, 158, 159, 161, 162, 165
Northern attitude to, i. 83, 89, 90, 92, 111, 163; Seward's motive against in Declaration of Paris negotiation, 162, 164, 169; Northern accusations against Britain on, 91
United States policy on, i. 141, 156. *See* Privateering Bill, *infra*
See also under Declaration of Paris negotiation
Privateering Bill, The, ii. 122 *et seq.*; purpose of, 122-3, 125, 137; discussion in Senate on, 123-4; passed as an administrative measure, 124, 137; influence of, on Russell's policy, 137; British view of American intentions, 137-8; historical view, 141; Seward's use of, 121 *note*[1]
Prussia and Schleswig-Holstein, ii. 203-4
Punch, cartoons of, cited: on *Trent* affair, i. 217-8, 237; on Stone Boat Blockade, 255; suggesting intervention by France, ii. 75 *note*[1]; on Roebuck, 170 *note*[1]; on Lincoln's re-election, 239 *and note*[1]

Poem in, on the death of Lincoln, ii. 259
Putnam, G. H., *Memories of My Youth*, cited, i. 178 *note*[3]
Putnam, G. P., *Memoirs*, cited, ii. 163 *note*[3]

Quarterly Review, The, i. 47; views on the Southern secession, 47; on the lesson from the failure of Democracy in America, 47; ii. 279, 286, 301; attitude in the conflict, 199, 301; on British sympathy for the South, 301

Reader, The, cited, ii. 222, *and note*[2]
Reform Bill of 1832 . . . i. 26, 28; ii. 276; of 1867 . . . 303, 304
Republican Party, The, i. 114, 115
Rhett, cited, ii. 4 *and note*[2], 88
Rhodes, *United States*, cited or quoted, i. 110 *note*[4], 138, 217 *note*[2], 231 *note*[3]; ii. 56 *note*[1], 57 *note*[2], 147 *note*[1], 285 *note*[1] *et passim*.
Richardson, *Messages and Papers of the Confederacy*, cited or quoted, i. 261 *note*, 266 *note*[1]; ii. 57 *note*[2], 69 *note*[2], 155 *note*[4], *et passim*.
Richmond, Va., Southern Government head-quarters at, i. 81; capture of, by Grant, ii. 248
Richmond Enquirer, The, quoted on attitude of France to the Confederacy, ii. 180
Richmond Whig, The, cited, ii. 68
Right of Search controversy, i. 6–10 *passim*, 16; recrudescence of, in *Trent* affair, 218, 219, 233, 235
Robinson, Chas. D., Lincoln's draft letter to, ii. 93 *note*[4]
Roebuck, speech of, on recognition, ii. 34 *note*[1]; motion of, for recognition of the Confederacy, 74 *note*[1], 144, 152, 164 *et seq.*; 296 *note*[1]; W. H. Russell's views on, 166; Lord Russell's opinion on, 166; interview of, with Napoleon, 167; Parliamentary debate on, 170-2, 176-8; withdrawal of motion, 175, 176-7; subsequent attitude of, to America, 177 *note*[1], 299-300; opinion on the failure of democracy in America, 299-300; *Punch* cartoon on, 170 *note*[1]; otherwise mentioned, i. 306
Rogers, Prof. Thorold, ii. 224 *note*[3]
Rosencrans, defeat of, at Chickamauga, ii. 184
Rost, Southern Commissioner to London, i. 63, 82, 85, 86, 264
Rouher, M., French Minister of Commerce, i. 293, 294
Roylance, ii. 110
Rubery, Alfred: Lincoln's pardon of, ii. 225 *and note*[1]
Russell, Lord John, i. 42, 76, 77, 78-9, 81; attitude of, in the early days of the American struggle, 42, 51, 53, 57, 60, 73-4, 79, 84; views on the secession, 52-3; views and action in anticipation of war, 57-8; instruction on possible jingo policy toward England, 60-1; recommends conciliation, i. 67, 74; refusal to make a pledge as to British policy, 67, 74, 86, 87, 101, 108, 125; promise of delay to Dallas, 67, 84, 85, 107, 108; plan of joint action with France, 84, 85; advises Parliament to keep out of the Civil War, 90 *and note*[3]; uncertainty as to American intention, 201-2; ii. 237; interview with Spence, i. 266; "three months" statement, 272 *and note*[1]; ii. 22; effect of Stonewall Jackson's exploits on, ii. 38; effect of Gladstone's Newcastle speech on, 49; idea of withdrawal of belligerent rights to the North, 182, 183; on relations with United States and Seward, 183-4; attitude to Seward's plan of collecting import duties at Southern ports, 198; views on the conflict: belief in ultimate Southern independence, 198-9, 212, 271; and the Danish question, 203; action in withdrawing neutrality proclamation, and belligerent rights, 266-7, 268, 269; attitude to piracy proclamation, 267-8, and the Reform Bill, 276, 302, 303; quoted on the degeneration of the American Republic, 285; succeeds to Premiership, 302

Diplomatic action and views of, in regard to:
Alabama, the, ii. 120, 121, 124; interview with Adams on, 128, 131; private feelings on 121, 124, 130

Belligerent rights to the South, i. 86, 87, *and note*[3]; reply to Houghton on, ii. 265-6, 267
Blockade, the: views on, i. 58, 91, 246, 252-3; instructions to Lyons on, 58, 244, 248, 263, 267, 271, 272; instructions to Bunch, 253 *note*[2]; view on notification at the port method, 246; on British Trade under, 252, 253; aim in presenting Parliamentary Papers on, 252, 267; on irritation caused by, ii. 225-6
Southern Ports Bill, protests against, i. 247-51; instructions to Lyons on, 248, 249
Stone Boat Fleet, i. 254-5, 256
Punch controversy, i. 186, 187, 190-5; letter of caution to Lyons on possible rupture, 190; anxiety in, 190, 191
Butler's, General, order to troops: advice to Palmerston on, i. 303-4; reply to Adams, 304
Confederate Commissioners: attitude to, i. 67, 68; interviews with, i. 85-6, 158, declines official communication with, 214 *and note*[4], 265-6; reception of Mason, 235, 265-6, 267, 268; suggestion to Thouvenel on reception of Slidell, 235; reply to Mason's notification of his recall, ii. 181; reply to Confederate "Manifesto," 241-2
Confederate Shipbuilding: reply to Adams' protests, ii. 118, 120-1, 127; advice to Palmerston on, 131; orders detention of contractors, 135; seizure of *Alexandra*, 136; stoppage of, 197; result of *Alexandra* trial, 197. *See also sub-headings* Alabama, Laird Rams
Confederates: negotiations with, i. 161, 163, 166, 168 *note*[4] 170, 184; attitude to Thouvenel's initiation of negotiations with, 189; explanation to Adams of British attitude to, 190
Cotton supply: attitude to French proposals on, i. 197, 199, 294
Declaration of Paris negotiation: request to France in, i. 142, 146-7, 156, 157 *and note*[2]; instructions to Lyons on, 146-62 *passim*, 184; interviews with Adams, 141-8; 158; proposals to the United States, 153 *and note*[2], 170; instructions to Cowley, 156-9 *passim*; suggested declaration in proposed convention, 143-6, 146 *note*[1], 149, 151, 154, 168, 170, 201
Emancipation Proclamation: views on, ii. 101-2, 107 *and note*[1]
Foreign Enlistment Act: idea of amending, ii. 124; offer to United States on, 124-5; reply to Adams' pressure for alteration of, 149
Gregory's motion, i. 108
Irishmen: recruiting of, ii. 201-2
Laird Rams: conversations with Adams on, ii. 144; orders detention of, 144-5, 146, 150, 151; correspondence with the Lairds, 146; drafts protest to Mason, 147, 148 *and note*[1]; reply to attack on Government policy on, 149-50
Lindsay: approval of Cowley's statement to, i. 293, 294; reply to request of, for an interview, 294-5; interview with, on motion for mediation and recognition, ii. 212-13
Mediation: advice to Palmerston on reported French offer, i. 305; reply to Seward's protest, ii. 19, 25-6, 27; project of, with Palmerston, ii. 31-2, 34, 36 *et seq.*, 91, 271; instructs Cowley to sound Thouvenel, 38; letters to Gladstone on, 40, 41; points of, 46; responsibility for, 46 *note*[1]; Russia approached, 45; memorandum on America, 49 *and note*[1]; proposal of an armistice, 31-2, 49, 53-5, 56-7; comments on Napoleon's Armistice suggestion, 61-2, 64; wish for acceptance, 62, 64; declaration of no change in British policy, 71; end of the project, 72, 155; motive in, 73; viewed as a crisis, 73; comments of, to Brunow

on joint mediation offer 73 *note*[1]
Mercier's Richmond visit, i. 287, 288
Privateering, i. 89, 91, 159-63 *passim*; possible interference of, with neutrals, ii. 127, 138-9, 150; opinion of, on intended use of privateers, 138
Proclamation of Neutrality, British position in, i. 166 *note*[1] ii. 265-6
Recognition of the Confederacy: attitude to, i. 67, 74, 86, 87, 101, 108, 242, 243; ii. 54, 59, 77-8; influence of *Trent* affair on, i. 243; reply to Mason's requests for, ii. 25, 27; opinion of Roebuck's motion on, 166, 177; denies receipt of proposal from France on 168-9, 172
Servile War, ii. 80, 97, 98
Slavery, ii. 89, 90; view of Seward's proposal for transport of emancipated slaves, 100
Trent affair, view of, i. 212; letter to Lord Palmerston on War with America over, 215; on possible ways of settlement of, 224; instructions to Lyons on learning officially that Wilkes acted without authorization, 226

Policy of, in the American Civil War: i. 145, 202, 243, 299: ii. 271-2; declaration to Adams on, 55, 71
Attitude to Adams, i. 81; view of, i. 131; ii. 128
View of Lincoln, i. 189; ii. 263
View of Seward, i. 67, 68, 131, 235-6; improved relations with, ii. 72, 197

Criticism and view of, in *The Index*, ii. 51 *note*[2], 68, 69, 196

Otherwise mentioned, i. 96, 101 *note*[1], 198, 274, 277; ii. 190, 208, 254

Russell, Lady, quoted on *Trent* affair, i. 224 *note*[2]
Russell, W. H., *Times* correspondent, i. 44, 56, 66, 177; letters of, to the *Times*, 71, 177; ii. 229 *note*[1]; on the secession, i. 56, 177; impression of Lincoln, 61 *note*[2]; description of Bull Run, 177-8; ii. 229 *note*[1]; abhorrence of slavery, i. 71, 177; American newspaper attacks on 178 *and note*[1]; recall of, 178 *and note*[1]; ii. 228, 229 *note*[1]; on Napoleon's mediation offer, 68; on recognition, 166; editor of *Army and Navy Gazette*, ii. 68, 228, 229 *and note*[1]; belief of, in ultimate Northern victory, i. 178 *note*[2], 180; ii. 68 *note*[1], 228, 229 *and note*[1]; view of the ending of the War, 229-30; on campaigns of Grant and Sherman, 230, 232-3, 243; quoted on Delane, 254; on prospective war with America, 254; on failure of republican institutions, 277
My Diary North and South, i. 177 *notes*; quoted 44 *note*[1], 61, 71; cited, 124, 178, ii. 229 *note*[1]
Russia: attitude in Declaration of Paris negotiation, i. 164 *note*[1]; convention with United States on privateering, 171 *note*[1]; attitude to recognition of the South, 196 *note*[2]; ii. 59; and mediation, i. 283 *note*[1]; ii. 37 *note*[1], 39, 45 *note*[2]; British approach to, on mediation, 40, 45, *and note*[2]; attitude to joint mediation, 59 *note*[4], 63 *and note*[2], 66 *and note*[2], 70 *note*[2]; on joint mediation without Britain, 76 *and note*[1]; plan of separate mediation, 251 *note*[1]; Seward's request to, on withdrawal of Southern belligerent rights, 265 *and note*[2]; policy of friendship to United States, 45 *note*[2], 59 *note*[4], 70 *note*[2]; United States friendship for, 225
Polish question, ii. 129, 163
Fleets of, in Western waters: story of, in *Trent* affair, i. 227 *note*[1]; ii. 129 *and note*
See also under Brunow, Gortchakoff, Stoeckl

St. André, French Acting-Consul at Charleston, i. 185, 186, 191 *note*[4]
Salisbury, Lord, quoted on John Bright's oratory, ii. 290 *note*[1]
Salt, price of, in Charleston: effect of the blockade, i. 270
San Domingo, Seward's overture to Great Britain for a convention to guarantee independence of, i. 126 *note*[1]

San Francisco, Russian vessels in harbour of, ii. 129 *and note*[1]
San Jacinto, the, i. 204, 205, 216
Saturday Review, The: views of, on Lincoln's election, i. 39; judgment of Seward, 39; views at outbreak of war, 41, 46; on Southern right of secession, 42; on Proclamation of Neutrality, 100-1; on reported American adhesion to Declaration of Paris, 146 *note*[1]; on slavery as an issue: attack on Mrs. H. B. Stowe, 180-1; on blockade and recognition, 183; on duration of war and cotton supply, 246 *note*[2]; on servile insurrection, ii. 80; and the relation between the American struggle and British institutions, 276, 277-8, 280; on the promiscuous democracy of the North, 277; on the Republic and the British Monarchy, 277-8; cited, 111. 231 *note*
Savannah, Ga., i. 253 *note*[1]; captured by Sherman, ii. 245, 249, 300-1
Scherer, *Cotton as a World Power*, cited, ii. 6
Schilling, C., ii. 301 *note*[2]
Schleiden, Rudolph, Minister of Republic of Bremen, i. 115, 116 *note*, 130; views of, on Seward and Lincoln, 115-6; offers services as mediator: plan of an armistice, 121, 122; visit of, to Richmond, 121-3; failure of his mediation, 122-3; report of Russian attitude to privateers, 171 *note*[1]; on *Trent* affair, 231 *note*[2], 242; on Lincoln and Seward's attitude to release of envoys, 231 *note*[2]; on attitude of Seward and Sumner to Southern Ports Bill, 248 *note*[2]; quoted, on slavery, ii. 111 *and note*[2]
Schleswig-Holstein question, i. 79; ii. 203-4
Schmidt, *Wheat and Cotton during the Civil War*, cited, ii. 7 *notes*; 167 *note*[1]; arguments in, examined, 13 *note*[2]
Scholefield, Wm., ii. 193 *note*
Schouler, ——, on diplomatic controversies between England and America, cited, i. 35
Schroeder, quoted on Erlanger's contract to issue Confederate Cotton Loan, ii. 161-2
Schurz, Carl, papers of, in library
advocates declaration of an anti-slavery purpose in the war, ii. 91, 92; cited i. 83 *note*[2]
Schwab, *The Confederate States of America*, cited, ii. 156 *note*[1], 158 *note*[4], 160 *notes*, 162 *note*[2]
Scott, Winfield, American General, on Wilkes' action in *Trent* affair, i. 218
Sears, *A Confederate Diplomat at the Court of Napoleon III*, cited, i. 261 *note*, 289 *note*[2]; ii. 24 *note*[1]
Secession States, ports of, i. 253 *note*[1]
Semmes, captain of the *Alabama*, ii. 119
Senior, Nassau W., article on "American Slavery," i. 33; quoted, 33 *note*[1], 34
Servile insurrection, i. 271; ii. 83, 87; British apprehension of, i. 93; ii. 49, 79, 80, 81, 101, 110 emancipation viewed as provocative of, 49, 81, 86, 98, 101, 114; as an argument for intervention, 98, 101, 103 *note*[5]; use of as a threat, 18-19, 83, 94, 95, 97, 98, 100, 114
Seward, W. H., American Secretary of State, i. 39, 49, 59, 60, 64, 79, 80, 115; British view of, 60, 80, view of, as unfriendly to Great Britain, 39, 67, 68, 113-4, 125 *et seq.* 242; reputation as a politician, 80, 114, 115; efforts of, to secure European support for the North, 67, 137, 152; view of his relation to Lincoln, 114, 115-6, 118, 120, 127-8, 130; document "Some Thoughts for the President's Consideration," 118-9, 123, 124; advice on Fort Sumter, 118, 120,; his "Despatch No. 10" 125-30, 154, 155; reversal of his policy, 130, 132; action on Britain's necessity of intercourse with the South, 164; instructions to American diplomats on slavery as issue, i. 176; ii. 95; offers facilities for transport of British troops, i. 213 *note*[4]; change of attitude to England, ii. 72; quarrel with Chase, 72; influence of, lessened by signing Abolition Proclamation, 100 *note*[2]; friendliness to Lyons, 72, 141; appreciation of Russell's expression of esteem, 147; attitude to Russell, 197; policy in regard to reunion, 197;

British-French harmony, 198; anxiety to avoid irritating incidents, 199; considers abrogation of treaties with Canada, 253-4; denies rumours of prospective foreign war, 254; accepts notification of ending of British neutrality, 268-9; meets with an accident, 257; attempted murder of, 257-8, 265

Diplomatic action and views of, with regard to:
Belligerent rights to South: denial of, i. 87, 102, 169, 233; ii. 182; remonstrance on concession of, i. 247, 274, proposes withdrawal of, ii. 264-5, 266; *See also under* Declaration of Paris *and* Neutrality *infra*.
Blockade, i. 54 *note*[1], 65, 246, 295; interviews with Lyons on, 244, 245, 246, 251, 256, 257; suggested alleviation of, i. 274
Southern Ports Bill: reassures Lord Lyons on American intentions in, i. 249; attitude to issue of, 248 *note*[1], 250, 251, 252; on closing of ports by proclamation, 250, 252
Stone Boat Fleet blockade: statement on, i. 256-7
Bunch affair, i. 184, 189, 191 *and note*[1], 192, 193, 194 *and note*[1]
Confederate debts: statement on, ii. 197
Confederate envoys: British intercourse with, i. 105
Confederate shipbuilding in Britain: ii. 121, 139, 140; effect of seizure of the *Alexandra* on, 140; despatch on *Alexandra* case decision, 143 *and note*[1]; refuses to allow British Consul through the blockade, 148
Cotton: on proposed French intervention to secure, i. 198, 200; promises of, based on capture of New Orleans, ii. 16
Declaration of Paris negotiation, i. 137, 141, 145, 147, 150 *et seq.*; statement in refusing convention as modified by Russell, 145; motives in, 150-2, 153, 169; hope to influence foreign attitude to Southern belligerent rights, 150-1, 162, 164, 165, 169; as part of foreign war policy: considered, 153-4, 155-6
Emancipation Proclamation: urges postponement of, ii. 37, 85, 95, 96, 98, 114; informed as to effect of, on intervention, 98, 99 comments on purpose of, 99-100 the "high moral purpose" argument, ii. 100; proposes convention for transport of emancipated slaves, 100
Hampton Roads Conference, ii. 252; attitude to Britain after, 253-4
Intervention: attitude to, i. 145, 178, 200; threat of servile war and, ii. 18-19, 22, 95; instructions to Adams on, 35-6, 96-7; view of the effect of emancipation, on, 98, 114. *See also* Mediation *infra*.
Irish Emigrants: enlistment of, ii. 201
Mediation: attitude to, i. 283 *note*[1], 297; ii. 18, 57 *note*[1]; by France, i. 283 *note*[1]; by Russia, 283 *note*[1]; view of England's refusal to act with France in, ii. 71, 72; declines French offer of, 76 *See also* Intervention *supra*.
Mercier's Richmond visit, i. 280-4, 286; statement to Lyons: view of Confederate position, 286; newspaper statement on, 287
Napoleon's Mexican policy: attitude to, ii. 198
Neutrality Proclamations: representations on, i. 100, 101; despatch on American view of, 101, 103 *note*[1], 134; refusal to receive officially, 102-3, 132, 133, 153 *and note*[1], 164; efforts to secure recall of, 152-3, 169, 198, 234, 274-5, 300, 301
Privateering, i. 160; convention with Russia, 171 *note*. *See also* Southern Privateering *infra*.
"Privateering Bill:" use of, ii. 121 *note*[2], 141, 151; on the purpose and use of the privateers, 122-3, 125, 137, 143; conversations with Lyons on, 125, 126; on

necessity for issuing letters of marque, i. 26, 143; advised by Adams against issue of privateers, 131, 139
Recognition of Southern Independence, i. 65, 74, 198
Servile War threat, ii. 18-19, 22, 83, 95, 98
Slave Trade Treaty with Great Britain, i. 10, 275, 276; ii. 90
Southern privateering: view of, i. 104, 105; efforts to influence European attitude to, i. 104, 150-1, 154, 162, 164, 169; attitude on issue of privateers from British ports, ii. 126, 127
Trent affair: reception of British demands in, i. 230, 232, 233; on Wilkes' action, 231; attitude to release of envoys, 231 *and note*[1], 232, 233, 234, 236; British opinion on Seward in, 239
Foreign Policy: high tone, i. 236, 252 *and note*[1], 301; restoration of the Union as basis of, 236; influences affecting, ii. 95, 100
Foreign War panacea, i. 60, 113, 120, 123-4, 125 126 *note*[1], 127, 130, 132, 134-5, 137, 154, 155, 214; appreciation of, 136.
Southern conciliation policy of, i. 49, 83, 117, 118, 120-1, 123, 125; expectations from Union sentiment in the South, 60, 117; aids Schleiden's Richmond visit, 121-3; communications with Confederate Commissioners, 117-8, 120
Appreciation and criticism of: by British statesmen and press in 1865. . . . ii. 257; *Times* tribute to, 257; Horace Greeley's attack on, i. 280 *note*[1]; Gregory's attack on, i. 269; Lyons' view of, i. 59, 60; Adams' admiration for i. 80, 127
British suspicion of, i. 113, 114, 128, 133, 136, 227, 235-6; ii. 101 *note*[1]; the Newcastle story, 80, 114, 216, 227; Thurlow Weeds' efforts to remove, 227; Adams' view, 227
Otherwise mentioned, i. 66, 163 *notes*, 177, 186, 188, 209, 212, 213, 217; ii. 39, 84, 123 *note*[1], 170, 173, 175, 223, 225, 245 *note*[1], 259, 281

Shelburne, Earl of, i. 240
Sheridan's campaign in the Shenandoah, views in French press on, ii. 236 *note*[2]
Sherman, General: Atlanta campaign of, ii. 217; captures Atlanta, 233; march to the sea, 243-5; captures Savannah, 245, 249, 300-1; campaign against Johnston, 248; reports of pillaging and burning by his army, 265; mentioned, 215
Russell, W. H., views of, on Sherman's campaigns, ii. 230, 232-3, 243
Times view of his campaigns, ii. 212, 227, 232, 243-6
Shiloh, General Grant's victory at, i. 278
Shipbuilding by Confederates in neutral ports, ii. 116, 117 *note*[1], 128; Continental opinion of international law on, 121 *note*[1]
Shipping Gazette, quoted, ii. 14
Shrewsbury, Earl of, cited on democracy in America and its failure, ii. 282
Slavery: cotton supplies and, i. 13; controversy in America on, 32, 36; English opinion on, 31-5, 37-8, 40; as an issue in the Civil War, 45, 46, 173, 175, 176, 179, 181, 241, 242; ii. 78, 88-93, 222; Confederates identified with, i. 71; ii. 220; Southern arguments for, 3 *and note*[1]; attitude of the North to, 78; growth of anti-slavery sentiment, 83, 84; failure of the slaves to rise, 86; Northern declaration on, urged, 98-9, 107; British public meetings on, 109 *note*[1]; Southern declaration on, 106. *See also* African Slave Trade, Emancipation, Servile Insurrection, etc.
Slidell, John, "Special Commissioner of the Confederates" to France, i. 203; captured on the *Trent*, 204-5, 234 *and note*[1]; connection of with Napoleon's Mexican policy, 261 *note*[1]; plan of action of, 264-5; received by Thouvenel, 266 *note*[1]; view on Continental and British interests in the blockade, 267 *note*[1], 273; view of Mercier's Richmond visit, 228; on Lindsay's interviews with Napoleon, 292; views

of, on the capture of New Orleans, 296; idea to demand recognition from France, 306, 307; ii. 25, 28; hopes of mediation by France, ii. 19, 25; interview of, with Napoleon, 23, 24; makes offers to Napoleon and to Thouvenel, 24, 25; letter to Benjamin on failure to secure intervention, 29; interview with Napoleon on Armistice, 59 *and note*[1], 60; memorandum of, to the Emperor, asking for separate recognition, 75; on shipbuilding for Confederates in France, 128; quoted on position of France in relation to mediation, 155; and Confederate Cotton Loan, 158 *and note*[2], 159, 161, 163; interview of, with Napoleon, on recognition, 167; and Napoleon's instruction on recognition in Roebuck's motion, 168-9, 172; and Mason's recall, 180, 181, 182; opinion of Russell, 213; suggestion on Lindsay's motion, 213; disappointment at result of Mason's interview with Palmerston, 215; opinion on European attitude to the South, 215; interview with Napoleon on the abolition of slavery in return for recognition, 249-50; quoted on Lee's surrender 256-7; appreciation of as diplomatic agent, ii. 25, 180 *note*[2]; correspondence of, i. 261 *note*[1]; otherwise mentioned, ii. 154 *note*[1]. *See also under heading* Confederate Commissioners

Smith, Goldwin, ii. 136 *note*[2], 189 *note*[2]; on Gladstone and Canada, 69, 70 *note*[1]; quoted on the influence of the *Times*, 178 *note*[2], 189 *note*[2]; on the *Daily Telegraph*, 189 *note*[2]; tribute of, to T. B. Potter, 224 *note*[2]; view of the *Times* attitude to democracy, 299; criticism of the privileged classes of Great Britain, 303-4

America and England in their present relations, quoted, ii. 304, *and note*[2]

Civil War, The, in America, cited, ii. 223 *note*[2], 224 *note*[2]; quoted, 304 *note*[1]

'Does the Bible sanction American Slavery?" ii. 110

Letter, A, to a Whig Member of the Southern Independence Association, ii. 194-5; quoted, 299

Smith, T. C., *Parties and Slavery*, cited, ii. 3 *note*[2]

Society for Promoting the Cessation of Hostilities in America; ii. 207; letters of, to Members of Parliament, 207-8, 210-11; deputation of, to Palmerston, 216

Somerset, Duke of, i. 207

South Carolina, secession of, i. 41, 44; *Times* view on, 55; and restoration of Colonial relations: some British misconceptions on, 43, 44 *and note*

Southern Independence Association, The, ii. 185, 189, 191-5, 204, 220, 298; cessation of meetings of, 193-4, 222-3; apathy and dissension in, 205, 207, 208; resolution and deputation to Palmerston, 210-2, 216; ticket meetings, 239; Oldham meeting, 239, 240

Southern Ports Bill. *See* Blockade

Southern States: attitude of, to protection policy, i. 21, 47; and reciprocity treaty with British-American provinces, 21-2; influences directing British trade to, 22; British press attitude to, 40-48 *passim*; characterization of, 41; right of secession, 42, 82 175, 176, 269; tariff as a cause for secession, 47; question of recognition considered, 58; secession, 172-3; preparations for war, 172; recognized as belligerents, 190, 191, 172; expulsion of British Consuls, by, ii. 148 *note*[2]; activities of British friends of, 152, 187-8, 190, 193-4, 239, 298; Conservative hopes for success of, 300; views on French attitude, ii. 236 *note*[2]; effect of the fall of Savannah on, 246; end of the Confederacy, 248, 259, 268; hope of, from "foreign war," 252; effect on, of Lincoln's assassination 258; withdrawal of belligerent rights to, 264-6; end of the war; naval policy towards, 266-7

Belligerent rights, recognition of, i. 87, 88, 95, 108, 109, 150, 151, 155, 166 *note*[2]. *See* Neutrality Proclamations.

Commissioners of, *See under* Confederate Commissioners

Cotton, obsession as to, i. 252 *note*[2]; ii. 4, 5

Cotton Loan, ii. 155 *et seq.* 179; reception of, in England, 160-1; amounts realized by, 162

Declaration of Paris negotiation: attitude to, i. 186
Finance, ii. 156 *et seq.*
Hampton Roads Conference: suggestions in, ii. 252-3
Leaders of: British information on, i. 58-9
Manifesto to Europe, ii. 241 *and note*[1], 242
Mediation: feeling in, on England's refusal of, ii. 71 *and note*[1]; hope of change in British policy on, 213-4
Military resources: decline of, ii. 219; desertions from the Army, 222
Negroes, arming of, ii. 240-1, 251
Privateering. *See that heading.*
Recognition of independence: anger at failure to secure, i. 252 *note*[1]; desire for, without mediation, ii. 217
Secret service funds, ii. 154 *note*[1]
Shipbuilding in British ports for, ii. 115 *et seq.*; British protest to, on, 148. *See also under* Alabama, Laird Rams, Oreto, etc.
Slavery attitude, ii. 88 *and note*[2]; intention of gradual emancipation, 98; British views on, 220; offer of abolition in return for recognition, 249-51
Spain, and Mexican debts, i. 259, 260
Spargo, *Karl Marx*, cited, ii. 292 *note*[1]
Spectator, The, i. 70 *note*[1]; ii. 231 *note*; constant advocacy of Northern cause, i. 39; on Lincoln's election, 39; views on the Civil War, 41, 69, 100, 181; on secession, 57; on Proclamation of Neutrality, 100, 136 *note*[1]; attacks Bulwer Lytton's speech on dissolution of the Union, 182; on servile insurrection and emancipation, ii. 79, 80; on British Press attitude to emancipation, 89; on declaration of anti-slavery purpose in the war, 89; on the Emancipation Proclamation, 104-5; on British lack of sympathy with the North, 280; on anti-slavery sympathies and view of democracy in England, 280; otherwise mentioned, i. 180; ii. 105, 223 *note*[1], 282
Spence, James, i. 183 *note*[2], 266 *and note*[2]; conferences of, in London, 266, 267, 272 *and note*[1], 273; prevents demonstration by cotton operatives, 300; plan to appeal to the Tories, ii. 153, 155, 164; as Confederate financial adviser, 156, 157, 158; and Confederate Cotton Loan, 159, 161-2; urges withdrawal of Roebuck's motion, 173-4; effect of the fall of Vicksburg on, 179; organization of Southern Clubs by, 186-7, 188, 189, 190; hopes for intervention, 187-8, 189-90; organization of Southern Independence Association by, 191; organization of meetings by, 191, 222-3; organizes petitions to Parliament, 193; comments of, on the Palmerston-Mason interview, 216-7; on slavery clause in Southern Independence Association's address, 220
Slidell's opinion of, i. 266 *note*[2]; ii. 159; Otherwise mentioned, i. 302; ii. 49 *note*[2], 181, 193
The American Union, i. 183 *and note*[2], 266 *note*[2]; ii. 112
Spencer, Herbert, quoted, i. 38
Spurgeon, C. H., prayer of, for victory of the North, ii. 109-110
Stanley of Alderley, Lord, ii. 42
Stephen, Leslie, meeting of, with Seward, ii. 176 *note*[2]
Stephens, Alexander H., Vice-President of Southern Government, i. 59, 81, 121; interview of, with Schleiden, 122, 123; discussion of, with Seward on Confederate foreign war plan, ii. 252
Stevenson, American Minister to London, letter of, to Palmerston, quoted, i. 109-10
Stoeckl, Russian Minister at Washington: view of the secession, i. 53 *note*[2]; on Russian policy in Declaration of Paris negotiations, 164 *note*[1]; on privateers in Northern Pacific, 171 *note*[1]; and recognition of the South, 196 *note*[2], and Mercier's Richmond visit, 283 *and note*[1]; on mediation, 283 *note*[1]; ii. 37 *and note*[1], 59 *note*[1], 70 *note*[2], 76; comments of, on Emancipation Proclamation, 107 *note*[1]; on the reconciliation of North and South followed by a foreign war, 251; Seward's request to, on withdrawal of Southern belligerent rights, 265; views on probable policy of Britain at the beginning

of the Civil War, 269-70, 271; on the Civil War as a warning against democracy, 297 *note*[4]; Otherwise mentioned, i. 54 *note*[1]; ii. 45 *note*[4]
Stone Boat Fleet. *See* Blockade.
Story, William Wetmore, i. 228, 256; letters of, in *Daily News*, 228 *and note*[4]
Stowe, Mrs. Harriet Beecher, and the *Saturday Review*, i. 181; mentioned, ii. 89-90, 109
Uncle Tom's Cabin, i. 33 *and note*[1]
Stowell, Lord, i. 208
Stuart, —, British Minister at Washington: report of new Northern levies of men, ii. 30; on recognition, 30 *and note*[3]; views on British policy, 30 *note*[3]; attitude to intervention and recognition, 36, 37, 66 *note*[3]; report of Lincoln's emancipation proclamation, 37, 98; suggestion of armistice, 47; account of Federal "reprisals," 66 *note*[3]; on servile insurrection, 97; describes Emancipation proclamation as a *brutum fulmen*, 101 Otherwise mentioned, ii. 25, 26, 66 *note*[3], 70, 100, 101 *note*[1]
Sturge, Joseph, *A Visit to the United States in* 1841, cited, i. 29
Sumner, Charles, i. 79, 80; Brooks' attack on, 33, 80; hope of, for appointment as Minister to England, 55 *and note*[2]; views on annexation of Canada, 55; in *Trent* affair, 231, 232, 234 *note*[3]; attitude to Southern Ports Bill, 248 *and note*[3]; advocacy of abolition, ii. 81, 90; conversations with Lincoln on abolition, 82, 86; attitude to Privateering Bill, 123, 124; otherwise mentioned, i. 49 *note*, 83, 130 *note*[1], 220; ii. 80, 132, 184, 247, 262, 280
Sumter, Fort, fall of, i. 63, 73, 74, 83, 120, 172, 173; Seward's policy on reinforcement of, 118
Sutherland, Rev. Dr., prayer of in American Senate, i. 233 *note*

Tariff Bill (U.S.) of 1816. . . . i. 19; of 1828 . . . 21
Taylor, P. A., abolitionist, ii. 224; eulogy of George Thompson, 224 *note*[1]
Taylor, Tom, poem by, in *Punch*, on the death of Lincoln, ii. 259
Tennessee joins Confederate States, i. 173
Texas, State of: revolts from Mexico, i. 12; Great Britain sends diplomatic and consular agents to, 12; independence of, as affecting British policy, 13-16; enters the American Union, 14, 15, 16; in War of Independence against Mexico protests against shipbuilding for Mexico in Britain, ii. 117 *note*[1]; mentioned, 266
Thompson and Wainwright, *Confidential Correspondence of G.V. Fox, etc.*, cited, i. 257 *note*[3]
Thompson, George, organizer of the London Emancipation Society, ii. 91; work of, for emancipation, 109, 224 *and note*[1]; mentioned, 109 *note*[3], 184, 191
Thouvenel, M., French Foreign Minister, i. 88, 143; in the Declaration of Paris negotiations, 151, 157, 158, 159, 161, 162, 163; initiates negotiations with Confederates, 157, 189; policy of, for relief of French need for cotton, 196, 197, 198; attitude of, in Charleston consuls case, 189; and Southern Ports Bill, 247, 248 *and notes*, 249 *and note*[4]; interview with Slidell, 266 *note*[1]; attitude of, to mediation, 266 *note*[1], 279; ii. 19-20, 28; on difficulties due to lack of cotton, i. 279, 293-4; conversations on Lindsay's interview with Napoleon, 291, 293; and Mercier's Richmond visit, 280, 281, 282, 285, 288, 299; conversation with Napoleon on the blockade and recognition of the South, 294; on French neutrality, 299; opposition to Napoleon on American policy, ii. 19 *and note*[3], 20, 39; Slidell's offer to, on mediation, 24, 25; reply of, to Russell's unofficial suggestion of mediation, 38-9 46; retirement of, 45, 59; view of England's advantage from dissolution of the Union, 270 *note*[3]; otherwise mentioned, i. 275, 289
Times, The: characteristics of, as newspaper, i. 42, 229 *note*[3]; ii. 178 *note*[3], 228, 230 *note*[3], 234; influence on public opinion, 178 *note*[3], 189 *and note*[3], 228; influence on public press, 226, 230 *note*[3]; accuracy of reports in,

226; pro-Southern attitude in last year of the conflict, 226-8, 242, 244 *and note*[3]; attitude to Hotze, 154 *note*[1]; relations of, with W. H. Russell, i. 177, 178, ii. 228, 229 *and note*[1]
Criticisms of: John Bright's view of, i. 55 *note*[2]; citations of anti-Americanism in, 217 *note*[1]; Cobden, on, 222 *note*; Canadian opinion on, 222 *note*; in *Index*, ii. 228; in *Morning Star*, 228; Goldwin Smith's attack on, 299
"Historicus," articles by, in. *See under* "Historicus."

Views expressed in, on:
Civil War: non-idealistic, i. 89 97; prints Motley's letter on causes of, 174-5
Confederate Manifesto, ii. 242
Cotton, i. 55; ii. 7 *and note*[1], 14, 15
Democracy: attitude to, i. 8; ii. 280-1, 284, 289, 297, 300; change of view on, 289-90, 291, 297; comparison of British and United States Governments, 286; attack on John Bright, 295-6
Foreign war plans of America on, ii. 252, 254
Gladstone's speech, ii. 49 *note*[1]
Laird Rams, ii. 146
Lincoln: on Slavery speech of, i. 38; on re-election of, ii. 234-5, 238; appreciations of, after his death, ii. 259-61
Lindsay's proposed motion: ii. 205-6
Mediation, i. 303, 305; ii. 67
Military situation, ii. 165, 176 *and note*[2], 178, 297; after Gettysburg, ii. 180 *and note*[1], 228 *note*[2]; Lee's Northern advance, 176; on Grant's reverses and Sherman's march on Atlanta, 212, 227, 232, 243,; capture of Atlanta, 233, 234, 235; fall of Savannah, 245-6, 300-1; Lee's surrender, 255-6; appreciation of Lee's campaign, 256; Northern ability in war, 256; Sherman's campaign, 301 *note*[1]
Neutrality in non-idealistic war i. 89, 97
Northern ability in war, ii. 256
Privateers, i, 158
Proclamation of Neutrality, i. 103-4, 158
Roebuck's motion, ii. 173, 176, 296 *note*[1]
Secession, i. 45, 68
Seward, i. 216; ii. 257
Slavery: attitude to controversy on, i. 32, 55; condemnation of, 38-9, 40, 71; on Northern attitude to, ii. 89; Emancipation Proclamation, 102-3, 104; criticism of anti-slavery meetings, 108; on Biblical sanction of, 110
South, The: condemnation of, i. 38-9, 40; lawless element in, 40, 41; changing views on, at opening of the war, 55 *and note*[2], 56-7, 68-9; demand of, for recognition, ii. 181; renewed confidence in, ii. 210 *and note*[2]
Southern shipbuilding, ii. 145, 146
Trent affair, i. 216-7, 225-6, 237
War of 1812 . . . i. 8
"Yankee," The, ii. 246

Otherwise mentioned, i. 174; ii. 65 *and note*[1], 160, 201 *and note*[2], 204 *and note*[2], 295

Toombs (Confederate Secretary of State), i. 129; ii. 4 *note*[2]
Toronto *Globe*, the, cited, i. 222 *note*
Trades Unions of London, meeting of, ii. 132-3, 134, 291-3
Train, George Francis, of the *New York Herald*, speeches of, in England, ii. 224 *note*[2]
Treaty of Washington (1842) i. 4, 9
Tremenheere, H. S., *The Constitution of the United States*, etc., cited, ii. 275 *note*[2]
Tremlett, F. W., quoted, ii. 211-12
Trent affair, The, i. 195, 203 *and note*, 204 *et seq.*
British demands in, i. 212-3, 226, 230, points of the complaint, 214 *note*[1]; American reply, 232, 234
British views on, i. 203, 216, 216-8, 221-4, 225, 226-7; American exultation in, 205-6, 218, 219; effect of in Canada, 222 *note*; Cabinet members' sentiments on, 223; change in American views,

226, 230-1; British speculation on probable war, 228, 229; European support of Britain in, 229, 235; French views on, 230, 234-5; release of envoys, 235; American feeling after settlement of, 236 *and note*[1], 237; Parliamentary debate on conclusion of, 240-1, 262, 265, 274; influence of, on British policy in relation to the Civil War, 242; ii. 15-16; Southerners' action in, i. 211 *note*[1]; effect of, on British cotton trade, ii. 9

Otherwise mentioned, i. 171 *note*[1], 201, 202, 244, 253, 254; ii. 72, 131

Trescott, William Henry, i. 186, 188
Tribune, The New York, cited, i. 280 *note*[1]
Trimble, W., "Surplus Food Production of the United States," cited, ii. 13 *note*[2]
Trollope, Anthony, i. 239 *and note*[2], 240; ii. 153; description of the United States citizen by, ii. 287-8
North America, i. 239; ii. 153, 287, 288 *and note*[2]
Trollope, Mrs., i. 27, 48
Tyler, President, i. 10

UNION and Emancipation Society of London, The: Bright's speech to, ii. 295
United Empire Loyalists, i. 8 *note*
United States:
Citizenship: theory of, i. 5-6 *and note*
Commercial relations with Great Britain, i. 17 *et seq.*
Democracy in, *See under* Democracy.
International law, influence of U.S. on, belligerent and neutral rights in, i. 5-10, 140
Naval power: agitation for increase of, i. 123
Policy in the Civil War, ii. 197. *See under* Adams, Lincoln, Seward, *and subject-headings*
Political principles of: British sympathy for, i. 3, 26
Political institutions in: views of travellers and writers, i. 30; ii. 274 *et seq.*
Population, growth of, i. 12
Protection policy: beginnings of, i. 18-19, 20-1; reaction against in the South, 21
Territorial expansion, i. 12 *et seq.*

See also under subject-headings.

United States Supreme Court: decision on Lincoln's blockade proclamations, i. 110 *note*[1]

VAN BUREN, President, i. 109
Vansittart, William, ii. 187, 193 *note*
Vicksburg, capture of, ii. 143, 165, 176 *note*[2], 178, 228 *note*[2], 296; Southern defence of, 164, 165, 178; importance of, in the military situation, 165
Victoria, Queen, i. 76, 96, 168, 190 *note*[2]; ii. 40, 199, 262; pro-German influence of, 203 *note*[1]; writes personal letter of sympathy to Mrs. Lincoln, 262
Vignaud, Henry, ii. 154 *note*[1]
Virginia, State of, i. 121, 122, 172, 245
Vogt, A., ii. 301 *note*[2]

WALES, Prince of, visit to United States in 1860, . . . i. 80
Walker, Mr., and employment of ex-slaves in British Guiana, ii. 100
Wallbridge, General Hiram, ii. 123 *and note*[2]
Warburton, George *Hochelaga*: i. 29
Washington, President, i. 11
Watts, *Cotton, Famine*, ii. 6 *note*[2]
Weed, Thurlow, i. 114 *and notes*, 129, 227, 231; ii. 130 *note*[2]
Welles, United States Secretary of the Navy, ii. 199; in *Trent* affair, congratulates Wilkes, i. 220; attitude to the "Privateering Bill," ii. 123 *note*[2], 128, 137; mentioned, 84, 96
West Indian Colonies, i. 3; American trade with, 17, 19, 20, 21; slavery in, 31
Westbury, Lord, i. 262-3; ii. 64
Westminster Review, The, i. 48, 70 *and note*[1], 71
Wharncliffe, Lord, ii. 187, 193 *note*
Wheat and cotton in the Civil War, ii. 13 *note*[2]
Whig sympathy for American political principles, i. 26, 28

White, Andrew D., "A Letter to W. H. Russell," etc., cited, ii. 229 *note*[1]
Whittier, J. G., i. 29, 47
Wilberforce, Samuel, i. 31
Williams, Commander, R.N., i. 204
Wilkes, Captain, of the *San Jacinto*, intercepts the *Trent*, i. 204, 216, 219-20; American national approbation of, 219-20; Seward on, 233; his action officially stated to be unauthorized, 226, 254
Wilmington, N. C., i. 253 *note*[1]; ii. 247
Wilson, President, i. 90 *note*[2]
Wodehouse, Lord, i. 84

YANCEY, Southern Commissioner, i. 63, 82 *and note*, 85, 86, 264; ii. 4 *note*[1], 223 *note*[1]
Yeomans, cited, i. 38

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