The London Times and the American Civil War

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The Times in the 1860's was the most powerful newspaper in Britain and the world. Through the labours of its exceptionally talented staff in London, the provinces, and abroad, it provided readers with vital information on major questions of the day, and instructed them on its editorial page as to the opinions they should hold. This thesis examines the record of The Times in covering and commenting on the American Civil War.

When war threatened in America, Times editor John Delane quickly sent his experienced foreign correspondent, William Howard Russell, to supplement his regular correspondent in New York. Russell was in place to report the beginning of the war, the retreat from the first battle of Bull Run, and the Trent Crisis of November/December 1861. Refused permission in the spring of 1862 to accompany Northern armies on the first major campaign of the war, he angrily returned to England. In this period of just over a year, The Times moved from being the foreign newspaper most educated Americans wanted to read, to being the foreign newspaper most Americans vehemently disliked. Contemporary observers charged then and later that The Times's coverage of the war poisoned relations between Britain and the United States for a generation.

This study analyzes this remarkable charge by exploring the private opinions of key players in the drama. The Times is unique among newspapers in possessing an unusually complete archive of letters written by its editors and correspondents. In addition to these letters and Russell's diaries, the papers of William Seward, American Secretary of State, and two of his diplomats, John Bigelow and Henry Sanford, the papers of Times correspondent Bancroft Davis and the diaries of American Minister Charles Francis Adams have been tapped to document American reactions to The Times. Lord Palmerston's papers have been consulted to determine the relationship between the policies advocated by The Times and those of Palmerston and his foreign secretary, Lord Russell.

The major concentration of the study has been on the period just before the war up to the time of the Trent crisis, for it was then that The Times's policy was forged. While it has not been possible to examine every issue that was debated in The Times during this four year war, the study goes beyond Russell's tour to describe the reportage of the five other Times correspondents in America, and the part they played in ruining or rescuing The Times's reputation.
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Introduction

George Putnam, American writer, publisher, and veteran of the Union army during the American Civil War, wrote in 1908, almost fifty years after the war, that the London Times's coverage of the "American Question" during the war had poisoned relations between the Britain and the United States for a generation. In an article published in his own magazine, Putnam charged that "Delane and his friends" had engaged in "malicious mischief," and in so doing were responsible for the creation of this grave misunderstanding. (1)

Putnam's article was occasioned by the publication in that year of the biography and correspondence of John T. Delane, the powerful editor of The Times at the time of the American war. (2) The "friends" to whom Putnam alluded were the editorial staff of The Saturday Review and Punch, the two other publications Putnam characterized as representing "the opinions and prejudices of London clubs and of London society." (3)

Criticism of The Times's coverage of the American war was not new in either the United States or Britain. It had begun during the civil war itself and appears in letters, diaries, newspaper and magazine commentary of the period. Since then it has
been cited with almost monotonous regularity in any of the vast literature on the American civil war that pays attention to diplomacy and/or public opinion. Henry Tuckerman, an American, may have been first in the field when he published a book entitled, *America and her Commentators*, in 1864. In reference to foreign newspaper comment elicited by the war, and without referring to *The Times* by name, Tuckerman described "the leading journal in Great Britain and most famous in the world," as having "sunk to the lowest conceivable level as a medium of authentic information..." Tuckerman noted that the first lesson to be inferred from a survey of European comment was "the immense and intricate influence and relations which now united the New and the Old World," and further, that the torrent of comment revealed "the extraordinary ignorance of the country existing abroad." Even allowing for this lack of accurate information, however, Tuckerman accredited "the greater part of their insane ill will and perverse misrepresentation...to political jealousy and prejudice..." (4)

Shortly after the war's end in 1865, the young Englishman Leslie Stephen wrote a scathing indictment of *The Times*'s handling of the war. In a privately printed pamphlet, Stephen did not hesitate to name names as had Tuckerman, but he did cautiously sign his work, "L. S." to avoid incurring the wrath of the mighty *Times*. (5) In 1865, Stephen had just begun what was to be a ten-year association with *The Saturday Review*, (6), and was one of a group in Britain, according to Putnam, who
were in a position to realize how widespread was the influence of these journals and how serious was the mischief brought about by them to the cause of the North and to a right understanding in England and on the continent of the great issues at stake; and they felt keenly the serious injury caused to the future relations between England and the United States. (7)

Another such contemporary English observer was Goldwin Smith, who, like Stephen, visited the United States during the war. Smith later wrote that he carried with him on this visit "the sympathy of Bright, Cobden, and other British friends of the North as a little antidote to the venom of the too powerful Times." (8) These "friends of the North," most particularly John Bright, had frequently consoled their Northern friends during the war with the assertion that the working classes of Britain supported their democratic fellows in the North. Smith repeated this assessment in an address to the last meeting of the Manchester Union and Emancipation Society in 1866 when he noted that the Society had been "formed to stem /the/ tide of sympathy with the slave-owner; to do justice to the large classes, especially the working classes of this country, who were not represented by the reactionary press." (9)
Whether it was democracy or slavery that motivated this relatively silent part of the British public, American Minister Charles Francis Adams began to note his acceptance of the idea of working class support for the North only in January of 1863, just after Lincoln had proclaimed Emancipation. Adams had received a gentleman from Manchester who brought with him a copy of an address by the working men's meeting held on the 31st of December to the President of the United States. He wrote in his diary that there was now "quite a strong manifestation of good feeling...There certainly is much sympathy felt in the lower classes, but little or none with the upper." (10) This oft-expressed view, that the British working classes supported the North, while the upper classes were on the side of the South, was to become the conventional wisdom.

The intriguing implication of all this comment was that public opinion was beginning to be viewed as having a very real influence on foreign policy. An important corollary was that public opinion could be determined by reading newspapers, and conversely that public opinion was itself molded by newspaper comment. While this is certainly not a startling idea today, the conditions of the mid-nineteenth century were such that the concept of public opinion, as opposed to official opinion, was still relatively new, for it found its roots in the movement for democracy in the nations of the West. In America the democratic movement with the extension of the franchise was well on its way, literacy was high, and newspapers were everywhere. The
invention of the telegraph made possible the fast transmission of news, and photography, although little used yet in newspapers, represented just one example of the many technological advances which were revolutionizing the communication system needed to create an informed public opinion.

In Britain the first concessions to democratic "reform" had been made in 1831, but the franchise remained considerably more limited at the time of the American war than it was in the United States. Demands for more reform, in the British context meaning primarily electoral reform, were relatively quiet in the 50's and 60's, but another important step along the road to the broad dissemination of information had been taken, and this just in time for the war. The elimination of the penny stamp in 1855 and the repeal of the excise duty on paper in 1861, the so-called "taxes on knowledge," paved the way for a cheaper and more abundant newspaper press in Britain. Minister Adams noted this in his diary for 1862 when he wrote, "...the press is in process of transition from the old to the new. It has been cheapened, and thus competition has come in to such a degree that even the absolute power of the Times over public opinion is declining." (11)

At the same time, it must be remembered that the press in any country in the nineteenth century did not have the competitors for the public ear and eye that it does today. Therefore, as two students of the public opinion of this era have
written, "The power of journalism in the mid-Victorian age was far greater than it is now..." (12) Yet the conscious use of propaganda, as such, including most particularly the manipulation of the press, apart from the use of bribes, placement of articles, and financial support of friendly pens, was still in its infancy. Some political leaders, such as Palmerston and Seward, understood and knew how to use the press adroitly; others considered such activities unworthy of their attention.

The North, of course, won the war, and early historical accounts of the war, when and if they commented on Britain and The Times, reflected the sentiments of a triumphant and aggrieved victor. The "first objective treatment of the war," as it was described by the editor of its 1917 edition, appeared in 1895 as part of a much larger history of the United States written by the American James Ford Rhodes. (13) Rhodes, in dealing with British sentiment in regard to the war, referred first to the duel which developed between the British and American press, quoting John Bright as having said that between the New York Herald and the London Times "there is great mischief done in both countries." (14) In this, as in all things, Rhodes was, if anything, even-handed.

Rhodes accepted the idea that "The main body of the aristocracy and the highest of the middle classes desired that the great democracy should fail..." for a variety of reasons, but
argued that "...the desire that overshadowed all others was that the war should end...so that England could again secure cotton and resume the export of her manufactured goods to America." He wrote, further, that "...the attempt of Englishmen to persuade themselves that slavery was not the issue of the war was a case of wilful blindness." (15)

Rhodes expanded his first assessment of British sentiment with further comments on the press when he lectured on the civil war at Oxford in 1912. He described the Times as supporting Lord Palmerston, then Prime Minister, and Lord Russell, Foreign Minister, in their conviction that since "the South was certain in the end to gain her independence, the sooner that fact was acknowledged by the North, the better." He noted that while Delane "had become a partisan of the South," his correspondent in America, William Howard Russell, "differed from him and presented in his correspondence a view opposed to that of the editor and his leader-writers." The ostracism of Russell by the Northerners as a result of his uncomplimentary description of Northern armies during the battle of Bull Run, and the unfair charge that he had used confidential information to speculate on the stock market, "meant a loss to our cause," Rhodes said, and Lincoln should have intervened on his behalf. Rhodes also called attention to a discrepancy between the editorial position taken by The Times and other leading journals at the time of the Trent
crisis, and the privately expressed views of Delane. Beyond this, he had little to say about public opinion as expressed by the newspaper press. (16)

These comments of Rhodes may have been added to his original historical analysis as the result of information contained in the biography of W. H. Russell written by John Black Atkins and just published in 1911. Moreover, Delane's first biography, containing much useful information on the great editor's views, had appeared only three years before, as we have noted. As embargoes on confidential government documents were lifted, biographies and memoirs such as these appeared with ever greater frequency, and the study of history itself became a more professional calling, historical accounts of the war changed and multiplied.

Thomas Pressly has shown in a fascinating account the different interpretations Americans have given to their civil war over the years. In the fifteen years immediately after the war, the different viewpoints of North and South were highlighted by the titles each section gave the war. For the North, it was the "War of the Rebellion," and for the South, "The War Between the States." A "peace" interpretation, heard faintly during war in America (and much more strongly in Britain), described the war as "The Needless War." (17)
As the war generation matured, the perspective changed yet again. Bitter emotions softened, Reconstruction ended, and the South was left to deal with the "Negro question" in its own way. Critics now viewed the war as good: the Union had been preserved, secession and slavery questions forever answered, and home rule and preservation of white supremacy restored to the South. Union and Confederate armies began to hold "blue and grey" reunions.

Rhodes was the spokesman for the new interpretation which then emerged. As noted above, he saw slavery as the primary, indeed, sole cause of the war, and, further, he placed most of the blame for the war on inanimate forces. The trained historian movement, which now arose, saw the development also of a distinctly southern school. The new southern spirit emphasized nationalism, sectional reconciliation, and integration of the South into the national pattern of life. The results of the war were considered to be more important than the causes, for they prepared the way for a new and better South.

Rhodes's emphasis on inanimate forces as having caused the war not only reduced blame and assuaged guilt, it paved the way for the application of Frederick William Turner's thesis of the crucial importance of the development of the west to the civil war. Historians such as Woodrow Wilson held that it was not slavery itself but the intermingling of slavery and westward expansion that brought on the conflict. Writings of this period
were impregnated with the Darwinian point of view, with the evolutionary development of human society viewed as an organism. Again, "forces," such as geography, climate, economics, were responsible for the events that had occurred.

In 1913, about the same time that Rhodes was adding the new information about the role of the London Times to his history of the war, Charles Beard published his Economic Interpretation of the Constitution, in which he described American history in terms of the primacy of economic forces. The civil war was seen by Beard to be essentially an economic conflict between sections of the whole. The moral issue of slavery, and the preservation of the Union, were minimized to the point of a virtual denial that they had any significance at all.

That Beard's economic interpretation did not sweep all before him is clear, for the first thoroughgoing history of the diplomatic relations between Britain and the United States, was published in 1925 and was based solidly on documentary sources, not theories of history. (18) This book, Ephraim D. Adams's Great Britain and the American Civil War, was begun in 1908 as a survey of English public opinion on the war and was to have been derived from Adams's reading of newspapers and journals in the British Museum. In the intervening years, with the publication of the diplomatic correspondence of Great Britain and the United States, Adams's collaboration with Charles Francis Adams, Jr. in the writing of a biography of his father, and the lifting of
further bans on Foreign Office material, Adams's work changed from a study of public opinion to a full history of British/American diplomatic relations of the period. But Adams's original emphasis on public opinion remained an important part of the final product, and constitutes the first major contribution in this specific field.

Indeed, Adams titled the last chapter of his book "The Key-Note of British Attitude," indicating clearly that attitudes, not forces were what mattered to him. Adams concluded that while nationality may have been the driving force in minds of Americans during the war, the British saw the war above all as a test of democracy, and that it was on this issue that British opinion divided. Furthermore, the fact that American democracy survived this terrible ordeal gave ammunition to those in Britain who had argued the North's cause and the cause of democracy. It was no accident, Adams claimed, that the next great step in "reform" in Britain, the Reform Bill of 1867, was passed within two years of the close of the American war. (19)

In 1931, there appeared two major contributions to the "vexing question of public opinion," as one historian has termed it. One of these provided the antidote to Adams's largely northern-biased diplomatic history, and the other was a study devoted completely to public opinion. The first, Frank Owsley's King Cotton Diplomacy, described the foreign relations of the Confederate States of America as having been based on the
conviction that the need for cotton by great powers such as Britain and France would insure the success of the southern independence movement. Throughout his book, Owsley relied heavily on newspaper comment, both domestic and foreign, for evidence of contemporary attitudes in the U.S., the C.S.A., and in Britain. In the conclusion of his book, when he grappled with the question as to why Britain had not intervened in the war as the Southern leaders had confidently argued they would, he dismissed the old idea that idealism, specifically "the sympathy of the Lancashire population -- and of the common people generally -- with the Union as a great experiment in democracy..." had prevented British recognition of the South. He also rejected the "newer school of economic historians" who had argued that Britain stayed out of the war because they needed wheat just as much as they needed cotton.

The first explanation, Owsley argued, was just too good to be true. On the one hand, he suggested, what sympathy there may have been in Lancashire may have been bought by Northern money. On the other hand, he asserted, the working people of Lancashire made little difference in the determination of foreign policy, for not only were they politically apathetic, they carried little weight in the body politic. If the government listened to them at all, it was to be concerned that their needs brought about by the cotton famine would mobilize them to force the government into breaking the northern blockade.
Owsley dismissed the "wheat" argument by pointing out that the issue had not been considered to be important at the time, and was not even discussed in the official or private correspondence of the public men involved. He suggested that the wheat-famine idea was merely federal propaganda, and stated that the British press, with few exceptions, sneered at the idea.

Why, then, did Owsley think Britain had stayed out of the war? War profits! he announced triumphantly, coupled with the firm belief in Britain that the South would triumph without Britain's help. "England never doubted until it was too late that the South would win its independence," he wrote, "and the roast pigeon would thus fly into the open mouth of the British lion without any other effort than the opening of his jaws..."

Moreover, the British did not want a war with America, he asserted. Had the belief that the South would ultimately triumph without any outside help not existed, he continued, "the British government could not have been induced to interfere with the American struggle because of a conviction that it would involve the two countries in a war in which, as Bright said, England would be the most vulnerable nation in the world. This is a fear which was constantly expressed by cabinet, Parliament, and press." (20) (Owsley simply overlooked the fact that Britain had very nearly gone to war with the North during the Trent crisis.)
The 1931 study devoted specifically to public opinion was the result of the amalgamation of two separate Ph. D. theses by Donaldson Jordan, and Edwin J. Pratt into a book titled Europe and the American Civil War. In his introduction to this volume, the authors' faculty adviser, Samuel Eliot Morison, wrote that this study of the sentiment of England, France, and Spain "marks the breaking of a new force in diplomacy. Rulers have always had to respect some public opinion, if only that of their immediate entourage; but never before in European history had large masses of opinion exerted such weight in foreign policy as in England and France during the American Civil War." (21)

Essentially on target as to the interplay of domestic conditions and public opinion in Britain with foreign policy formulation, the book is, unfortunately for the historian, handicapped by the absence of footnotes, though there is an excellent and extensive bibliography. Perhaps because of this lack of historical trappings, it is immensely readable, and contains lengthy quotations from a variety of newspapers and periodicals in Britain, as well as France and Spain. It is an excellent overall portrayal of European contemporary opinion.

In regard to The Times the authors related the experiences of Times correspondent, William Howard Russell, charging Secretary Stanton (Northern Secretary of Defense) with having committed "a great blunder in keeping 'The Times' correspondent away from the army and thus forcing him home." Russell's book,
My Diary North and South, published after he returned to England, in its "equally stringent criticisms on both South and North," had an effect which was "distinctly unfavorable to the South," the authors wrote, but they cite conflicting evidence as to what Russell's leanings really were.

Jordan and Pratt mentioned only one other Times correspondent by name, Charles Mackay, who, they incorrectly asserted, was sent out as Russell's successor. They dismissed The Times's unnamed southern correspondent, (it was Frank Lawley), as having been "too desultory" in his production "to give satisfaction" as they correctly pointed out that he was warmly sympathetic to the South.

As to The Times's record and editorial position on the war, the authors concluded that it was "natural, probably inevitable, and thoroughly bad." Nevertheless, they asserted, "the only measure of the judgment which can be passed upon 'The Times' is its success with its own public. Delane believed that the indefinite attrition of American power by the Americans themselves was a good thing for England, and 'The Times' acted accordingly...and prospered." (22)

The reaction this Times position provoked in America was not touched on by Professors Jordan and Pratt, but of course, their study was of public opinion in Europe, not the United States. As to overall British opinion, they concluded that it had become
fairly stabilized by 1863, two years into the war, and could be broken into three groups. First, there were the open friends of the South, not actually a very large number, but stronger because they were mostly upper class. Then there were those who hoped that the American Union might be restored; this was the numerically larger group but it was weak among electors, Parliament and society. Finally, there were the "greater portion of Englishmen" who "took an attitude of irritated neutrality." (23)

Just after World War II, at the time of America's coronation as a major world power, Richard Van Alstyne, who wrote extensively on American diplomacy, the American drive for empire, and American nationalism, dealt briefly with British sentiment during the civil war in his *American Diplomacy in Action*. Given his penchant for seeing the world in terms of power, it is not surprising that he observed that "Beyond a doubt the strongest feeling in Great Britain was the wish to stay out of the war." Van Alstyne echoed Owsley when he wrote that in Britain there was "no cause for sorrow in the breaking of the Union," that Palmerston and Russell "took it for granted that the American Union could never be cobbled together again," and that these ministers agreed that Britain's "true course was strict neutrality..." He did allow sentiment to enter the picture when he admitted that "Negro slavery was probably the one great obstacle which prevented the classes in the mother country from giving their hearts to the South..." (24)
The post-World War II era was now witness to a keener interest in Anglo-American relations, and in 1954, H.C. Allen's *Great Britain and the United States: a History of Anglo-American relations (1783-1952)* was published. Allen had a good bit to say about Britain during the civil war, relying quite heavily on the studies which had gone before, but with his own interpretation. He put very well what he termed "the fundamental dilemma of British policy" during the war: it was "how to recognize the fact of a great international war without permanently alienating a South which might become a great nation, or a North which already was one." (25)

On only one issue, he wrote, was there a general and decided opinion, and that was slavery. He debunked the idea of a fellow feeling between British aristocrats and the southern planters, but said there was "a school which sympathized with the Confederacy...because of its desire for free trade, and it was naturally strengthened by the Republican Party's advocacy of a protectionist policy in the North," most especially the Morrill Tariff of 1861. However, "it was surprisingly weak, and chiefly confined to those with direct interests in commerce with the South." Surprisingly, then, he quoted a *Times* leader of March 12, which was an angry response to the Morrill Tariff, as signalling a *volte face* on the part of the press from its initial support of the North to its tilt towards the South.
Allen pointed to the battle of Antietam (1862) as the "vital turning point" in Anglo-American relations as indeed in the whole history of the war because this northern victory, or, at least, successful repulse of Lee in his bid to invade the North, put a stop to the Anglo-French initiative to propose mediation, and encouraged Lincoln to issue his preliminary Emancipation Proclamation. Although initial reaction in Britain to the proclamation was unfavourable, the eventual result of the proclamation was to rally the anti-slavery forces which were so strong in England that "even the most pro-Southern organs, such as the Index, never dared to defend the institution as such." (26)

But the real explanation of the obduracy of much of the press, such as The Times, in refusing to admit that the North might be successful, Allen attributed to the judgment that "the war was fundamentally a war for democracy." He pointed out that "enlightened liberal opinion was beginning to move in the nineteenth century toward.../the/ Southern view of liberty". Nevertheless, he wrote, ".....feeling for the North and joy at Northern triumphs became more and more associated with the movement for Parliamentary reform in Britain...There is no doubt that the Northern victory greatly facilitated the passage of the Reform Bill of 1867." Although Allen's conclusions agreed with those of E. D. Adams, as noted above, Allen felt that Adams had
overdrawn the case of Northern influence on British reform, for, he argued, this trend toward reform was already evident in English life. (27)

Allen summed up the American reaction to British policy by quoting Henry Cabot Lodge to the effect that after the war, "The North was left with a bitter sense of wrong and outrage, and the South with a conviction that they had been uselessly deceived and betrayed." (28)

Frank Thistlethwaite made an important contribution to the understanding of Anglo-American relations with his study published in 1959 of The Anglo-American Connection in the Early Nineteenth Century. (29) He described the singularity of the Atlantic economy in terms of trade and of the migration of labour and capital, with Britain playing the role of the metropolitan unit, and North America, especially the United States, being the colonial unit. As to political ideas, he pointed out that in England, the manufacturers, artisans and Dissenters were still outside the social pale, and that for these outsiders, "...the American republic was the hope of the world, just as for the insiders of the establishment, it was a subversive influence deeply to be feared." (30) Apart from the obvious unity of language and institutions, there was a unity between Britain and America, also, in the field of humanitarian endeavour and in educational reform. Thistlethwaite described in rich detail the organizations and people involved in these important areas.
Still, he asked, did all this make "a single 'communication system' sufficiently defined to justify using the term 'Atlantic connection.'" (31) Yes, he thought, with certain caveats and limitations. Individuals could not be neatly assigned to certain groups, such as "abolitionist" or "agrarian radical", he pointed out, for they overlapped into other areas of activity and influence with many inconsistencies and variations. Philanthropic connections were altered by the fact that much of the reform desired in Britain had already been accomplished in the United States, and the power in Britain was more concentrated in the sovereign and parliament, while in the United States, power was divided according to sectional interests. The Atlantic connection was strictly Anglo-American, also, not American-European, and only involved particular groups. In the United States, this connection was largely limited to the North — to commercial, manufacturing, migration, political ideas, philanthropy and education, with the motivating forces being capitalistic, democratic, evangelistic, and reformist, all of which were essentially northern. In Britain, these ideas and forces were shared by particular classes, not sections, and these classes were commercial, manufacturing, capitalist, artisan, intellectual, Dissenting, and reformist — essentially, the new order that was coming into being.
These important Anglo-American connections flourished only during the early nineteenth century, Thistlethwaite wrote, and the American civil war proved to be a turning point in this Atlantic connection. As the result of entirely different events taking part of either side of the ocean, the American economy evolved from colonial status to metropolitan status after the war, while in Britain, the power of Atlantic ideas waned. In the reform that followed so closely on the heels of the end of the American war, the British establishment was not toppled, or replaced, it was enlarged. And as privilege was broadened and the outsiders became part of the system, the ideological appeal of American democracy lost its magic. (32).

To this solid background of investigation of the diplomatic aspects of the war, public opinion in Britain during the war, and the interconnectedness of the Anglo-American community which provided the foundation of Anglo-American relations, we may add Kenneth Bourne's *Britain and the Balance of Power in North America. 1815-1908.* (33) Of interest primarily for the information it provides on the military aspects of the relationship, Bourne underscored the importance of an overall naval superiority as being the "real basis of Britain's imperial power." At the time of the American civil war, the contemporary British military assessment was that there could be "no question of a general invasion of the United States from the Atlantic coast any more than from Canada. All the experts, naval and military alike, were agreed that the territorial conquest of the
United States was a physical impossibility." (34) This is very important, for it formed much of the basis of thinking in Britain in regard to the war.

Nevertheless, and specifically in regard to the Trent affair and the motivation of British policy, Bourne pointed out that prestige was more important to the British than any political or economic consideration. He quoted Lord Clarendon to the effect that "...peace like other good things may be bought too dearly and it never can be worth the price of national honor." (35)

Two very fine modern studies of the diplomacy of the American civil war are Brian Jenkins's Britain and the War for the Union and David Paul Crook's The North, the South and the Powers. (36) Jenkins's book includes much original material on the impact of the war in Canada, and impressive detail on the role the need to protect Canada played in the formulation of British policy. He also takes a different view than most authorities of William Seward's early aggressiveness toward Britain. Instead of criticizing Seward, he credits this policy of Seward's with having "convinced the Palmerston government of the North's determination to resist by force any further step toward intervention" in the first year of the war, and states that "Seward's behavior was carefully calculated to play upon British concern for the safety of their all too vulnerable empire in North America and their preoccupation with the balance of power in Europe." (37)
Jenkins did an excellent job in describing the variety of reaction in Britain to the war and the many threads that went into the creation of this opinion. In particular, he rejected the old idea of working class support for the North, pointing out that as distress mounted in Lancashire the population there turned against the North, for the North was blamed for having caused the war. From Lancashire came a call, not for support of the North, but for recognition of the South, for mediation of the conflict, and for peaceful separation. (38) Jenkins's book has important sections on the Confederate propaganda paper, The Index, and much more descriptive material about The Times than in any other source, save The Times's history of itself, and a recent book of Martin Crawford's, of which more later.

Crook, in his The North, the South and the Powers, rejected what he termed "recent historical writing /which/ has tended to portray the rise of the American republic as part of the rise of Western nationalism and imperialism." He argued that "American expansionism can only be understood as a struggle for mastery against imperialist rivals, chief of whom was Great Britain." From this basic thesis, he reasoned further that it was rash to jump to the conclusion that Britain necessarily welcomed a breakdown in the hemispheric power balance. No power, he argued, "could afford to move on America without consulting its full range of international interests." (39)
Seward controlled foreign policy throughout the war, Crook contended, and his reputation as a secretary of State, "and even more as an imperialist, has skyrocketed in recent times." Among other things, Seward "contributed a new understanding of the necessary connection between public opinion and foreign policy." It was Seward who began the systematic publication of State Department correspondence, and his "penchant for viewing foreign policy in propaganda terms was revealed when he took the extraordinary step of reading /an important/ despatch to W. H. Russell of the London Times two days before it was officially filed and nineteen days before it reached Adams." (40)

Blaming the "disenchanted march of events rather than, as the textbooks tell us, disappointment at Lincoln's refusal to make war on slavery" for Britain's retreat from its initial support of the North, Crook concluded that it was "...the distractions of European power politics" not the profits of neutrality or the fear of war that led to British nonintervention. War was never "demanded," he wrote. Most of all, Britain wanted to keep out of trouble and play it safe. Britain ended the war despised by both sides, not a "mere temporary misfortune," Crook said, and the integrative bonds of the Anglo-American connection were thereby torn asunder, almost beyond repair. (41)
In his book, *Desperate Diplomacy*, Norman B. Ferris took a similarly favourable view of Seward and his place in history. Instead of viewing Seward's initial foreign policy efforts as inexperienced bumbling and bombast, Ferris asserted that the whole tenor of Seward's policy was purposefully designed to stop European intervention. In describing the tension that developed between Lord Lyons, the British minister in Washington, and Seward, Ferris wrote, "Lyons interpreted Seward's outspoken love of country as arrogance and his bantering sense of humor as recklessness." Ferris blamed Lyons for being a "humorless foreigner who was perennially ill at ease in the jovial atmosphere that usually surrounded Seward, and who was affronted that the wishes of his government did not always meet with the deference he expected from an inferior people...." (42)

Ferris placed importance on the Morrill tariff, as have many, as being the act which most undercut the arguments of those who insisted that the civil war was a fight against Southern slavery. He attributed the readiness of the British to go to war over the Trent to the inaccurate view of Seward's policy as "unconciliatory and hectoring" and designed to "unite parties at home by a war with England." The Trent crisis was "a needless occurrence," Ferris wrote, which grew out of misunderstandings on both sides, and a hypersensitivity of British leaders who reacted with a show of military force at the slightest threat to Britain's commercial interests or to British subjects. (43)
It remains to discuss The Times's own assessment of its performance, and the latest contribution to this field of Anglo-American relations and public opinion by Martin Crawford. The authors of The Times's history devoted an entire chapter in Volume Two to the American Civil War. They began their account with the immediate disclaimer, "Englishmen in the mid-nineteenth century were neither close nor sympathetic students of American history." This implied, presumably, that not too much should be expected of The Times. In addition, the authors pointed out quite rightly that "The Times shared the prejudices of its readers even while it tried to enlighten their ignorance." One assumes, then, that The Times should not be expected to be objective under these circumstances, as, indeed, it was not. While English reformers might have admired American institutions, the authors stated, editor Delane, manager Mowbray Morris, and editorial writer Robert Lowe did not. Moreover, although Delane and Lowe both visited America and were therefore somewhat better informed that the average Englishman, "the causes of the...struggle were complex and difficult for a foreigner to comprehend."

On one subject, the chapter continued, The Times had spoken with authority many times: this was abolition, and its opposite, slavery. The Times "yielded to none in its hatred of slavery," although it had criticized Harriet Beecher Stowe's Uncle Tom's Cabin as bad propaganda, and it expressed abhorrence at the more violent manifestations of the American Abolitionists.
When secession first occurred, The Times supported the Northern position and was highly critical of the South. But when the newly constituted northern Congress (sans South) passed the Morrill Tariff, "The Times found that 'Protection was quite as much a cause of the disruption of the Union as Slavery.'" The writers of this account then concluded that The Times's leading article of March 19, 1861, (published just one week after The Times had taken editorial notice of the tariff), announcing that the origins of the quarrel in America were economic, "may be taken as defining the attitude of The Times." The official explanation is, then, that The Times changed its whole editorial position because of an act of the American Congress.

The chapter proceeded with a short narrative of William H. Russell's sojourn in the United States, and the authors suggested that "had Delane and Morris taken /greater/ heed of Russell's judgments, they "might have saved the paper from serious errors." The Times's leadership is applauded later, however, in that it "never wavered in its steady and powerful argument for European and particularly British neutrality." Though the authors agreed that there "can be no question that the sympathy of The Times with the losing side caused it to be led into partial statement of many facts, which for a newspaper is the unpardonable offence...the whole truth was not more palatable to the North than a half-truth," as Bull Run had demonstrated. Moreover, "The South had a case, and,...The Times had a natural sympathy for an
oppressed agrarian aristocracy." Thus, while admitting that The Times performed its duties as a newspaper poorly, the authors offer apologies, explanations and the rather mild defense that the position taken by The Times was only natural.

Martin Crawford's The Anglo-American Crisis of the Mid-Nineteenth Century, subtitled 'The Times and America, 1850-1862', carefully examined The Times's performance in this period in an effort to understand why the American civil war caused such a devastating collapse in Anglo-American understanding. He argued that only by examining the ante-bellum period can one ferret out the reasons for this process of alienation. Historians have concentrated too much on the war period itself, he wrote, and have been too quick to accept as inevitable that a conflict was bound to occur. Thus, they have felt no need to explain what did occur. Taking a leaf from Thistleton Waite, Crawford pointed out that the Anglo-American relationship involved more than economics, politics and diplomacy. It was based on and functioned through communication. Travel writers had caused anger and misunderstanding in the ante-bellum period, and the daily press of both countries had erected major barriers to understanding. He agreed with the statement attributed earlier to John Bright that The Times and the New York Herald "...were playing a leading role in the process of mutual arousal to which both countries subscribed in the months following the outbreak of war in the United States." (45)
Crawford's book contains much the same information that will form the bulk of the following study, but places greater importance than does this work on the Morrill Tariff and a letter from Northern diplomat Cassius Clay as causes of the shift in *The Times*'s editorial position. Unfortunately, Crawford's case that an examination of the ante-bellum period clarifies the "process" of Anglo-American conflict, and, therefore, of the breakdown in communication between the two countries, is simply not clear or convincing. What is clear is that the editorial policies of *The Times* contributed to that breakdown to a significant degree, though it would be very difficult to make the case that *The Times*'s pronouncements and coverage of the war had a major influence on the formation of British policy during the war, apart from the anger it caused the Americans.

In this regard, it is our belief that Lord Acton was right when he wrote in 1853, "The *Times* describes which way public opinion will turn, and by bending its course accordingly appears to direct where it really only follows." (46)

The present study, relying primarily on a close reading of all aspects of editorial direction in the daily *Times*, not just editorial comment, on the "in-house" letters and diaries of the principal players in the drama which can be found in *The Times* archives, and on the correspondence of others who were in a position to observe *The Times* during the war, traces the
development of The Times's editorial policy toward America from 1860, just before the war, through the Trent crisis of November/January, 1861/1862. The intensive scrutiny of The Times's editorial comment and other news content leaves off in the spring of 1862 by which time The Times had fully matured its position on the merits of the war. By this time also its original correspondent team had left or was about to leave America, and its reputation, in the North most particularly, was irrevocably damaged. The study also describes subsequent efforts of The Times to place and keep correspondents in America, including Delane's sending of a different journalist to America at war's end in an attempt to restore his paper's standing in the newly reconstituted United States.

2. A. I. Dasent, John Delane, 1817-1879, 2 volumes, (London: John Murray, 1908.)


6. where his essays were to be found only in the latter two-thirds of the Review. As another famous reviewer, John Morley, wrote, "Stephen and I were shut out from political writing, for we were both of us in politics inexorable root and branch men..." Quoted in Merle Mowbray Bevington, The Saturday Review 1855-1868: Representative Educated Opinion in Victorian England, (New York: Columbia U. Press, 1941), 36.


11. Ibid., 8 January 1862.


15. Ibid., 260, 261.


19. Ibid., 274-305.


22. Ibid., 80-83.

23. Ibid., 162-163.


26. Ibid., 484, 486, #493.

27. Ibid., 494-496.


30. Ibid., 40.

31. Ibid., 151.

32. Ibid., 171 ff.


34. Ibid., 208, 241.

35. Ibid., 247.

38. Ibid., II, 40, 41.
40. Ibid., 29, 64.
41. Ibid., 39, 371, 375, 376.


43. Ibid., 182, 198. Ferris has also written an excellent account of the Trent crisis.


The London Times in 1860 was without question the greatest newspaper in the world. There was no other British, continental, or American paper which matched it for its combination of large circulation, experienced staff, and social and political influence. When its famous war correspondent, William Howard Russell, met Abraham Lincoln in 1861, the American president showed his appreciation of The Times's stature with these words of greeting:

"Mr. Russell, I am very glad to make your acquaintance, and to see you in this country. The London Times is one of the greatest powers in the world, -- in fact, I don't know anything which has much more power -- except perhaps the Mississippi."

This was a trans-Atlantic view, perhaps a bit overstated for the occasion, but very much in keeping with America's almost reverential view of Britain and its institutions. In Britain, The Times had its boosters and its enemies, but the general opinion was similar to Lincoln's. In fact, a year earlier, James Grant, editor of the Morning Advertiser and publisher of the
Newspaper Press Directory had described The Times in these glowing terms:

This, the leading journal of Europe, has for the field of its circulation, emphatically, the WORLD, and its influence is co-extensive with civilisation. Other papers may be more preferred by particular classes, but all read The Times who can...

(2)

Except for those who read their Times at their club, library, or coffee shop, or somehow obtained a second-hand copy, those who could read The Times were necessarily well-off, for The Times was expensive in 1860. At 4 pence a copy, it was in competition with the Morning Post which was reputed to be Lord Palmerston's "organ", and was favored predominantly by upper class readers who lived in the country and wanted to keep up with society and sport. The Post's modest circulation of 3,000, however, demonstrated its limited appeal, especially in contrast to The Times's circulation that year of 55,000. (3)

Another "expensive" morning newspaper was the Morning Advertiser, circulation, 6,000, whose audience was the lower to middle class public of shopkeepers and innkeepers. This daily cannot really be termed a Times competitor, however, for not only was its mission quite different and its goal more modest, it was also of a fairly low educational standard. The Times, in contrast, quite seriously viewed itself as "the great public instructor." (4)
A third morning paper was the Daily News, selling at 3 pence, with a circulation in 1860 of 5,000. This paper appealed to a fairly narrow spectrum of liberal intellectuals ("middle to upper middle class Liberals 'honeycombed with Tory ideas'", according to Ellegard) and became a favourite, along with the Star, of Northern supporters during the war. (5)

There were four other morning papers which sold for only a penny. Of these, only the Daily Telegraph was a serious competitor. Five years earlier, The Times's circulation had been larger than all morning papers combined, but the abolition of the compulsory newspaper stamp duty had changed this picture dramatically. While in the next five years The Times's circulation did not appreciably increase, its new competitor, the Daily Telegraph, was able to double its circulation, so that by 1860, it could claim more readers than the "Thunderer". Three years later when one of its correspondents, G. A. Sala, visited the United States, he was able to present himself as "the representative of a journal which has the largest circulation in the world, and among whose readers there must be a great many thousand who are not donkeys." (6)

Two other "penny dailies", the conservative Standard and the ultra-liberal Star (which had both morning and evening editions) had a combined audience larger than The Times (60,000), but from opposite ends of the political spectrum. The fourth penny paper was the Manchester Guardian which had just begun to eat into the
 provincial monopoly *The Times* had enjoyed earlier. (7)

Circulation figures tell only part of the story, however. Of greatest importance was the fact that *The Times* was the newspaper of choice of the "upper ten thousand." It was not, as the *Daily Telegraph* was described, "for the pot-house and the kitchen." (8) Moreover, its influence reached far beyond London. Although as noted above in regard to the Manchester *Guardian*, provincial papers were increasing their circulation and prestige, *The Times* still dominated the national scene. In 1866, for example, over half its copies were sent to the provinces.

Outside of the British Isles, Englishmen and foreigners alike, anxious to keep track of what was going on not only at home but throughout the world, made sure they had their *Times* to read. In its many pages, closely crammed with type sometimes so small as to be nearly illegible, they could read full reports of parliamentary debates, notices of cabinet meetings, law reports, market reports, letters from *The Times*'s special correspondents in Paris, Rome, Berlin, Vienna, St. Petersburg, Melbourne, Ottawa, Vancouver, New York, and letters from its readers (not then the important section it has become today, but useful for stimulating debate or making an editorial point). Each day there were, in addition, four long, thoughtful, well-written essays on topics of national and international interest, extensive quotations from other newspapers and journals at home and abroad, transcripts of major speeches, especially when politicians took
to the hustings, and more -- book reviews, theatre reviews, sporting news, descriptions of important dinners and ceremonial occasions, reports of government commissions, and pages and pages of advertisements. No other source provided such a complete record of day-to-day events.

An amusing illustration of this was provided by the writer Thomas Escott when he reminisced toward the end of the century about important people and institutions he had known during this mid-Victorian period.

The best-informed person ever met by the present writer was an English gentleman...[who lived]...on a small private estate...in North Italy...[He was not a great scholar...nor was he master of many modern languages. Yet he combined with extensive information on central subjects of contemporary or past interest ready and accurate knowledge not only of the events, but of the individual or general causes of the events of the moment throughout the world...[When asked how he was able to be so well-informed...he pointed to two or three as yet unopened and uncut copies of the Times just arrived from England...[He did not, he said]...let a full week pass without having read and mastered, as a careful undergraduate...each issue...of the Times]

Had Escott's Englishman been a better linguist, he could have read reprints of Times's leaders and news stories in other European journals also. The principal conduit for this European dissemination was the Havas-Bullier Telegraphic and Correspondence Agency which had a monopoly on translations of incoming foreign news. The Confederate propagandist, Henry Hotze, took advantage of this arrangement in the last year of the
war to extend his audience to a good part of Europe. (10)

The newspaper historian, Fox Bourne, has concluded that notwithstanding the inroads of other newspapers on The Times's circulation around 1860, The Times...

was still, and was long to continue, a great authority, courted and feared by strong government, and meekly or sullenly accepted as an infallible instructor by a large section of the public.

(11)

No one described this better than Ralph Waldo Emerson, who wrote of The Times in 1856.

No power in England is more felt, more feared, or more obeyed. What you read in the morning in that journal, you shall hear in the evening in all society. It has ears everywhere, and its information is earliest, completest, and surest. It has risen, year by year, and victory by victory, to its present authority. I asked one of its old contributors, whether it had once been able than it is now? 'Never,' he said; 'These are its palmiest days.'

(12)

What made for this enormous influence, in spite of high cost and a circulation of only 55,000 in a country of 30,000,000? Emerson referred to its "ears everywhere" and to its "earliest, completest, and surest" information. James Grant agreed that this was the source of The Times's power:

Most of the authors and contributors to periodicals who have written in relation to the rapid progress which the Times made...have expressed their inability to account for it. To me the causes of the sudden start in the circulation and continued prosperity of
the paper, are quite intelligible. In 1834 the Times for the first time in the history of the Newspaper Press, established a system of expresses literally regardless of expense, in virtue of which, important intelligence could be received from all parts of the country with the greatest practical expedition; while at the same time correspondents were appointed in all the leading capitals of Europe, with authority to incur any amount of expense, however great, in getting anything of importance transmitted to the Times office at the earliest possible moment.

In other words, The Times did what every great newspaper must do: it got the news more quickly, accurately and fully than its competitors, and for that it was willing to pay.

Moreover, it did not limit itself to a particular type of news -- commercial news, for example, or political, or social and sporting news. It did not allow itself to become a party spokesman, either, though it tended to support the government of the day. Overall, it strove for a comprehensiveness which made it, incidentally, into a very large paper, and more significantly, into the indispensable tool of the movers and shakers of the British Empire, and its observers. (14)

Not the least of its strengths was the triumvirate which ran it: its proprietor, John Walter III, its editor, John T. Delane, and its managing editor, Mowbray Morris. Of these, the most important was Delane. He had been appointed editor in 1841 when only 23 years old and just two years out of Oxford. By mid-century he had taken The Times to the summit of its influence.
when it had been instrumental in bringing down Lord Aberdeen's government over the conduct of the Crimean War. It was Delane who had sent William Howard Russell to the Crimea to report on the war, and it was primarily Russell's graphic descriptions of the Army's incompetence sent back to The Times which had inflamed public opinion at home sufficiently to topple Aberdeen. Such was the authority of Delane in 1853 that Lord Stanley remarked to his father that "the only posts of power which appeared to remain in England were the Governor-General of India and the editorship of the Times." (15)

Delane was a man totally devoted to his charge. Even his home was in walking distance of Printing House Square, the location of The Times. His work-day began when he breakfasted at lunch. He read the newspapers and his mail, decided on the topics which should be considered for editorial notice, sent instructions to his leader writers and reviewers, conducted interviews, and paid calls, (riding his horse as often as possible). In the evening, he dined out or entertained guests in his own home at No. 16, Sergeants' Inn, where politics and the day's issues were the favored topics of conversation. If there was an important reception, he of course was invited and obliged to attend. If Parliament was in session, he might drop in on an important debate when he could be spared at the office. At 10 or 10:30 he arrived at his desk and began the real task of editing, a job which usually kept him at Printing House Square until 3 or 4 in the
...[His] responsibilities were stupendous -- hardly less, or less complicated and various, than those of a prime minister", according to Fox Bourne. (17)

In fact, Delane, in many ways, resembled the prime minister of the day, Lord Palmerston. Moreover, relations between the two men were close. Palmerston entertained Delane at his home at Broadlands, and took care to keep him informed of developments in government. Delane, in turn, routinely gave the First Minister previews of information which others had to wait for until they read their Times the next day. Their alliance had dated from 1855, some six months after Palmerston had formed his first cabinet during the wind-down of the Crimean War. There is the suggestion that Delane traded his support of Palmerston for two appointments which he favored: Molesworth to the colonial office (from which Lord John Russell was ousted), and Robert Lowe to the Board of Trade (18)

According to Escott, Delane's good relations with Palmerston were initiated by Lady Molesworth, who brought them together "at a series of little dinners." (19) While one cannot discount the influence of important hostesses in this period, it hardly seems credible that either of these men, from what is known of their character, would have been swayed by deference to a lovely lady had their own interests not dictated that course.
Whatever the reasons for Delane’s switching his support to Palmerston (he had been pretty consistently critical of Palmerston before 1855), these good relations continued to the end of Palmerston’s life. Nor were they a secret. Stanley noted in his diary for 1865 that he had seen Delane at Lady Palmerston’s "...as usual, ...conspicuous, and deeply engaged in conversation with the Premier: which is a little affectation, which both enjoy: it tells the world of their close alliance." (20)

Delane’s information sources did not depend solely on Palmerston. As the diarist Greville reported, "Delane has friends in all parties." (21) In the *persona* of Mr. Tonans, in George Meredith’s *Diana of the Crossways*, Delane is asked "How do you get to the secrets?" His response, as Meredith made him say: "By sticking to the centre of them." (22)

Delane was, indeed, at the centre of things. While journalists were often looked upon in the 19th century as mere "scribblers", Delane had transcended this limitation. He moved easily among the great. Much of this was due, of course, to the immense prestige of the newspaper he represented, and to the desire of the powerful to win favor in this most influential of presses. Due credit must be given to the man himself, however, for his social skills, and for his ability to listen and to be a genial companion.
Not only did he have information sources in all parties, he had "spies" throughout the government. Lord Torrington sent letters from the Court, his friend Layard could be counted on to pass on news from the Foreign Office, his "star" leader-writer, Robert Lowe, was Vice-president of the Board of Trade, and so on. Not members of Palmerston's government, but intimately involved in politics were two of Delane's closest friends, Edward "Bear" Ellice, an influential M.P., and Joseph Parkes. Ellice, as governor and one of the principal shareholders of the Hudson's Bay Company, was at the very top of the upper middle class, and as was so often the case with the wealthy non-aristocrat, was connected by marriage to a peer. Ellice's brother-in-law was Lord Grey. Parkes, described later by Henry Adams, as "one of the traditional busy-bodies of politics", came from a manufacturing family, was a solicitor, but more importantly, a "facilitator" among the various factions of the Whig party. (23)

As Delane shared judgments and information with his two friends, he also shared a common ambition: to have influence, not authority, and to maintain his independence. In this respect he parted company with Lord Palmerston, for the latter had influence and the authority which carried with it the greater responsibility. This is not to say that Delane was irresponsible. His unique position outside the government, however, gave him that edge of freedom to present proposals or play the devil's advocate through his paper which Palmerston had
to be a good deal more cautious in using when committing the
government to any given course of action. In fact, as is so
often the case where government and press cooperate, the
newspaper could be, and very likely was, during the period of
this study, a convenient medium for testing public opinion on
proposed policy initiatives. In general, though, Delane, just as
Palmerston, steered a course very close to what he thought public
opinion, (meaning the opinion of Britain's ruling class), would
support. Sir Edward Cook wrote near the end of his careful
biographical study of Delane that "partly by forming, partly by
guiding, and partly by reflecting public opinion Delane in a
remarkable degree spoke with and for the voice of England." (24)

Delane was not a writing editor. He chose his staff from among
the very brightest and most able, and expected them to take over
from there. As one of his most eminent leader-writers, George
Brodrick, wrote later, Delane "scarcely ever corrected what I had
written and never altered its sense..." (25)

According to the biographer of another of Delane's
leader-writers, James Macdonell, Delane did a bit more than this
on occasion. He "was accustomed, even to an unusual degree, to
'write in' paragraphs and revise the articles of others." (26)

Both men described how he punctuated his instructions to his
writers with "short and pithy notes, suggesting, but not
dictating, the line to be taken." (27) "He managed always to put
into [his letters of instructions] some epigrammatic phrase, which the writer would be only too glad to use, and round which thoughts might be grouped." (28)

Although he guided his leader-writers, Delane did not try to force square pegs into round holes. Brodrick had been relieved to find when he began writing for The Times that Delane did not require him "to write strictly to order, or to advocate views opposed to my own convictions." Delane's way, instead, was to substitute another subject, and to pass on the offending assignment to another writer. (29)

In this respect, Delane demonstrated another of his talents, described by Kinglake, with whom Delane had travelled in the Crimea: "He used generally to bend conversation in such a way as to avoid coming into dispute with his comrades." (30) This proved to be of importance for Brodrick in relation to the subject of this study, for, as he notes, he "was seldom invited to write on American affairs, owing to my known sympathy with the cause of the Union." Yet Delane, through his skill at managing Brodrick, was able to use him to write about things pertaining to the United States nearly 160 times in spite of his aversion to writing on the war. (31)

When the war broke out, Delane's leader writers were Thomas Chenery, Henry Woodham, Robert Love, George Cooke, Thomas Mozley, James Mozley, and the afore-mentioned George Brodrick, who was
just beginning his career at *The Times*. They have been listed here in the order in which they figured as frequent contributors on American affairs in 1861. In the four succeeding years of the war, three other men were added to Delane’s list of regular editorial contributors: L. Filmore, Henry Wace, and Leonard Courtney.

We have already had occasion to mention Robert Lowe, later Viscount Sherbrooke, for he was certainly the most famous of Delane’s editorial writers. Previous studies of *The Times* and its treatment of the American Civil War have usually given greatest prominence to the contributions of this man. In fact, Lowe did not carry the burden of numbers in writing on American affairs during the war period, though his having been to America, his position as a rising star in government, and his acknowledged brilliance probably gave him more influence on Delane than any of the other *Times* men. Lowe had also been Delane’s tutor at Oxford and it was Delane who recruited him for *The Times*. Although Lowe did not write most of the American leaders, when he did write on an American subject, his leader invariably occupied the first or second slot.

The two men who wrote the bulk of the leaders on America during the civil war were Thomas Chenery, who many years later succeeded Delane as editor of *The Times*, and Henry Annesley Woodham, described by the official *History of *The Times* as "the most unflagging, though the most remote from editorial direction."
Woodham lived in Cambridge, wrote his leaders in the morning, after having received instructions from Delane by early morning train, and despatched his work to London by the 4.30 train. (32)

There is no evidence that either of these men disagreed in any significant way with Delane in regard to American affairs, and they can therefore be viewed as willing collaborators in the position the paper took on American affairs. For Delane's supremacy at The Times was never in doubt. "Up to the last four years of his editorship, he practically reigned alone at the Times office, no one else having any voice." (33)

Allowing for the hyperbole expressed here, it is certainly true that Delane was in command. He had good relations with his proprietor, John Walter III, who felt free to offer suggestions and ask special consideration for his pet projects, but who as a rule gave Delane free rein to run the paper as he pleased. When Delane was on holiday, and Delane's brother-in-law and assistant editor G. W. Dasent was left in charge, however, Walter took a more active role. Delane, Dasent, and managing editor Howray Morris, also one of Delane's brothers-in-law, often referred to Walter as the "Griff", short for "griffin", a grim and extremely vigilant guardian. They had no choice but to defer to him, for, after all, he owned the paper. But they gave him as little opportunity as possible to interfere and felt themselves definitely in charge.
To summarize, Delane's strong suits were many. His dedication to his job has been mentioned. He was "...a man of great ardour, great eagerness, and one passionately imbued with the spirit of journalism..." (34)

He had unparalleled access to social and political circles. Equally important, he had the ability to attract good men to his staff, and to support them, encourage them and inspire their loyalty. Finally, he had an intuitive grasp of public affairs, an ability to anticipate events, and that sixth-sense about what constituted news that a great editor must have.

To this glowing account must be added the caveat that The Times, of course, had its enemies and its detractors. Its competitors were quite naturally envious of its power and success. And many prominent figures in Britain had been stung by The Times into hostility. One of the most important of these was Lord John Russell who had never forgiven Delane for the part he was sure Delane had played in the appointments made to key government posts in 1855 referred to earlier. Russell never understood the role of the press, as did Palmerston, and resented Delane's power. As he said to Lord Granville at the time he lost the colonial office, "Your friend, Mr. Delane, seems to be drunk with insolence and vanity." To Clarendon, he wrote, "'The Times' aspires not to be the organ but the organiser of Government." (35)
Ten years later, Lord Stanley wrote in his diary for the year 1865, "It is curious that for many years [Russell] has never taken in or read The Times." (36)

Difficult as it may be to imagine a cabinet official paying no attention to The Times, there is no evidence that Russell had the slightest contact with Delane or his paper during the American Civil War period, at which time Lord John, of course, was Foreign Minister.

Of equal importance to this study was that great orator and friend of the North during the civil war, John Bright, and his colleague in the cause of democracy, Richard Cobden. These two men were without rival as the favorite whipping boys of The Times. They were the focus in England of all the abuse The Times seemed to delight in pouring on the radicalized ex-colonies in North America, for both men stood for the very democratic principles which The Times rejected. The Times may have defeated its own objectives to a degree by giving these men such an unusual amount of attention, and thereby contributing to their fame. In addition, Delane made himself look a bit foolish during the celebrated feud he carried on with Cobden in 1863 where the subject of controversy was the interpretation given by The Times to a speech of Bright's.

One of Cobden's favorite betes noires was the system of anonymous journalism then practiced by all the leading newspapers
and reviews. His contention was that the press was irresponsible in hiding its views behind the cloak of anonymity. At The Times the system was so rigorously enforced that the leader-writers had little or no communication with one another, in fact, were not absolutely sure who their colleagues were. Brodrick wrote that The Times "kept its beasts in separate cages" and he approved of the system. It allowed for a young man such as himself to assume all the gravity and force of his paper when writing on subjects an informed critic might have considered him unqualified to comment on. (37)

For The Times never spoke tentatively when it took a stand. It spoke, as its commentators so aptly put it, as Jupiter.

Little wonder that the Court, like Lord Russell, thought The Times infinitely too presumptuous. There is a note in Stanley's diaries of a conversation he had with Disraeli, who was fresh from Windsor and a talk with the Queen and the Prince, in which Disraeli reported that the Queen angrily called The Times "as corrupt as the rest." (38)

In a draft, in Prince Albert's handwriting, of a letter from Victoria to Palmerston, during the Crimean crisis, the Queenexpressed herself as

much disgusted with the late atrocious articles in The Times on the Army in the Crimea...Ld. Panmure speaks even of the desire evinced in different quarters to establish an "Anti Times League"-- the Queen believes this would but aggravate the evil like any repressive laws, but she would put it to Ld Palmerston,
whether it is right that the Editor, the Proprietor and the Writers of such execrable publications ought to be the honoured and constant guests of the Ministers of the Crown?"

Yet honoured they were, by most, and where they were not, their power was recognized, and feared, if not courted. The Times in 1860 was the recognized newspaper authority of the western world. The United States would soon feel the lash of the mighty "Thunderer" when it found itself engulfed in a civil war in 1861.

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5. Eliegard, op. cit., pp. 16-17. The internal quotation is from the Spectator of 1868.
10. Frank L. Owsley, King Cotton Diplomacy, (Chicago: U. of


14. Grant extolled "The Walter Printing Press" used by The Times which could produce 11,000 to 12,000 double-sided sheets in an hour, and wrote in breathless admiration that "On June 22nd, 1861, there appeared to the astonishment of the world an impression...which...contained no fewer than 24 pages, or 144 columns!" Grant, op. cit., 22.


32. The History of 'The Times', II, 127.
33. Nicoll, op. cit., 293.
34. Kinglake, quoted in Dasent, op. cit., 284.
35. quoted in Cook, op. cit., 93.
38. Vincent, op. cit., 165.
Chapter Two

The Times and the United States

When civil war threatened in America in the last quarter of the year 1860, the leadership of The Times were neither without resources to report the growing conflict, nor did they completely lack first-hand experience on which to base editorial judgment. The Times maintained a regular correspondent in New York, and both the editor, John Delane, and at least two of his leader-writers, Robert Love and Thomas Chenery, had travelled in America just a few years before.

The Times's "special" in New York was John Chandler Bancroft Davis. Davis was descended from a prominent Massachusetts family whose distinguished forebear had been among the original colonists to come over on the Mayflower. His father, John Davis, had twice been Governor of Massachusetts and three times its senator. J. C. B. Davis was known as "Bancroft" Davis, perhaps to emphasize family ties with his uncle, George Bancroft, who was already a renowned public figure and historian. Davis's wife, whom he had married in 1857, was the granddaughter of Rufus King, a former Minister to the Court of St. James. Davis himself had served at the American Legation in London some years before...
Little wonder that Times Managing Editor Mowbray Morris described him as "a remarkably good specimen of an American." (1)

Davis made his living as a lawyer, as a member of the firm Kent, Eaton and Davis of 45 Wall Street, New York. He was engaged by The Times to write a weekly letter for which he was paid five guineas, The Times's highest rate of pay for this type of work. (2) His job was to describe and comment on any developments, political or otherwise, which had implications for the commercial world. That his primary mission was to concentrate on commercial matters is made clear in a letter Mowbray Morris wrote him in 1859 suggesting that he take up the subject of English investments in American enterprise...The depreciation of railway property is alarming, and it is worth your while to explain the causes...Such an inquiry would be more profitable to us than a discussion of the relative chances of the candidates for the presidency... (3)

Another letter written by the American H. T. Tuckerman in 1860 to whom Davis seems to have offered an interim assignment makes the same point:

My impression is that the staple of your correspondence is statistical and that the chief value it possesses consists in early and reliable reports of financial and political facts -- especially in regard to American Railway and other securities -- such as your daily business gives you peculiar facilities for making up.
Davis was not by any means a mere commercial reporter, however. He was keenly interested in politics and public affairs and devoted a good part of his weekly letter to these matters. At a later date, during the Civil War, he was to be rejected by his masters at The Times for this very reason.

For special assignments The Times sent men out from England who were expected to maintain their transatlantic perspective and not fall victim to the "native" point of view. One of these was L. Filmore who made an extended tour of the United States in 1856 and 1857, and relieved Davis when he went on his honeymoon that fall. (5) Another was Nicholas Woods who accompanied the party of the Prince of Wales when the Heir Apparent made his triumphal visit to America in 1860.

All of these gentlemen sent their letters back to The Times by the regular mail boats that plied the Atlantic, taking from ten to fourteen days to cross. In 1859 Morris wrote Davis that a new experiment was to be initiated whereby the Cunard steamers from Boston and Halifax would land their mails in Queenstown in Ireland. The Times maintained agents Thomas Crosbie, in Queenstown and Cork, and Charles Bean, in Liverpool, to receive mail packets delivered by other boats. These gentlemen were instructed to send telegraphic summaries of important news on to London, when the circumstances warranted it. During the coming
The Times would try various other methods to get the news from America before its competitors. Morris was particularly anxious to beat Reuters, whose summaries he considered to be inferior and unreliable. (6)

The laying of an Atlantic telegraph cable in 1858 would have changed the situation dramatically had it been successful. Morris had not been at all enthusiastic at the prospect of more speedy transmission of the news by the underwater route as he frankly wrote in this letter to Davis in September 1858:

"The Atlantic telegraph is no doubt a great fact, but unfortunately it is at the same time a great bore. The public will expect the Times to use it, and the public must not be disappointed."

That part of the reading public which Morris dismissed as the "profane vulgar" would not understand, he wrote, that "rapid communication does not make news more important." He predicted that more frequent communication would become "monotonous and frivolous." However, he reluctantly instructed Davis to send a daily message of about forty words once the cable had been laid. The regular news was to be commercial -- quotations of the certain stocks and shares of which large quantities were held in England. He appended a list of primarily rail stocks and state bonds to which Davis was to pay particular attention. (7)

Unfortunately for its promoters, the first attempt at laying the cable met with failure. Filmore, who had returned from his American tour to take up duties as a Parliamentary Reporter wrote
Davis from London in October, describing the reaction at Printing House Square to the news:

We are (privately) very much delighted at the failure of the Atlantic Cable, which would lessen our profits considerably, causing enormous expense, without return...if it ever does get to work, you will never have a day's peace afterwards. The wires everywhere cut a correspondent's throat by anticipating his facts, and making his letters stale before they come...

Morris had worried about the cost, and the ephemeral bias of fast news. Fillmore saw the new telegraphic medium as a threat to the reporter who, at the more leisurely pace then enjoyed, could reflect on events and provide some analysis and interpretation for his readers along with the raw news. The failure of the cable-laying left the emphasis where it had always been -- on the long, descriptive letters written by regular and special correspondents.

The Times's standard practice was to publish the correspondent's letter on page 8 or 9 in the daily paper and comment on anything of note in one of the leaders on page 6 or 7 of the same issue. The leader assignments, and the tack to be taken in their writing, were, as we have noted, solely the responsibility of the editor, John Delane. In assuming this role in reference to American affairs, Delane must certainly have been guided by the opinions he had of the United States as a result of a trip he took to the New World in 1856.
Delane had come to America at the urging of his friend "Bear" Ellice who believed that America was already at the point of explosion. Ellice arranged the trip for both Delane and star leader-writer Robert Lowe, contending that it would be a great advantage for them to be able to speak from first-hand experience when the inevitable North/South crisis occurred. He sent letters of introduction ahead to his Hudson's Bay Company agent in Canada, John Rose, asking for Rose's help in providing information and contacts for these most influential of men. (9)

Pressing business caused Delane to postpone his trip, but Lowe went on as planned on the second of August, 1856. During the ten-day crossing, Lowe made the acquaintance of the distinguished American man of letters, James Russell Lowell, (10) and prepared himself to understand America by reading de Tocqueville's Democracy in America. That perceptive Frenchman had visited the young republic some twenty-five years earlier in the days of Andrew Jackson and had observed the first attempt of the South to "nullify" the actions of the federal government. Lowe would be called upon to write about actual secession four and one-half years later.

It would be interesting to know if Lowe read the following paragraph in de Tocqueville, in which the Frenchman described what he saw as the developing relationship between the federal government and the several states.
I am strangely mistaken if the Federal government of the United States is not constantly losing strength, retiring gradually from public affairs, and narrowing its circle of action. It is naturally feeble, but it now abandons even the appearance of strength. On the other hand, I thought that I noticed a more lively sense of independence and a more decided attachment to their separate governments in the states.

(11)

Lowe, along with his colleagues at The Times, would have agreed in the description of the central government as weak and inadequate to its task. He would see ample evidence of the political struggles which were tearing the young nation apart when he toured America during the late summer and early fall of 1856, a period which coincided with the presidential campaign of that year.

Both he and Delane took the British tour of America which was standard for the day, first landing in Halifax in Canada, then proceeding to Boston and New York. From there, each went "west" to Chicago and "the prairies," thence back east with an obligatory stop-off at Niagara Falls. Lowe also visited Detroit, Cincinnati, Baltimore and Washington. In general, he made a much more extensive trip than his busy editor.

Everywhere Lowe travelled, he found people intensely interested in discussing the coming presidential elections, and the future of the "peculiar institution," slavery. While he was in America, "bleeding" Kansas was being fought over by pro-slavery forces and
Abolitionists, including John Brown. In Baltimore, Lowe had his first exposure to slavery when he visited the huge plantation north of that city owned by Colonel Carroll. He had the opportunity to tour the farm as he was instructed in the economics of slave labour.

Lowe’s visit to Baltimore also coincided with a convention of the political party which was nicknamed the "Know Nothing" party because of the secret nature of its agenda. In 1854 it had openly assumed the name "The American Party", and, choosing former president Millard Fillmore as its candidate in 1856, it attempted to appeal to a national constituency. The party convention in Baltimore, therefore, provided a battleground between North and South for Lowe to observe, and the public side-show gave him plenty of opportunity to see rowdy American politics in action, with torchlight parades, excessive oratory and frequent street brawls.

Lowe had planned to continue his explorations of the South by an excursion to Virginia. He apparently concluded that he had observed enough of southern customs and heard enough southern bombast while in Baltimore, and cancelled that leg of the trip. He spent a few days in "melancholy and half-finished" Washington, hurried to New York, and on October 1, headed for home. (12)

Based on what he had seen from a mainly northern and western perspective, Lowe agreed with Ellice that the two great regions
of the United States were likely to split. He wrote, "North and South are rapidly becoming two nations." (13) This idea of the inevitable division of the United States would later become an explanation and a basis for British policy when war actually broke out.

Lowe was an elitist when he left Britain and he saw nothing in his travels in America to make his change his mind. Like his paper and most influential Britons of the time, he thought "mob rule," which was the way these gentlemen described American democratic government, a most ineffective way to run a country. While he admired the "simple, thrifty, energetic, honest people" he found on the frontier, he deplored American democratic politics with its susceptibility to the mood swings of the multitude. His world perspective was considerably altered, however, by this extensive tour of the northeastern part of North America. He came away convinced that America "despite her serious internal contradictions...would emerge in the near future as the dominant power in North America and a force to be seriously reckoned with in the western hemisphere." (14)

Delane's trip, on the other hand, was too short to produce such a dramatic attitudinal shift, though it probably sharpened some perceptions he brought with him to the "new world." From the few letters he wrote to Dasent, his assistant editor and brother-in-law, and a diary, now lost, in which he is said to have jotted down the sort of things any tourist might write, it
is just possible to infer that Delane found travel in America a bit tiresome, saw no reason to view politics any differently in America than he did in his own country, and considered New York City the hub of the American universe, although he found Boston more attractive. (15)

In a letter to Dasent he made these observations about American mores:

...this country...seems a mass of contradictions. Everything is so familiar in one respect, and yet so unlike what one has ever seen before. People are extremely brusque and yet extravagantly civil...The English are very popular...At church yesterday the preacher --Theodore Parker, a great gun here -- spoke of England as "that country which we all love so dearly,..."

(16)

Delane did not go south, although he talked about making "a run south as far as Richmond" in a letter to Dasent, nor did he go to Washington, which he termed an "odious...village." He was so convinced of Washington's inferiority, in fact, that he wrote that if he had been arranging matters he would have had the British Ambassador remain in New York, except "during the session." (17)

Delane's last stop was in New York, "that fast city", and it was from here that he viewed the presidential elections, indicating quite clearly that he saw New York as America's London. Delane demonstrated his political sagacity by predicting
correctly that the Democratic candidate, James Buchanan, would become the next president. In this he disagreed with Lowe who had favoured General Fremont, the nominee of the young Republican Party. Having seen the "Know Nothings" in action, Lowe had assumed that this party would take votes away from the Democrats and allow a Republican victory. He was just four years too early in his assessment. The situation would change, in detail, in the next interval between presidential campaigns, but essentially it was this fracturing of old parties which paved the way for a Republican presidency in 1860.

Noting that domestic politics took precedence over foreign affairs in America, Delane played down the importance of any change which might take place with the inauguration of a Buchanan administration.

...I don't believe Buchanan's foreign policy has anything whatever to do with his success. Indeed, I have never once heard the subject broached except by professional politicians. It turns, with the mass, upon the two old rival drageaux, "Democrat" and "Republican", just as Whig and Tory with us, and, where there is an intelligent expression of opinion independent of party, upon the extension or non-extension of slavery. Of course, there is a strong abolition party, but for obvious reasons they don't go the whole hog in this contest, but only protest against the extension of slavery to free States.

Don't therefore overrate the importance of Buchanan's victory as far as we are concerned. He is not elected as an enemy to England...
As to the American press, Delane was completely scornful:

I fear there is little good to be done with the Press of the United States. It is too corrupt, and it would be dangerous as well as unavailing to bribe it in our interests...

(19)

From this scant evidence it would seem that Delane came back from his three weeks in America with these several impressions. On the professional level, he profoundly distrusted and was contemptuous of the American press. As a politician, he saw much that was familiar and had no grave worries about the Buchanan administration or the abolitionists. On a personal level, he was convinced that Washington was an unimportant backwater to New York, and he apparently concluded that the South was not enough in the center of politics and ideas to warrant a visit. Finally, he experienced a feeling of unease in a country that seemed superficially like home, but clearly was not. He actually vowed never to leave the British Isles again. (20)

Some time later, though, Delane mentioned in a letter to Bancroft Davis on another matter, "I was quite glad to be reminded by your note of New York and the pleasant time I spent there. I always regard it as next to Paris the most agreeable capital I ever knew..." Allowing for the hyperbole of social correspondence, it squares with the nature of the man that Delane found New York more to his taste than the rest of America. In New York, he had undoubtedly found the same kind of political and
commercial leaders with whom he normally associated in London. (21)

A year later, in the summer of 1857, The Times's leadership apparently still believed a trip to America was of value, for Davis was asked to provide assistance to visitor Thomas Chenery, the man who would eventually write most of the leaders on the American Civil War for The Times. Mowbray Morris wrote, "Let me introduce my friend Chenery, one of us, to whom any attentions you pay will be highly appreciated..." (22)

Thus, in the years just before the American Civil War, The Times had seen it that at least three of its regular staff, the editor and two of his most important leader-writers, had crossed the Atlantic to see the United States for themselves. Unfortunately, these trips were limited to the North and what was then known as the "West" so far as we know. (There is no specific information on Chenery's travels). In Lowe's case, at least, the trip was long enough to impress him with the emerging importance of the new republic, although he concluded that divergent forces in the young country would ultimately cause it to break into two, perhaps three different nations. Delane, disgusted with what he saw of the press and drawn instinctively to New York as the center of commercial and political power, came away apparently convinced that Buchanan's presidency would be business-as-usual and no threat to Great Britain. Beyond this he does not seem to have experienced any alarm, or even awareness,
of the growing crisis in America.

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3. Ibid., 116/117. Italics mine.
4. Ibid., 220/221.
5. History of 'The Times'. op. cit., 360, and Davis Papers, I, 151/152.
6. See, for example, Morris's letter to R. Stuart, 12 October 1863, Times Archives, Howbray Morris Letterbooks, (referred to hereafter as "TA, Morris"), 12, 498: "Reuter feels that he is bound to beat the Times, and the Times having reluctantly begun a contest with Reuter, cannot allow itself to be defeated."
7. Davis Papers, I, 78/79.
8. Ibid., I, 87/88.
10. of whom Love remarked, "a most agreeable gentleman; one might almost take him for an Englishman." Winter, op. cit., 113.
14. Winter, ibid., 115 and 123.
15. The History of 'The Times'. op. cit., 360. The authors of the History presumably had access to the diary which has since been lost.
16. Arthur Irwin Dasent, John Thadeus Delane: Editor of The
Parker was a transcendentalist, Unitarian minister who was a leader in both the anti-slavery and prison reform movements. He was pastor of the Twenty-eighth Congregational Society of Boston.

17. Dasent, op. cit., 244 and 248.

18. Ibid., 245, 247, and 248. Buchanan was not unknown to the British for he had been Secretary of State during the administration of James Polk, (1844-1848), at which time he had been responsible, on the American side, for the peaceful settlement of the Oregon Controversy with Britain. From 1852-1856, Buchanan served as American Minister in London. During those years there were some rather acrimonious disputes between the British and Americans over the attempt by the British to recruit troops for the Crimean War, and over differences in Central America. Buchanan was an expansionist, favouring annexation of Cuba. This stand won him the hatred of the Abolitionists, and was undoubtedly viewed with some concern by British policy-makers.

19. Ibid., page 248. There is an interesting implication here that bribing would be acceptable if it could be made to stick. In this connection, see Wilbur Devereux Jones, The American Problem in British Diplomacy, 1841-1861, (London and Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1974), 241, note 79, in which Jones states that Lord Clarendon, then serving as Palmerston's Foreign Minister, sounded out Delane on the possibility of bribing American newspapers. The information is from a letter Delane wrote to Clarendon on 2 December 1856.

20. Ibid., 245.

21. Davis Papers, I, 176/177. The letter was dated "January 21st;" no year.

22. Davis Papers, I, 33. That Chenery actually made the trip is authenticated by a note from Morris to Davis in September referring to the disposition of an IOU from Chenery. Davis Papers, I, 39.
Chapter Three

The Times and the United States: II
Anglo-American Issues

At the beginning of 1860, the London Times showed little concern for the "irrepressible conflict" which Senator William H. Seward had predicted for the United States in 1858. This was notwithstanding the fact that leader-writer Robert Lowe had thought it imminent two years earlier. Although editorial notice was taken in January of the opening address of America's President Buchanan to the Congress, and occasional attention was paid in the next few months to American finances, politics and slavery, the Times found little of interest going on across the Atlantic. In the first four months of 1860, only eleven Times leaders were devoted to American affairs, while the rest of its approximately four hundred editorials were concerned with European affairs, especially France, Garibaldi, and Italian independence, the financial affairs of Mexico, the war in China, the volunteer movement at home, the perennial question of reform in Britain, and miscellaneous other foreign and domestic concerns. Even Bancroft Davis's columns from New York appeared infrequently, although his correspondence with Managing Editor Howbray Morris indicates that he was sending a weekly letter.
The scant attention paid by The Times to the United States at this time points not only to the relative quiescent state of the North/South debate in America, but also to the relative unimportance of America in Britain's view of the world in early 1860. Similarly, the subjects which attracted the notice of The Times's editor demonstrate the nature of the Anglo-American relationship.

There were two topics which merited consistent coverage by The Times. These were, first, the American system of government, and secondly, American slavery. In addition, there were two other arenas in which British and American interests intersected which provoked comment from Britain's leading newspaper from time to time. The foremost of these was that of America as an economic force, a place of investment, a competitor in world trade, and a source of that vital raw material, cotton. Intertwined with this economic view, and with the moral perspective of the slavery question, was a fourth matter which was an ever-present worry to British statesmen and mercantile interests alike. This was the threat of American expansionism, in the Caribbean, in the west and south towards Mexico, and northward towards Canada.

In regard to the first topic, "America, the great democratic experiment," the positions of the British "ten thousand" and that of The Times were virtually unanimous. Although British politicians were divided in their own councils as to the question of increased democratization of the British constitution, most
agreed with The Times that the American model was deplorable. The government was criticized as corrupt, feeble, divided and inefficient, and "democracy" was dismissed as "mob rule." American politicians were usually the subject of scorn. They were criticized for being given to long, windy speeches, full of excessive rhetoric but lacking in statesmanlike content.

An example of this view was a comment in the January 1860 leader mentioned above, written by Thomas Chenery and devoted to President Buchanan's address to the American Congress. While focussing primarily on Buchanan's implied support for the extension of slavery to the territories, Chenery revealed The Times's low opinion of America's statesmen when he gave Buchanan the back-handed compliment of describing him as "above the usual run of American Presidents." (1)

This was fairly mild. In another leader, some weeks later, Henry Woodham came down harder on what The Times viewed as the flawed political system in America by taking the Americans to task for their inability to agree on the election of a Speaker for the House of Representatives, although the Congress had been in session since December, 1859. (2) In February, when a Speaker had still not been chosen, The Times's Robert Lowe drew a sharp contrast between the ineffective Americans and their British cousins who had quickly and expeditiously chosen a Speaker for their House of Commons and were already engaged in truly important affairs. But after all, Lowe wrote, the American
Congress had very little to do, unlike the British Parliament which had "an empire to run." As a final jab, Love noted that since the Americans had such a relatively short legislative agenda, "It takes a vast deal of oratory to spin out the session..." (3)

In a similar vein, when charges of corruption in the Buchanan administration were brought in the Congress in April, Chenery wrote, "Such an exposure will...do little for the promotion of purity in the States. The evil is too general for one example, however conspicuous, to work a cure." Clearly, as far as The Times was concerned, the American government was beyond redemption. (4)

Early in April, as part of its continuing criticism of American political institutions, The Times printed in entirety a letter written by Lord Macaulay to a Mr. H. S. Randall of New York City in 1857. In this letter Macaulay replied to Mr. Randall who had asked Macaulay's opinion of America's Thomas Jefferson. Macaulay stated that he did not consider Jefferson a great man for Jefferson had been a democrat. Macaulay was opposed to democracy.

The United States can afford such extreme ideas now, Macaulay had written, because of its boundless territory and seemingly limitless economic opportunity. But when the American continent had filled, and population had become more dense, as it most
certainly would,

You will have your Manchesters and your Birminghams; and in those Manchesters and Birminghams hundreds of thousands of artisans will assuredly be sometimes out of work. Then your institutions will be fairly brought to the test. Distress everywhere makes the labourer mutinous and discontented, and inclines him to listen with eagerness to agitators who tell him that it is a monstrous iniquity that one man should have a million while another cannot get a full meal. In bad years there is plenty of grumbling here and sometimes a little rioting; but it matters little, for here the sufferers are not the rulers. Accordingly, the malcontents are firmly but gently restrained. The bad time is got over without robbing the wealthy to relieve the indigent. The springs of national prosperity soon begin to flow again; work is plentiful, wages rise, and all is tranquillity and cheerfulness.

A few days later The Times, through the pen of Robert Lowe, referred approvingly to these views of Lord Macaulay and added its own comments on the horrors of democracy. The real peril in America today, Lowe wrote, was that Americans had learned to dislike and despise the veneration for authority and law. There was no longer any curb "strong enough to rein in the headlong course of democratic passion." Yet in America, because of the democratic nature of the government, the workers were the real rulers. The greatest danger of this to the workers was that they could, by their demands for economic equality, bring about a dissolution of the capital which was at the foundation of their own prosperity, just as Macaulay had predicted. But the workers did not understand this connection between capital formation and their own well-being.
If this were to happen in Britain, Lowe wrote,

A single act of Government appointed by and responsible to the poor in the direction of Socialism or a redivision of property would dissolve like an exhalation our gigantic fabric of credit, would close our manufactories, empty our workshops, choke up our harbours with rotting merchant ships, and while annihilating private enterprise, would destroy the public revenue.

Lowe's colourful evocation of the evils of Socialism which would flow from an excess of democracy in Britain was directed, of course, towards the British Parliament and its debates on reform. But the oblique reference to America in the person of Thomas Jefferson had given The Times yet another opportunity to denounce the American democratic system of government.

The British and The Times were equally despairing of the Americans on the slavery question. Having abolished slavery in their own colonies a generation before, the British were able to take a high moral tone when discussing their errant cousins' persistence in maintaining that "peculiar institution." As demonstrated in that first leader of the year in which disappointment had been expressed in Buchanan's support for the extension of slavery to the territories, The Times took a clear stand against the slaveholders' attempts to spread slavery beyond the territorial confines of the original slave states.

In a leader on January 19, probably written by Chenery and held
over from an assignment on the 14th, The Times called attention to a recent development which was quite ominous. There seemed to have been a change in the latest American opinion on slavery. Whereas ten years ago, the Abolitionists appeared to be getting their way, now the slaveholders were apparently becoming more and more powerful and "rapidly advancing in the extravagance of their demands."

Sadly, the writer pointed out, President Buchanan had confined himself to mild protests against the Slave Trade. ("Slavery" and "Slave Trade" were always written in capitals in Times leaders.) He argued that this had occurred because there was a failure of will in the North, that the North "...had not the invincible resolution to win." He, and The Times, saw that the critical test was the Union. As soon as the South showed that it was prepared to leave the Union over any given issue, the North shrank back and gave in. (7)

While The Times opposed slavery and urged the North to take a firm stand against it and its southern proponents, the newspaper did not give its support to the Abolitionists or favour violence as a means of solving the slavery problem. John Brown's aggressive actions had been criticized earlier, as had Harriet Beecher Stowe's book Uncle Tom's Cabin which a Times reviewer had described in 1854 as not only bad literature but bad propaganda. Times leader-writers argued repeatedly that violence only inflamed passion and exacerbated divisions. The Times
counselled a "moderate, but firm" approach. Or as Lord Macaulay had written, the "malcontents" should be "firmly, but gently restrained." (8)

Typical of this stance was the leader of 22 March, again the product of Chenery's pen. Taking heart at a speech which had been given by Senator Seward who was widely recognized as the leading contender for the nomination of the Republican Party for the presidential contest coming up in the fall, Chenery wrote that Seward's words might presage the "dawning of a more friendly feeling" among the major political leaders in America in regard to slavery. His speech, on the admission of Kansas to the Union, was described as "able, and even eloquent." Approvingly, Chenery noted that Seward was no "trimmer" but a staunch anti-Slavery man. Nevertheless his speech, while it was the most terrible attack on Slavery that had been made for a long time, would "tend to concord, because it avoids passion and acrimony."

The Northerners had tended to treat Slavery as a regional matter, Chenery pointed out, while the Southerners had sought for universality of acceptance of the principle of Slavery. This is why the Southerners had been more successful in abolishing compromise through such legislative enactments as the Fugitive Slave Bill, and by judicial decisions such as the Dred Scott case.

The "compromises" Chenery referred to included such provisions
as the Missouri Compromise of 1821 whereby slavery had been limited to territories south of 36 degrees 30 minutes. Maine, a free state, and Missouri, probably a slave state, had been admitted to the union at the same time to preserve the voting balance in the United States Senate, and subsequently new slave and free states had always been paired for admission. This Compromise had been repealed by the Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854 which had introduced in its place the principle of popular sovereignty, or "squatter sovereignty," as it was also known, whereby the settlers of a given territory could decide for themselves whether or not the area should be slave or free. This, in turn, had led to the unfortunate result that pro- and anti-slavery forces had moved into Kansas, engaging in armed conflict to try to win a popular majority in that state. Robert Lowe had been travelling in the United States when "bleeding Kansas" was going on. The Fugitive Slave Bill of 1850 tipped the balance in favour of the slave-holders by requiring the slaves who escaped to the North be returned to their owners. In the Dred Scott Case of 1857 the United States Supreme Court, then dominated by Southerners, decided that the Congress had no power to limit slavery in the territories.

In spite of this alarming trend in favour of Southern slave-holding interests, Seward's speech, Chenery said, now provided evidence that the Republicans would stand up to these aggressions of the Southerners. "Under the organization of the
Republicans, and with the moderate programme sketched by Mr. Seward, the North may be able, without plotting or bluster, to roll back the tide of Slaveholding aggression.

As to the ultimate extinction of America's "peculiar institution", however, Chenery cautioned that "The downfall of Slavery must be left to time..." (9)

Two months earlier Chenery had hinted at the way in which he thought emancipation might occur. He had written a leader taking notice of a meeting which had been held in New York to support the Union and condemn Abolitionist excesses, a meeting attended by three former presidents of the United States. Amazingly, the orators at the meeting had roundly defended slavery. "There can be no doubt that these are the prevailing views even in the Free States of America," Chenery claimed, and "the violent doings of the Abolitionists have had a great share in producing" these views, he argued.

Stating that Virginia and Maryland now used slaves primarily for domestic purposes, and that both these states had had a large influx of white men recently who were demonstrating how much could be done by free labour, Chenery expressed the belief that "All the conditions requisite for the trial of the experiment of emancipation" had been coming into existence in those states, and Virginia and Maryland might by this time have severed themselves from the sisterhood of Slave States, had it not been for the feud between North and South fomented by the Abolitionists. These people have thrown the old
Another example of The Times's position on the Abolitionist Movement and on violence was a leader provoked by a speech of Senator Sumner in the waning days of the American congressional session in June. The editorial was a comment on a letter of Bancroft Davis which appeared in the same day's paper. Davis told his Times readers that this was the first speech which Sumner had given since he had been brutally beaten by a Southern colleague on the floor of the Senate four years before. Sumner's speech, Davis wrote, had been exceptionally strong and was potentially damaging to the Republicans. There was not a paragraph in the speech, he continued, which was not full of defiance, and not a sentence which was not offensive to southern members of the Senate. (11)

The Times commented on this report in these words:

Although the great events which are now occurring in Europe receive and deserve our incessant attention, it is impossible not from time to time to turn our eyes to the New World, where problems are to be solved that nearly affect ourselves.../We/ are continually reminded we are not only a European Power...Perhaps the most important foreign question for England is that of American Slavery...We have the greatest interest in the decay of this mighty evil... That it will come to an end in our time is, indeed, not to be hoped; but that the South should be induced to acquiesce in the principle that Slavery is an evil, and ought to be abated, is what every man of humanity ought to desire and work for.
The Times's writer then went on to equate Sumner's violent denunciations of the South with the aggressions of John Brown. Both, he wrote, only succeeded in further antagonizing the different sections and classes in America. His advice to America was that Sumner should be muzzled by his friends. As to the effect the speech might have on eradicating slavery, the writer concluded that "the man who can in personal irritability so forget the interests of a great cause is its worst enemy..."

(12)

As the legislative sessions on both sides of the Atlantic drew to a close, the Slave Trade was a subject of debate in both forums. Accordingly, The Times took the opportunity to declare itself on this matter. The brutal fact, it said, was that the Slave Trade seemed to be flourishing as never before. On the British side, it seemed there was little more that could be done, for the biggest stumbling block was Cuba.

If we could but close the Cuban market -- and some day, perhaps, in conjunction with the American Government, we may be fortunate enough to do so -- the Slave Trade would be really and truly suppressed. Until then we can but keep it within bounds...

(13)

Referring to the debate in the American Congress, The Times again drew an unfavourable contrast between the behavior of American politicians and their British counterparts. Focussing
particularly on Senator Mason of Virginia who had accused the British of stupidity and hypocrisy in their stand on Slavery, The Times, in the person of Thomas Chenery, wrote that one would think the British would be the object of pity, not scorn, since they had been so stupid as to abolish slavery and thus bring on the ruin of their own sugar industries in the West Indies. But it was clear that England's practice had wounded America's sense of self-esteem. "It must be galling to Americans," Chenery wrote, to hear that the slave trade was not only increasing but that New York City was the foremost slave port in the world. This being the case, it was probably only natural for the Americans to accuse the British of hypocrisy. (14)

Along with the interest Britons and The Times displayed in the American political system and its continuing struggle with slavery, they also kept a close watch on the United States as it grew in economic strength. For British investors, America's prosperity was a thing to be cherished. In another area, however, the British and the Americans were bound to clash. This was in the arena of international trade where two important facts were of controlling importance: first, the domination by the British navy and merchant fleet of the oceans of the world; second, the adherence of the British, since mid-century, to the principles of free trade.

The Americans chafed continually under Britain's rule of the high seas. They were angered by Britain's attempt to interfere
with the slave trade, they had resented the attempts by the
British to "impress" seamen during the Napoleonic Wars, and they
were to try throughout the century to wrest an increasing share
of the lucrative ocean carrying trade from British shippers,
although by the late 50's the game seemed to have been decisively
won by the British. (15)

Unable to dominate the oceans, the Americans had done what they
could in an area over which they exercised control. They had
restricted their own coastal trade to American bottoms, even
going to the extreme of defining this trade to include trips
around the "Horn" between New York and San Francisco.

On the question of free trade vs. protectionism, Americans
were divided by the economics of the regions from which they
came. It was Northern shipping interests which favoured
restrictions on shipping, and Northern merchants who supported
restrictions on trade which funneled imports and exports through
Northern ports. Similarly, it was in the North that the great
growth in manufacturing capacity had occurred, and it was these
"infant industries" which cried out for protection against their
largely British competitors.

Southerners, on the other hand, were producers of raw
materials, and consumers of finished goods. They wanted to keep
tariffs low to encourage the import of the cheapest manufactured
goods possible from anywhere in the world. They also preferred
shipping their raw goods, of which cotton was the major product, directly to British warehouses and mills, rather than having to send these products via American bottoms, and/or transshipping them through American middlemen. They resented being forced in this way to divide their profits with the Northerners. Thus, while they differed with the British on the slavery question, the Southerners found themselves agreeing with the British on the free trade issue.

In regard to the cotton supply, The Times began the year by calling attention to the enormous amount of cotton Britain imported from America, but contending that there was little that could be done. Noting that the importation of American cotton had increased sixteen times, The Times's writer pointed out that that meant there were sixteen times as many mills, sixteen times as many families whose livelihood depended on cotton, and sixteen times as much profit. This importation

is so large and so steady that we can steer our national policy by it. It is so important to us that we should be reduced to embarrassment if it were suddenly to disappear.

The Times say this as a cause for congratulation, but noted that Lord Brougham, as an abolitionist, saw the ever-increasing flow of American cotton only as an exaggeration of an evil which he never ceased to deplore.

Unlike Lord Brougham, the leader stated, we see only the free and intelligent English families who thrive upon
the wages which these cotton bales produce. Lord Brougham sees only the black labourers who, on the other side of the Atlantic, pick the cotton pods in slavery.

The Anti-Slavery people say "Let us raise up other markets," the writer continued. And "So say we all," he wrote. Britons knew that it could be done in India, China, and Africa. But the fact that cotton flourished in many places did not mean it could be grown profitably everywhere.

.../Even/ Lord Brougham would not ask us to believe that there is any proximate hope that free cotton raised in Africa, will, in any reasonable time, drive out of culture the slave-grown cotton of America.

Meanwhile, the writer advised, since Britain did buy its cotton from the Americans, it is not dignified "to revile them for producing it."(16)

Within six months The Times had changed its tune. Expressing concern at Britain's dependence on America for its raw cotton, The Times urged, before it was too late, that steps should be taken to encourage the production of this vital commodity in Britain's own colonies. The Times pointed out that the amazing richness of Lancashire came from one plant which came from one part of the world. Yet, there could be a war, or a blight, which could interfere with this supply.

Equally threatening was continued development of rival mills in the North. ".../In/ a few years the planters will find in their own country a market for nearly all they can grow." The
Americans were perfectly capable of passing protective legislation to accomplish this, for they were not believers in free trade. Yet the short-sighted merchants in Liverpool looked to the United States first, and only to India if the American supply was not sufficient. What was needed was support by these same merchants for the development of the cotton growing industry in Britain's own colonies, especially India, where more British capital should be invested in the creation of a more extensive railroad system, for example. (17)

On other matters having to do with international trade, The Times, during the first third of 1860, devoted two leaders to questions involving the high seas. One, in January, concerned the attempt to bring to trial in Britain two American sailors who had been indicted for the murder of six coloured men while at sea. The British court had been required to release the sailors who had been allowed to go back on board an American ship. Chenery, the writer, pointed out that had these murders occurred on a British ship, or on board any ship in British waters, every man who committed such a crime would be prosecuted and hanged, or otherwise punished. In this case, however, "It is quite possible that should the two mates be sent to the United States under the Extradition Treaty, they will be acquitted, their victims being only 'niggers.'"

Apart from the light treatment of the sailors to be expected in America because of the racial aspects of the case, Chenery also
took the occasion to criticize Americans for their violent tempers. "There must be some hidden cause acting on the American people and producing in them a certain savageness of temper, which, increasing year by year, threatens to become the most marked feature of their character." When this characteristic behavior results in crimes, "for which the American merchant service has become justly infamous," it demands the serious attention of the British people. (18)

The other leader was a comment on a correspondence between the British shipping magnate William Lindsay and Foreign Minister Lord John Russell on the question of privateering. By the Treaty of Paris which had ended the Crimean War in 1856, Britain, France, Austria, Turkey and Russia had agreed on four rules of international law, the first of which was the outlawing of privateering. The United States had been invited to adhere to this declaration. At first the Americans said they would agree to the Declaration on the condition that all private property at sea be made exempt from capture in time of war. Later, they had backed away from signing the treaty under any conditions.

Lindsay's concern was that at the first hint of a European war, the Americans would be able to appropriate the whole of the British carrying trade. This could happen because American ships, as neutral vessels, would be exempt from search and seizure by belligerent warships. For this reason, Lindsay favoured complete immunity for private property, just as the
Americans had done earlier.

The Times took the view that the Americans could not be blamed for wanting to retain the right to commission privateers because their standing navy was small, and they needed to have this right to augment their fleet in time of war. As to Lindsay’s proposal to exempt private property from seizure on the high seas in time of war, The Times pointed out that while this would be in the interest of the shipping industry, it might not benefit the whole British nation, since Britain would then have to forego the privilege of excluding the enemy from the seas in time of war.

Finally, the fourth matter which was a continuing concern of British statesmen and of The Times was America’s tendency towards territorial expansion. Although nothing occurred in the early part of 1860 to alarm the British or call for specific comment by The Times, the topic was always part of the British-American equation, including the question of slavery. It was widely understood that southern slaveholders were anxious to extend their slave dominions by annexing Cuba and moving west and south towards Mexico. Britons, therefore, not only wished to limit American territory in order to limit America’s power. They also saw such a policy as a way of stopping the expansion of slavery. This was one reason, for example, that the British had supported Texan independence some years before. The ever-present nature of this question of the United States as an expanding part of North
and Central America is also evidenced by the frequency with which news of Mexico and the Caribbean appeared in Bancroft Davis's weekly columns from New York.

When secession threatened later in the year, and war actually broke out in 1861, these four areas of concern continued to dominate The Times's coverage of America. The inefficient and volatile nature of democratic government, the evil institution of slavery, the vital links of international trade, and the worrisome tendency of the Americans to expand in every direction in the New World were subjected again and again to editorial treatment in the pages of The Times. The quantity of space given to comment on American affairs was slight as compared to the close scrutiny given to European politics and domestic concerns. But as civil war came ever closer in America, The Times's perspective was to undergo subtle but significant change as its editor came to terms with a major upheaval on the North American continent.

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2. The Times, 27 January 1860, 8.
5. The Times, 7 April 1860, 8.
12. *The Times*, 18 June 1860, 8. The author of this leader cannot be reliably determined.
Chapter Four

The Times and the United States: III

Prize-Fighters, Princes and Presidents

While The Times's serious concerns with American affairs had to do with America's political system, slavery, economic potential and territorial expansion, two of the biggest news stories about America in 1860 were of a human interest nature. The earliest was the celebrated fight in April between the British Champion prize-fighter, Tom Sayers, and the American Challenger, John Heenan.

Although the fight was illegal, it occasioned such excitement in England that even the generally staid Times could not ignore it. Shortly after the fight took place (at a "secret" location in Surrey, but attended by an estimated 3,000 people, many of whom had come from London on a special train), The Times ran a three-column description of the fight. The next day it took a curiously noncommittal stand on the unlawful event in a leader which included these comments:

National rivalry and the curiosity regarding a singular spectacle have overcome in a day all the
intellectual and moral teachings of a generation... So we will take men and their nature as we find them, and not preach a homily against the fight for the championship.

(1) For days afterwards, The Times carried letters to the editor arguing for and against prize-fighting, but mostly arguing whether or not the American or the Englishman had been the victor.

The important things to note here are two: first, the fight occasioned enormous interest to a great extent because the challenger was American; and second, The Times did not adopt a holier-than-thou approach about the fight but realistically recognized how quickly "intellectual and moral teachings" could be swept aside. Both of these attitudes were to come into play when The Times chose sides during the American Civil War.

The fight was even the occasion for one of the rare letters written by Mowbray Morris to Bancroft Davis in America. Morris exhibited a remarkable fairness towards the American side, while primarily expressing great concern for learning the reaction of the "upper classes" in America to the charge that the fight had been "barbarous and immoral." (2)

At about the same time, Davis had written Morris requesting leave to go on holiday from July to October. Morris had replied that he would be willing to square the requirements of The Times with those of Davis, but that he wanted Davis to arrange a replacement. "I should not like to be without correspondence
from the United States during the whole interval of your absence," he wrote, for there were many questions of interest to the British "which our own circumstances induce us to regard with unusual watchfulness." (3)

One of these, certainly, was the Prince of Wales's forthcoming visit to America, an event which, along with the prize-fight and the maiden voyage across the Atlantic of the celebrated new ocean vessel, the Great Eastern, was to vie with the presidential contest in America as the biggest news story of the year. The Times commissioned a special correspondent, Nicholas Woods, to travel to America on the Great Eastern and report on that voyage, after which he was to go to Newfoundland to be on hand for the Prince's arrival. Woods was then directed to accompany the Prince and his party on the rest of the trip. Bancroft Davis was not in New York to greet Woods, but his law partner helped him get established. Davis apparently had already gone on his holiday, spending some time in England, for he paid a call on Morris in London towards the end of July. (4)

Before he left the United States, however, Davis had sent news to The Times of the various political conventions then being held in America to nominate candidates for the presidential race in the fall. He described how the Democratic Party had split at its convention in Charleston over its platform and over the proposed nomination of Stephen Douglas as its candidate, how the former "Know Nothings," now the National Union Party, had chosen Bell of
Tennessee as its candidate, how Seward had been passed over by the Republicans for Lincoln, and how, finally, the Democrats, divided on the slavery question, had selected two presidential candidates, Breckinridge, who supported the Southern view that slavery was "right" and should be allowed throughout the United States, and Douglas, who advocated the "popular sovereignty" idea that it was up to the local population to decide whether or not a particular state or territory should be open to slavery. (5)

Throughout July and August Davis's replacement sent regular reports about the presidential campaign to The Times. On the 10th of July, he predicted a Republican victory in November, unless the Republicans became too over-confident. The campaign had been opened by Senator Sumner with a speech at the Cooper Institute. Vice-presidential candidate Everett had responded to Lord Grey's criticism of corruption in the American government. The President had been informed of the Prince of Wales's intention to visit the United States right after Canada. The stock market was buoyant, railroads were good, and the greatest grain crop ever was expected to be harvested. An equally strong yield was predicted for cotton. (6)

A month later, the New York reporter wrote that the North-South contest did not seem to have the same urgency as it had had in 1856. There was no admission of Kansas as a state which turned on the election, the South seemed to be scattering its strength by dividing its support among Breckinridge, Bell and even Douglas.
On the other hand, there were ominous rumblings from the South. The Times correspondent quoted a Congressman Keith from South Carolina who had said that if the Republicans were to win, the South should secede. Keith had declared that "Any fate is better than degradation and a slow consuming tyranny." The New York correspondent dismissed Keith's statement, however, by declaring that he was alone in these views, even in his own party. (7)

The Times accepted its reporter's assessment of the situation in America, and went further. (Chenery was author of this leader, and probably would have preferred later to forget that he wrote it.) Although disunion had threatened in 1856, he wrote, it had been predicted that 1860 would be the most fateful year. Yet nothing of the sort seemed to be happening. "The most striking feature of the present Presidential contest is the comparative apathy of the American public.../In/ our opinion, the American people did not share the disunionist principles of either party" in 1856. While the Southerners had worked themselves into a fury, and Sumner had declared them barbarians, the probable fact was that the question of negro culture would still be a question for the future, and neither Lincoln nor Breckinridge would be able to affect it much during the next four years. (8)

Two weeks later the New York correspondent still thought Lincoln's victory a sure thing, and wrote that even foreign
delegations were reporting this to their governments. Douglas was campaigning vigorously, but no Democratic candidate had a ghost of a chance if the South opposed him, as it did Douglas. Even the financiers were deserting Douglas. The only possibility, short of a Republican victory, was that the vote might be so divided that the election would have to be thrown into the House of Representatives. This was what the National Unionists under Bell were hoping for. Meanwhile, Senator Mason of Virginia was advocating direct trade between the South and Europe, beginning with the use of the Great Eastern. It was reported also that a despatch had been sent to the Courts of Europe sounding these governments out on what their policy would be if a slave-holding republic were formed in America. (9)

As these first notes of Southern secession were reaching Times readers, discounted, however, by its New York reporter and buried in the generally soothing news that the American public was apathetic and that the Republicans, who advocated a strong stand against Slavery, would surely win, the policy-makers of Britain were winding down their affairs and preparing for their trips to the country or abroad. Parliament was prorogued on the 29th of August until the 6th of November. In September, Times Editor Delane took leave of London to go with his friend Robert Love to "Bear" Ellice's country estate, Glenquoich, for some deer-stalking. After his sojourn with Ellice, Delane went on to visit Lord Ashburton at his home at Loch Luichart, thence to
Brahan Castle and Tarbat, before he returned to his own home at Ascot Heath on 22 October.

M.P. William Lindsay, the shipping magnate who had queried Lord Russell earlier on the British Government's stand on neutral shipping and privateering, took the occasion of the Parliamentary recess to go to America. Although his trip was a private one, some concern was expressed that he was overstepping himself: "Is this mission 'official?'" queried "A shipper" in a letter to the editor. The Times carried a news story from The Observer that Lindsay was being supplied with all correspondence between the two governments on the subject, and would hand over any actual negotiation to the British Minister in Washington, Lord Lyons, if he made any progress in his talks with American shippers. (10)

The Times's New York correspondent continued to report on the presidential campaign and the great harvest in America, but these topics took a distinctly second place when compared to the voluminous descriptions of the visit of the Prince of Wales which began to fill the pages of The Times in September. On the 10th of September, Wood's report of the Prince's visit to Canada took five columns. The same day, in the New York correspondent's letter of less than one column, it was noted that

...we hear of nothing but the Prince of Wales; everything is dubbed by his name. We have Prince of Wales hats, Prince of Wales perfumes, and Prince of Wales wigs and toupees...there can be little doubt that the heir apparent to the British Throne will have a reception here of which none of the parties concerned in it will have reason to be ashamed....
A week later, Davis's substitute, possibly Davis himself, reported that the leading citizens of New York were beginning to come back from their summer homes in Saratoga and Newport after what had been a very exciting summer, what with the arrival of the Great Eastern, a visit to the United States by a delegation from Japan, and the excitement of the presidential campaign. Of the latter, he wrote that this "stirring political strife," must end "in determining the character of our national administration, involving probably a complete overthrow of the principles and policy which have controlled our Government for the past thirty years." He predicted that the coming three months would be equally memorable, for in the opinions of far-seeing statesmen in America the election of Lincoln to the Presidential chair would be a revolution. "Whether it be a bloodless and peaceful one depends on the ability of the ultras among his opponents to give effect to their avowals."

The same day The Times devoted three and three-quarters columns to Woods's lengthy report on the Prince, who was still in Canada.

By now the presidential campaign in America, which traditionally begins on Labor Day, the first Monday in September, was in full swing. Davis's column, written September 12, perhaps by himself, perhaps by his substitute, reported that the
"Wide-awake" and "Rail-splitting clubs" which had formed to support Abraham Lincoln's candidacy were conducting torch-light parades, carrying "rails", and holding rallies in their "wigwams" in almost every town and village. Meanwhile the Democrats were holding "barbacues (sic) and clam-bakes" at their political rallies. For the first time in American history, the presidential candidates had gone on the "stump," i.e., were actively campaigning among the people. Seward was particularly busy and was by far the most popular speaker.

The Prince of Wales's visit to New York City was now imminent. The leading citizens were busily organizing the ball which was to be given in his honour at the Academy of Music. Thirty thousand dollars would be spent, but only three thousand of New York's elite would be permitted to attend. George Templeton Strong, a prominent New Yorker noted in his diary that he had been chosen to be on a committee headed by General Scott and William Astor to get up a banquet for "Lord Renfrew, alias the Prince of Wales, when and if His Lordship's Grace's Highness comes to this city."

(13)

By October, Strong was writing,

Much occupied with divers matters growing out of the expected advent of our "sweet young Prince." "Long may he wave," but I wish he were at home again with his royal mamma, and I hope the community won't disgrace itself before he goes away. The amount of tuft-hunting and Prince-vorshiping threatens to be fearful...

(14)
A week later, this American "aristocrat" wrote, "I begin to be weary of this "sweet young Prince." The Hope of England threatens to become a bore...Everybody has talked of nothing but His Royal Highness for the last week." (15)

Strong's comments reflected his criticism of his countrymen that "...no community worships hereditary rank and station like a democracy," but in regard to Anglo-American relations, his comments were positive and significant:

Under all this folly...there is a deep and almost universal feeling of respect and regard for Great Britain and for her Britannic Majesty. The old anti-British patriotism of twenty years ago is nearly extinct.

(16)

The Times meanwhile saw in the reaction in America to the Prince's visit these lessons about Americans and their press:

"...we were not prepared for the impulsive inquisitiveness of New York and her sister cities." Of course American accounts are characterized by "grotesque exaggeration."

Many will consider all this as vulgar /as contrasted/ with the reticence of our own Press. We cannot wholly concur in this view. The American papers present but a reflection of the American character, in which a craving for excitement, and more especially the excitement of curiosity, holds a principal place.

(17)

A four-column account of the Prince's activities in Toronto
were printed in The Times of the same day.

At about the same time, in New York, Davis, who by this time must have been back at work, was writing that "Baron Renfrew" had arrived in Detroit, preparations were going forth in New York, Lindsay had given a speech in Boston and a committee had been set up to consider his proposals. On the political front, Sevad had been expressing one of his favorite themes: that the United States should eventually annex British Columbia and "Russian America" to establish a counterbalance to the expansion of slave power in the southwest. Southern Democrats were declaring that they would "rise in rebellion" if Lincoln were elected, but these threats had been rebuked by other more conservative Southerners. Davis concluded confidently that it was well understood that "...the cry of disunion is mere party clap-trap." (18)

A Times leader the next day, written by Thomas Mozley, spoke very kindly of the Americans, albeit somewhat condescendingly:

All we wish for the citizens of the United States is that they may become as much like ourselves as possible, but with a few improvements...The Prince has made many friends in the New World. His visit...may prove to that touchy race how little we wish to quarrel with them. Within limits of reason there is not a point that England would not gladly concede to secure her from a quarrel with her own flesh and blood.

(19)

On the same day in New York, Davis continued to express optimism about the election. "As I write," the Presidential
contest will be decided, he said. First,

You must dismiss from your mind any apprehensions of disunion as a possible consequence of the election of any candidate, if by chance you had any such fears...Such threats are only part of the machinery for getting or retaining political favour...no one seriously contemplates the dissolution of the Union as a possibility...

The fact that Federal securities were selling at a premium was offered by Davis as proof of his assessment. (20)

Woods continued to chronicle the Prince's journal in great detail, providing a travelogue of America as the royal party proceeded. In Chicago, they were witness to a torchlight parade for "Honest Old Abe" and an exceedingly orderly political meeting. The prairie captured Woods's imagination: "an undulating ocean of long, rich grass and flowers...not a sound but the shrill of chirping of millions of crickets..." The Mississippi River at Alton, Illinois, crept "slowly along between banks a world too wide -- a dull, dilapidated, poor, half-shrunken, muddy stream." In Washington, Woods found a "strange city, whose streets of ill-built houses connect the most noble public buildings, and where one has to admire the city as a city always in the future tense."

When you have visited the capital and Mount Vernon, admired the Treasury, Patent and Post-office, called at the White House, suffered under a bad hotel, and continually mistaken the Washington Monument for a lighthouse...you may quit the administrative capital of America with perfect ease of mind...
In Richmond, the Prince encountered an angry mob, which Davis assured his masters at The Times disgusted decent Americans. Chenery commented for his paper that

It must be remembered that nowhere in the free States is there to be found, among the native Americans at least, a class as ruffianly and deprived as are the lower class of whites at the South. These worthies are the drinking, swaggering, swearing, grumbling, revolver and bowie-knife-using gentry, who furnish so many paragraphs to the newspapers, and have almost come to be taken as a type of the American character...a Southern mob is capable of being led away by any worthless fellow who gets its ear...

(22)

One of the final leaders occasioned by the Prince’s visit was written by Robert Lowe, expressing some of the same views as Chenery’s leader above, and clearly demonstrating The Times attitude towards slavery and the South. Considering how many Irish there are in Canada and America, Lowe wrote, "...we confess we were not without misgivings that /the Prince’s visit/ might suit the interests of some party or other to get up an anti-English demonstration ..." Fortunately, the only nasty incident was in Richmond, and the Prince should not have gone there.

If there be a place justly odious to the feelings of Englishmen and their Sovereign, it is that mart where the human animal, which is now almost the only produce of Virginia, is ruthlessly sold for consumption in the dreary plantations of the South.

Lowe may very well have been thinking of his own American tour
when he wrote that the Prince, through this trip, had experienced some idea of the vast scale of nature, the Mississippi, the Great Lakes, the Alleghenies, Niagara. He has seen in America (as had Lowe) "the most astonishing proofs of energy and industry."

The institutions of America differ from ours, and we have never hesitated to express our preference for the Constitution under which we live; but that must not prevent our doing full justice to the merits of a nation in whose fame we claim a common interest, or admitting that their institutions, though not to be coveted by men who have the happiness to live in England in the reign of Queen Victoria, are far superior to any that are to be found in any other country except that from which they sprang.

The grand finale of the Prince's American visit was his sojourn in New York City. George Templeton Strong, as vestryman at Trinity Church where the Prince worshipped while in New York, accompanied the royal party and described the popular response to the Prince's visit with amazement:

The crowd was very dense and occupied the whole street as far as the park...There were lines of people waiting all along Broadway to Fourteenth Street, two or three deep, and all cheering, the better class of men raising their hats as the Prince passed by...His visit has occasioned a week of excitement beyond that of any event in my time, and pervading all classes.

The great ball at the Academy of Music, certainly the social event of the decade, was marred by the unfortunate collapse of a temporary floor which had been erected for dancing. Strong
describe it in his usual witty and sardonic fashion:

I was pointing out notabilities to Englehart /the Duke of Newcastle's private secretary/ and the Honorable Mr. Somebody, and just indicating John Van Buren as the son of one of our ex-kings, when there was a dull, ugly, jarring report, quickly followed by another of the same sort. Everybody started and peered in vain over the heads of the densely packed crowd, and wondered what it was. But there was no panic and rush...Of course, people crowded away from this dangerous region in all directions...the Prince and his suite and most of the committee retreated to the reception and supper-rooms...A score of carpenters and policemen...were energetically repairing the damage within fifteen minutes after the accident. But there was a general sense of failure and calamity. Everything looked bilious...By midnight damages had been repaired and dancing set in. People streamed over every part of the floor the moment the Prince appeared on it. Danger was forgotten...Miss Helen Russell was overpowered when the Prince was presented. Her voice failed her for fear, and she astonished H.R.H. with a series of contortions and muscular twitchings before she succeeded in articulating an audible word. So they say; I saw little of the dancing. The way people crowded round was snobbish and rude and indecent, and I kept on the outskirts, where I loafed and lounged dejectedly...

(25)

Woods, too, reported the failure of the great ball, but emphasized "The spontaneous and unexpected outpouring of the masses of citizens on the day of the Prince’s arrival." (26) Two weeks later, the Prince was home, and The Times pronounced its valedictory of his trip. Thomas Mozley, given the assignment, concentrated on relations between Britain and the United States:

A new relation had to be established between two of the greatest Empires of the world, members of the same human family, heirs of the same grand traditions...For near a century the gulf of a bloody schism has gaped between them, and the triumph of success on one side
has been met with the sneers of disappointed dominion on the other. They have forgotten in the petty resentments of the hour that we are their elder brothers and fathers; and we have forgotten that they are but our young kinsmen and that what is amiss in them must come of our breeding...we have to become brothers.

(27)

Anglo-American relations were certainly at an all-time high. The Prince's visit had been a resounding success, and the recent diplomatic relations between the two nations had been remarkably amicable. (28) That there were important differences in perspective, however, was noted by the perceptive Woods. Buried in one of his four column reports were these words:

Every day, every hour of this long tour has only convinced me more and more of how little...the English and Americans really know of each other.

Certainly the Times's editorial comments about American "character" described earlier revealed the same kind of stereotypical thinking which the Americans showed also when they expressed amazement to find that the Prince was "so utterly unassuming." (29)

For Davis, in New York, in any case, the departure of the Prince meant back to politics. After complimenting both Woods and the Prince for the favourable impressions which they had left, Davis turned to reporting on the State elections which were only weeks away. The Republicans were sure to win, although the Democrats in New York were trying desperately to unite the
parties there to stem the tide. "The principal election cry is still disunion as the probable result of the election of Mr. Lincoln, and today the 'bears' have their own way on the Stock Exchange." But Davis didn't think it would happen.

Notwithstanding the apprehensions which the plantation States naturally feel at the probable election of an anti-slavery President, I have seen nothing to induce me to believe that there is in any part of the country a serious wish to embark on the sea of revolution...The South are united in the determination to maintain their constitutional rights when they are invaded. In this they will be supported -- unless there is some great change of sentiment -- by the majority of the North, so that the danger can hardly become a reality...The leading politicians in that quarter are committed to agitation, some of them to resistance, and it is possible that there may be some rash overt act; but until the North give better cause for disunion than the election of Mr. Lincoln, I do not think that it will be seriously attempted.

Robert Love, writing for The Times on November 15, predicted victory for the Republicans and was roundly critical of the South. The Democrats were so used to winning, he wrote, that they couldn't accept defeat with good grace. Their calamity was not undeserved.

The South has had a long enjoyment of power, and has been tempted in many respects grievously to abuse it...Instead of sparing or even humouring the prejudices of their Northern brethren, the South has pushed the advantage which its long lease of power gave it to the utmost.

As to Lincoln, Love wrote,

The Republican party has selected a man remarkable for nothing we know of beyond a good character and
strong Anti-Slavery opinions. It does not follow, because Lincoln is elected by persons opposed to Slavery, that he will therefore lend himself to any attack on the property or peculiar domestic institutions of the South.

The Democrats threatening to secede, Love compared to "one of our own colonies threatening to declare itself independent. It is the threat of doing a great deal of mischief to themselves in order to do a very little mischief to us." (31)

One week later Davis's column from New York began, "As I write, the last rays of the setting sun are lingering on the cliffs of the Jersey shore of the North River, and there are as yet a few moments left for laggard voters before the great question of the Presidency is decided...All depends upon the vote of New York..."

"I believe that if the South is left to itself there will be no disunion...On the other hand the North is united...there is but one feeling as to the necessity of maintaining the Union at all hazards." (32)

The news of Lincoln's election had already been reported in The Times the day before this letter from Davis was printed. On the 21st, Love reiterated the views he had expressed in his leader of the 15th, warmly supporting Lincoln's election, and restating that the South would be foolish to secede.

When we read the speech of Mr. Lincoln on the subject of Slavery, and consider the extreme moderation of the sentiments it expresses...when we see how entirely he narrows his opposition to the single point of the admission of Slavery into the Territories, we cannot help being forcibly struck by the absurdity of breaking
up a vast and glorious confederacy like that of the United States from the dread and anger inspired by the election of such a man to the office of Chief Magistrate...

Nevertheless, The Times saw Lincoln’s election, as did the South, as a defeat for Slavery. “We are glad to think that the march of Slavery.../has/ been at length arrested and silenced.” (33)

But Lowe was wrong. The news of secession activity was to arrive just one week later, shattering the hopes of these reasonable men that a stop had finally been put to the spreading evil of Slavery.

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1. The Times, 19 April 1860, 8.
2. Times Archives, Morris Letterbooks, 10/102.
3. TA, Morris, 10/125.
5. The Times, 7 May 1860, 9; 12 May 1860, 12; 17 May 1860, 10; 22 May 1860, 12; 29 May 1860, 9; 18 June 1860, 11; 25 June 1860, 12; 4 July 1860, 4.
7. The Times, 8 August 1860, 12.
8. The Times, 8 August 1860, 8.

10. *The Times*, 1 September 1860, 12, and 3 September 1860, 10.


14. Ibid., 44.

15. Ibid., 45.

16. Ibid., 51, 52.


24. Ibid., 51.


27. *The Times*, 16 November 1860, 8.


29. *The Times*, 18 October 1860, 9. This was reported by Woods.
30. The Times, 6 November 1860, 9.
31. The Times, 15 November 1860, 6.
32. The Times, 20 November 1860, 7.
33. The Times, 21 November 1860, 8.
Chapter Five

Secession

When the news of actual moves to secede were received in Britain, Delane and his staff seem to have shaken their collective head in disbelief. Their man in New York had assured them that threats to secede were merely party rhetoric, and they had accepted his judgment, concurring as it did with their own assessment of what ought to be.

Chenery described his paper's views in a leader on the 26th of November. If the Southern states secede, he wrote, we will be proved wrong. For the present, the storm is raging throughout the southeastern states, with the Governor of Georgia behaving particularly extravagantly. But we think, he continued, the Carolinians and Georgians protest too much. Common sense will show them how absurd they are. The American papers discuss the prospects of the new republic, its wealth, material resources, ports, railways, and commercial system. The effect on the cotton trade especially would be most remarkable. But the South Carolinian scheme is not so much secession as nullification. They will push their states rights to the limit while remaining
within the union, Chenery predicted.

A strong-minded President like Jackson, whatever his sympathies, would probably not hesitate to crush the Carolinians by force. It is evident, indeed, on the smallest reflection, that the South, even if united, could never oppose for three months the greatly preponderating strength of the North. A few hundred thousand slave-owners, trembling nightly with visions of murder and pillage, backed by a dissolute population of "poor whites" are no match for the hardy and resolute populations of the Free States.

Concluding that he believed moderate counsels would prevail and that the North would not use force, Chenery offered the faint hope that the South was not united in its move to secede and that whole states were lukewarm in the cause. (1)

This important leader, The Times's first reaction to secession, highlighted a number of controlling ideas: first, that the South was led by extravagant hot-heads who lacked common sense; second, that Southern leaders would try to get all that they could get through these threats but would stay in the union; third, that a strong president would bring them into line; fourth, that the North was much stronger in population and in its economy and could quickly defeat a revolution in the South; and fifth, that the Southern people, composed as they were of less than admirable slave-owners, poor whites, and ignorant slaves, would be no match for the fine people who lived in the North.

Davis soon sent some comforting news from New York which was published two days later. In spite of the rash of sensationalist news reports about secession activity, he wrote, the facts belied
these stories. Virginia, Maryland, Delaware, Tennessee, Kentucky and Missouri had all given popular majorities against secession in special referenda on that question, and Arkansas, Louisiana and Florida had not taken any steps so far. Alabama's governor had been empowered to call a convention but had not yet done so. Georgia's governor had argued for retaliation against the North but not secession.

The danger, Davis wrote, was in South Carolina where the secessionists held all the reins of power. Nevertheless, the commercial interests in New York believed that the southern states would not secede. The majority of Southerners in New York were of the same view. With the authority of one who was well informed as regards the New York business community, Davis wrote, "The conservative doctrine at the South is to remain in the United States and protect Southern rights and property." (2)

Young Brodrick, who had just recently joined The Times's editorial staff, was now given the assignment of expressing his paper's disapproval of the South Carolinians. After an introduction which was exceedingly critical of the South for its blustering and rash threats, Brodrick cited a number of reasons why South Carolina should not secede. First, he pointed out that in case of a servile war, South Carolina would need help from the North. Second, he argued that since South Carolina exported seven times the value of its imports it would suffer serious reverses if it were excluded from the federal mercantile union. Third, he
sent South Carolina the warning that France and England would not retreat from their anti-slavery policy for the sake of the cotton trade. (3)

In a ringing defense of the federal union he wrote...

...the character and prestige of the several United States in the eyes of Europe depend on their federal union...Let there be no mistake as to English public opinion on this subject. If we have paid a sincere homage to the rising greatness of America, it has not been to that which the Southerners are so anxious to conserve, but to that which they are striving to destroy. All that is noble and venerable in the United States is associated with the Federal Constitution.

If South Carolina's blustering leads to bloodshed, he concluded, at least Lincoln commands the stronger party and "will not tamely acquiesce in its becoming the basis of an illegal and hostile Confederation." (4)

In two leaders written in the next week The Times hammered away at the folly of the secessionists. On the third of December, the leader-writer assailed Governor Brown of Georgia who had castigated Massachusetts for passing a law freeing slaves who reached free soil. The Northerners had brought the slaves to America in the first place, Brown declared, and had no right now to criticize the slave-owners. If they insisted on seizing property which belonged to the South, the South should deny all legal rights to Northerners. The Times writer pointed out that since in earlier days England had been just as heavily involved in the slave trade as Massachusetts, Georgia would have to war...
against England as well. He dismissed Brown with this verdict:
"The world will judge for itself what are the chances of a
federation in which Governor Brown shall be a leading spirit."
(5)

Thomas Mozley next wrote a long leader pleading for moderation
and understanding. Why is the South so violent? he asked, in
disbelief. Lincoln has committed himself as opposed to slavery
and will certainly do all he can to prevent the spread of slavery
to new states "but even this assumption...waits for proof." But
Southerners, he feared, felt themselves as living on a volcano,
terrified of a servile war. If this were so, one could
understand their excessive reaction. Yet reports say the slaves
are quiet. There is no prospect of a rising.

Nevertheless, describing the problem merely an emotional one
does not make it go away. All that can be done is to take a
moderate and rational view of the dispute. "We are a fair and
reasoning people," he wrote, but what is to be done? "We feel
for the slaves, but we feel also for the masters." And we are
aware of British culpability in the matter. "...what would New
York be without Slavery? But what, alas! would Liverpool and
Manchester? What this metropolis?" Mozley urged a cooling of
passions and mutual understanding. (6)

Unfortunately, his advice to South Carolina, along with that of
the rest of his colleagues at The Times, was already too late.
Less than two weeks later a letter from Davis announced that South Carolina was effectively out of the union. The whole South, Davis wrote, was to be invited by South Carolina to join a Confederacy to rest upon African Slavery and "to be supported by the foreign protection of England and France." Virginia had been disparaged by the South Carolinians as a "Northern Slave State" which put the Union above the rights and institutions of the South.

Davis reported that Alexander Stephens, an influential Georgian legislator, had tried to hold off secession by his state, arguing that the Union was the best government in the world, even better than England. "Let us not destroy it," Stephens had pleaded. Pointing out that power resided with the people, he had said the people must be called upon to decide this question. Only then, "...in the face of the civilized world, /may we/ justify our action, and, with the wrong all on the other side, we can appeal for the God of battles to aid us in our cause." Davis wrote of another Southerner, Senator Andrew Johnson from Tennessee, who also argued for preserving the Union "as it was intended to be by its founders." (7)

In spite of these occasional voices of reason coming from the South, Davis wrote,

The idea of a Southern Republic, with free trade (in negroes as well as in cotton), and direct trade with England, is captivating the masses who do not think of the confusion, destruction and expense of war.
Davis wrote a private letter to Delane at this time, describing the difficulty of obtaining accurate news on which to base predictions, and clearly expressing his opinion of the sanity of Southern "fire-eaters."

I do not know that I can add anything to what I have said in my letter upon the state of things down South. The Secessionists have got their day just now, and are using it to good purpose. You are a politician, and can judge just as well as we can here, whether they will win. We can tell you how that or the other public man stands -- what the advices are from this, that, or the other town from the men who usually lead public opinion -- but neither we nor they can tell you what is the relative strength of parties in Georgia today, or what it will be next January, and on that the whole question will turn. I am assured by everybody here except the Breckenridge politicians that the movement for immediate secession will be stopped on the borders of South Carolina. But I am assured with equal assurance by those politicians, who are in daily correspondence by telegraph and mail with the South, that the 8 planting States will unite and secede. I can only say that I don't believe that they will. So far as I know the views of the property holders, they are adverse to secession, and property in the end wins, even in a democracy.

Some of these men are crazy -- at least it is charitable to say so. As a sample of them I enclose a letter from Corbin of Paris, who is, you know, the mildest of men when himself. You see what a fire-eater he has become. Yet he fancies that he has written me the mildest of letters -- dovelike in fact, and would be quite astonished if I were to take offence...

On the same day that Davis's public letter was published in The Times, Chenery penned an important leader for his paper. South Carolina, he wrote, which considers itself the intellectual
leader of the pro-slavery South, is determined to secede. President Buchanan, still occupying the presidency until Lincoln's inauguration in March of 1861, can do nothing about it.

The election of Lincoln, however, was not the reason for South Carolina's secession. There is a "school of Charleston politicians who have for some time been prepared for such a contingency, and are now using it to further schemes on which they have for some time meditated." They imagine great things will come to them if they are at the head of a great Southern confederation. Their tactics are what caused Governor Seward to refer to the "irrepressible conflict" destined to take place. Like the American colonists who led the rebellion against Great Britain in the 18th century, Chenery said, these southern politicians flew into a passion over every grievance, imagined and otherwise.

Success now depended on whether they could convince other states to join them, he continued. In the opinion of The Times, these policies were dead wrong.

The course of this journal on American questions has been such that the people of the United States will believe us when we express our deep regret at their present difficulties, and our hope that their Union will long survive as a security for political liberty and commercial enterprise in the New World. Without sharing the opinions, much less using the language, of the Abolitionists with respect to Slavery, which, bad though it may be, must remain for many years an institution of the United States, we look upon the conduct of South Carolina...as disgraceful.
In only one way could The Times support what they were doing, and that was on the question of free trade. "The Protectionist legislation of the United States is a disgrace to so enterprising and intellectual a country," Chenery wrote. (10)

This was an important addition of Chenery's. While continuing to excoriate the South for its intemperate behavior and condemning it for its insistence on demanding recognition of the sacredness of private property in human beings, The Times, through free trade, had discovered and enunciated the first way in which it could support the South.

A week later Bancroft Davis sent The Times the full text of President Buchanan's message to the United States Congress which had convened on December 4. Those who hoped Buchanan would find a way to conciliate both North and South on the slavery question were disappointed, for Buchanan's advice continued to favour the South. He called for constitutional amendments which would do three things: permit slave-owners to take their slaves into the territories; support the Fugitive Slave Law and nullify any state laws which contradicted or attempted to circumvent the federal law; and expressly recognize the right of property in slaves in states where it now existed. These amendments were necessary according to Buchanan because the North had threatened the South, which was morally in the right.

On the question of secession Buchanan said the South had no
legal right to secede. On the other hand, he claimed that he, as President, could not force them to remain a part of the union.

Chenery, writing for *The Times*, exploded with impatience at Buchanan's message. It was, he declared, "ambiguous and an evasion of responsibility." Comparing Buchanan to Jackson, as he had in an earlier leader, Chenery pointed out that Jackson had brought the Southern nullifiers to heel by threatening federal force. By eschewing this course, Buchanan was perhaps trying to avoid prejudicing Lincoln's actions. But he was also demonstrating, once again, the weakness of the Federal executive and its fear of public opinion.

The President knows that he can do nothing, that public opinion would not tolerate the invasion and conquest of the Southern States and the holding of them as conquered provinces, and therefore he declares the Federal Government has no such right of coercion...In fact the opinions of the President amount to this; -- that no Federal obligation whatever can be enforced on any recusant State.

(11)

The next day a similar leader concluded with this judgment, an opinion Delane and Lowe had held even before the current crisis: "If Mr. Buchanan's view be correct, his government is the most unstable in the world..." (12)

The penultimate valedictory on these events of 1860 appeared in *The Times* the day before Christmas and was written by Robert Lowe. Expounding on the wisdom of the federal constitution,
especially the check of the federal system and most particularly the Senate on "mere democracy," Lowe wrote that the American Constitution provided better government to the States than if the States were independent. He compared the absence of customs barriers between states in America to the situation in Australia where the reverse was true, and wrote, "Happy America, if she knew her own blessings."

"Statesmen" in America, he claimed, openly or secretly favoured Union. But control had passed from them to...

...vulgar demagogues and furious bar-room politicians...In England, a statesman must follow public opinion, but in America public opinion comes from a lower class...and is less patient, because less accustomed to opposition, than in England.

Those in the South who opposed disunion were trying to delay until Lincoln became president, Lowe stated. But their opponents argued that it was better to push while Buchanan, who was pro-South, was still President. Southerners were now thinking more and more of the advantage to themselves of seceding and attracting commerce to themselves. What a pity! Lowe wrote.

...it is possible that the problem of a Democratic Republic may be solved by the overthrow in a few short days of a Constitution which the greatest human wisdom was hardly sufficient to frame, but which an ordinary amount of folly, selfishness and short-sightedness seems perfectly adequate to destroy.

Lowe had attributed Southern secession moves to a commercial
motive in this leader. This restated a judgment of Davis’s, expressed in a letter from New York which appeared in The Times the same day. Reporting that the secession of South Carolina would most certainly be accompanied by Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi and Florida, with Texas, Louisiana and Arkansas to be forced by the hard core slave states to follow suit, Davis claimed that this was not just an anti-Republican movement. "On the contrary, it is quite as much a commercial as a political step." The new Southern confederation proposed to pay for its expenses with an export duty on cotton, plus, very sub rosa, a reopening of the slave trade to cheapen labour. Ominously, the South Carolina legislature had already passed a bill providing for armed forces and calling for ten thousand volunteers.

Nevertheless Davis believed that "If...any part /of the South/ is to go, I think myself it will go peaceably...If there is to be a separation it will not necessarily involve anarchy here..."

The financial markets, however, were not in agreement. A panic had already started, and there had been a steady depreciation of all securities. This was hardly the news that British investors wanted to read on Christmas Day. (14)

At about the same time, Delane must have received this letter, written by William Henry Hulbert in New York on the 11th of December.

Public feeling is proving decidedly dangerous here. Leading republicans like /Moses Grinell/ and Thurlov
Weed are becoming fairly frightened into Democrats, but
the republicans...and the sports men...are madly bent
on mischief. They talk so wildly indeed that you need
be surprised at nothing from a sudden break up of
Congress in violence to mob law in New York City where
the suffering of the unemployed poor are growing
terrible....I should be very glad to see a more calm
and far-seeing appreciation of this crisis of ours in
your press. It is impossible to tell you how much good
or harm you may help to do, for in sober truth the
peace of thirty millions of Americans, and the daily
bread of five millions of British working people depend
on the events of the next few weeks...

(15)

There was little time left in the year 1860 for The Times to
exercise that benign influence Mr. Huibert called for, but it did
its best in the lengthy review of important events and
developments it provided its readers on the last day of each
year. This very comprehensive report was written during the
years 1857 to 1882 by George Venables, a distinguished political
commentator who also wrote for the Saturday Review. Of events in
America, Mr. Venables had these things to say for The Times.

The consequences which have immediately followed the
election of a Republican President have probably taken
the South as well as the North by surprise. Loud
threats of secession had been so habitually used that
they were generally classed among the exaggerations of
American party warfare.

South Carolina had "practically thrown off the Federal
authority" and remaining Cotton States seemed about to adopt a
similar course.

The election of Mr. Lincoln is in itself only an
imaginary or symbolic grievance. The president has no
initiative in Federal legislation, nor is it in his
power to interfere with local rights of property.
The points of dispute were the right of possessing slaves in the Territories, and "the unconstitutional acts by which some free States have rendered the Fugitive Slave Law inoperative."

Both questions were for the Supreme Court, which had uniformly decided for the slave-owners. The President could not influence the court except by appointment.

A reconciliation seems hopeless if the Union is only to be preserved on the conditions suggested by Mr. Buchanan in his Presidential Message...it is absurd to expect that the Republicans will turn their victory into a defeat by acknowledging the abstract right of property in slaves or by allowing Slavery in the Territories.

Secession would only make matters worse for the South for the states there would no longer have any influence in the North, every free State would become an asylum for fugitive slaves, and the South would only get part of the Territories which climate and situation dictate.

The pride of belonging to a great nation, the habit of union, and the convenience of unrestricted intercourse, will probably induce the Slave States to devise some attainable compromise, if only time is given for negotiation and reflection. The feelings, and perhaps the interest of England, are on the side of continued union. The free commerce which might be opened at Charleston or New Orleans would fail to produce cordial relations with a Confederacy which would be pledged to promote the indefinite extension of Slavery, even if it were not tempted to revive the Slave Trade.
In these measured tones, The Times gave notice to the South that it supported the Union, was critical of the South's intemperate reaction to Lincoln's election, rejected the South's tempting offers of bilateral trade with Great Britain, and held fast in denouncing Slavery. As the year 1860 came to a close, The Times's editors continued to plead for reconciliation and peace in America.

1. The Times, 26 November 1860, 10.
2. The Times, 28 November 1860, 10.
3. The term "servile war" was used at this time to describe an uprising of the slaves against their masters.
4. The Times, 29 November 1860, 8.
5. The Times, 3 December 1860, 6. Leader writer unknown.
6. The Times, 5 December 1860, 6.
7. While Davis's intentions were to illustrate that there were at least two influential men in the South who were opposed to secession, Stephens, at least, may have had other things in mind, viz., to lay the groundwork for a moral defense of the Southern cause. Significantly, Stephens became Vice-President of the Confederate States of America. Johnson continued to be one of the few Southern leaders who publicly supported the Union through thick and thin, and became Lincoln's running mate four years later. He succeeded to the presidency when Lincoln was assassinated.
8. The Times, 11 December 1860, 6. This letter occupied three columns, a record for news from America.
12. The Times, 20 December 1860, 8.
15. TA, Delane, Volume 10/61. Hulbert was on the staff of the New York Times.
Chapter Six

First Reactions: The Times Looks for a Position

On the morning of January 1 of the new year 1861, a wealthy Times reader could open his paper to the Money Market column and read these encouraging words:

...secure in our home position, we turn to estimate our external prospects. First as regards the United States. The conflict going on there can, after the first confusion shall have subsided, have no injurious influence on commerce. If, as few in this country are disposed to anticipate, a dissolution of the Union should take place in March, it may be expected to include among its results the opening of the ports of all the Southern States to free trade, a step which the North would infallibly soon find itself compelled to imitate.

On the other hand, compromise to preserve the Union would result in a lowering of the general tariff...

Thus, on the whole, there has never been a date at which a more happy view of our position could be taken. But its full realization depends upon peace...

(1)

In Washington, the picture was a stark contrast to this rosy view, as statesmen from both regions desperately attempted to reach some compromise which would stem the tide of secession. William S. Thayer, a prominent New York Republican, wrote to
Bancroft Davis from Washington holding out little hope.

It looks as if secession of the United South was more certain than before...The Committees on the Crisis have got about to the end of their rope. They see where they cannot agree...

Bancroft Davis must have written a despairing private letter to Mowbray Morris at about this time, for towards the end of the month, Morris sent this reply in which he revealed his impatience and outrage at events in America:

I am sorry you are sick, but not surprised. Every decent man in America must, I think, be sick and sorry to see what is going on around him. Your republic, like every republic that has ever existed, is breaking up and falling to pieces under the influence of its internal and self-created corruption. If one could discard one's natural sympathies, and shut out from contemplation the misery and ruin that threaten your country, one might rejoice at this spectacle of the weakness and folly of mob government, and look forward to a better time when station and intelligence shall have their proper place in council and in society. You must excuse me for indulging in this homily. My indignation, sufficiently strong from the first, has been carried beyond measure by the President's message to the Senate which appear in this day's paper. A more cowardly, illogical and dishonest document never appeared with the name of any man calling himself a statesman. The only parallel is Pontius Pilate -- washing his hands of the affair and leaving both action and responsibility to whoever chose to take them. Conceive a man, with almost unlimited powers (for your President is a Dictator with far greater power than a constitutional sovereign) sitting down with his hands before him in the hour of his country's agony, and saying "it is not my business." He ought to be whip't down the steps of the great house at Washington.
Morris's private letter and a leader of Chenery's which had appeared in The Times two weeks earlier revealed a unanimity of opinion at Printing House Square about President Buchanan. Chenery characterized Buchanan's message to Congress, reported earlier, as a greater blow to America than the ranting of Georgia's Governor Brown. Chenery still had hopes for compromise, however.

The President, it is whispered, is in favour of compromise; Governor Seward is in favour of compromise...now that the loss of Southern wealth threatens them, great numbers of the stanchest Anti-Slavery men are in favour of compromise...this we may conclude -- that the North will not be too rigid, and that the slaveowners will receive what all but the most rabid of them will consider satisfaction...

At the very least it was hoped that secession might be allowed to take place peaceably. The next day The Times applauded its Prime Minister, Lord Palmerston, on his comments on America in a speech he had given in Southampton. The Times said it sincerely echoed the hope that the Prime Minister expressed that

...if disruption there must be, it may be free from the horrors of a fratricidal war, and that in ceasing to be fellow-citizens, the North and the South may not cease to be friends.

Privately, the venerable Palmerston, who had learned from a lifetime of experience in foreign affairs not to jump to conclusions prematurely, expressed some scepticism about the
inevitability of war in a letter to Delane written the same day.

Our American friends seem as bent upon a Row, as two Factions at an Irish Fair; but there is always some Difference between Sayings and Doings.

As the month progressed, with fresh news of the rising conflict arriving almost every day, Delane and his staff began to orient themselves to the reality of a future divided America, with or without war. As the amount of American news increased, so did the number of leaders devoted to American affairs. In the month of January 1861, The Times devoted fifteen leaders to America, if allied topics such as shipping and the problem of cotton supply are included.

Woodham now joined the group of leader writers who were asked to write on American themes and he produced five, possibly six leaders from his Cambridge retreat. He is listed in the leader diary as having written three times on the American Navy, (7), but, in fact, wrote on the American Army on the 2nd, was perhaps the author of a leader on the 4th describing slavery as the forgotten element in the American conflict, and finally produced the required inquiry into the American Navy on the 11th, although he confined himself to discussing in this leader the advisability of building "ironclads."

On the same day that his Navy leader was published, news appeared in the paper announcing that the Northern Army had
abandoned Fort Moultrie in the Charleston Harbour. Major Anderson of the U.S. Army had moved his garrison from that fort to the stronger fortification at Fort Sumter.

Woodham wrote another leader on the 22nd in which he commented on an article from the Economist which had been reprinted in its entirety in The Times on the 21st. This article and Woodham’s reaction to it will be described more fully later.

On the 28th Woodham wrote a leader on the recently published population figures in the United States. Instead of focussing on the disparity of size between North and South revealed by those figures, he called attention to the fact that the territories in the West were still relatively empty, that the conflict between North and South had sprung up over which region was to be allowed to exploit the enormous potential of the territories, and that the North was right in having taken the stand that slavery must not be allowed to spread to these virgin lands. (8)

Woodham’s leaders reveal his relative isolation from Printing House Square, and the independent viewpoint from which he approached his assignments. As mentioned earlier, Delane’s practice was to send Woodham a "parcel" in the very early morning by train, containing suggestions for a leader which Woodham was to finish and put on the 4.30 train from Cambridge. Woodham had a tendency to put his own comforts first, sending in his articles occasionally in his own good time. But he was a reliable work
horse, as his numerous leaders for January demonstrated. (9)

The three leaders which were written by Robert Lowe demonstrated his superior grasp of American affairs, his well-documented disdain for democracy and his penchant for speaking forcefully. In his first leader in January, he unequivocally characterized the North as being for freedom and the South for slavery. Moreover he blamed the South for its inability to accept any check to its ambitions. Disdainfully, he wrote,

With a majority in both Houses of Congress and in the Supreme Court of the United States, the South cannot submit to a President who is not their devoted servant. (10)

In his leader on the 26th, by which time the secession of South Carolina was established and other states seemed ready to follow, Lowe analyzed the American political system and found that its flaws had produced the current crisis. He argued that elections every four years, coupled with America’s lack of tradition and loyalty to carry the country over these periodic upheavals had produced a situation which magnified the conflicts which the representative system was supposed to solve. Moreover the “encroaching spirit of democracy” in America had wrecked the electoral college system which had been purposely devised by America’s founding fathers to intervene between the voters and candidates to avoid temporary popular passions. (11)
In this same leader, Lowe called attention to the inter-regnum which occurred between the election of a new president and his actual installation in office, a period which Lowe described as "a species of twilight." Lowe explained to his readers that at this time, Lincoln, although the choice of the majority, was powerless to act, while Buchanan, the incumbent, could act, but in fact had completely missed his opportunity. It was this failure which had so infuriated the editors at Printing House Square.

If, instead of flattering and encouraging rebellion, Mr. Buchanan had acted up to his recent declaration that it is his duty to execute the laws, it is very possible that the fire might have been trampled out before it had time to spread. A small naval force in Charleston harbour and in the Mississippi, coupled with a resolute declaration of the only line of policy which is open to a President of the United States worthy of his position...would probably have rendered any further appeal to force unnecessary.

Lowe was just as impatient with Governor Seward, whose long-awaited speech had been analyzed by Bancroft Davis in his letter from New York published on the 29th. Lowe wrote that same day,

...we confess we do not see much to admire. We have waded through his long speech, read how marvelous the form of government and benefits of the Union, but when Seward discusses how this union is to be preserved, we find nothing. All Seward says is that disunion is "impossible." For the present he is willing to repeal Personal Liberty Acts.../and/...consent to a Constitutional Convention in two or three years time...This is all that the official adviser of the incoming president can suggest as a remedy for dangers so urgent and so threatening.../If Seward/ is to be accepted as a type of the would-be saviors of his country, the Union is not likely to be saved...
Chenery continued to write on familiar *Times* themes. In addition to his above-mentioned leader of the 9th devoted to Buchanan's bungling, Chenery told *Times* readers again what a dissolute lot lived in the South.

...the mass of the people in the Southern States are in a state of deplorable ignorance...the enlightenment which exists in New England gradually fades as the traveller moves southward, till in South Carolinas and Alabama the class which governs is really hardly more instructed than the Irish peasantry. These men are not the great Slaveowners, but the poor, proud, lazy, excitable and violent class, ever ready with the knife and revolver, and hating the Negro and his Northern friends with equal hatred.

He concluded his analysis of the roots of the violent upheaval in the South with these judgments:

The richer citizens did not approve, but could not stem the movement...The regular politicians thought it wiser to go with the stream.

Related news and articles on American topics crowded the pages of *The Times* in January. On the 4th, the paper published a four column "History of Slavery in the United States" which had been sent by Bancroft Davis. A leader the same day, perhaps written by Woodham, took the line that in the current confusion the issue of slavery seemed to have been overlooked. Negotiations, he wrote, were now proceeding on the assumption that both North and South had arguments of equal value. "We dispute the fact," *The Times*
said flatly. (14)

On the 5th of January a trade report appeared describing the enormous quantities of cotton which had been shipped to Great Britain during the previous year. From America had come 3,366,626 bales in 1860, the largest amount on record, and six times the figure for 1859. Woodham was given the assignment of writing a leader calling on the nation to diversify its sources of cotton supply. This was published on the 16th. "Invest the capital, organize the trade, invite the Chinese labourers," Woodham urged. ".../Why/ not extend a hand to the struggling Negro /already in Africa/?" he asked. (15)

Six months earlier The Times had issued a warning that Britain should start preparing for an interruption of whatever kind in the cotton supply, but apparently its words had been uttered to no avail. Now that actual disruption stared the merchants in the face, they were beginning to listen. Early in the month, a Letter to the Editor from T. N. Mackay in Liverpool urged the Manchester Cotton Growing Association to turn its attention to encouraging cotton cultivation in Queensland. In order to make this possible, he suggested that a covenant legalizing emigration be added to the treaty then being negotiated with China.

...the cost of bringing coolies from China to Moreton Bay or Port Curtis would only be a few pounds a head during the favourable monsoon...with the countless millions of Chinese ready to work for a small wage it would be a madness to think of any other class of labour...
Two weeks later there was a report of a meeting of provisional directors of a cotton company who proposed selling shares in a new company which would promote the cultivation of cotton in India, Australia, Africa or other nations. (17)

As January drew to a close, The Times continued its campaign to promote alternative cotton supply based on free labour by carrying the text of a speech given by Mr. Buxton, M.P., to a Working Men's Institute on "The United States and the Cotton Supply." Arguing the case for free trade, Mr. Buxton affirmed that in the long run the prosperity of the world would benefit from a disruption of the American supply, for production of cotton by free labour would be stimulated in other portions of the globe. (18)

News items in The Times now demonstrated that the shipowners of Great Britain were becoming worried. Whereas the trade report early in the month had shown England to be in a well-nigh impregnable position, (19) by the end of January it was reported that a deputation of shipping interests had gone to see the foreign minister, Lord Russell, asking him to secure for British shipping firms the same rights in foreign ports that non-British ships received in British ports. (20)

Arguably the most significant insertion in the pages of The Times in January was a reprint of a long article taken from The Economist entitled "The Disruption of the Union, as It would
Affect England." It was not unusual for The Times to quote from other sources. It routinely carried interesting leaders from British and American newspapers. In each of these cases it may be assumed that the article or leader was reprinted because it was thought to be an important addition to any debate which was then filling the pages of The Times. By the end of January of 1861, a number of unsettling questions had been raised. First, what was Britain to do if the cotton supply were to be disrupted? Second, what relations should Britain establish with the warring parties, if war occurred? Third, how could Britain protect its maritime commerce in such an event? Fourth, what might its relations be should a new nation state or two emerge on the American continent? As the responsible leader of British opinion which The Times considered itself to be, The Times reprinted The Economist article to contribute to the discussion of these questions.

The writer of The Economist article refrained from the usual rhetoric and took a hard look at events in America, realistically analyzing what Britain should do on a case by case basis.

He began with the assumption that events would continue as they had been, that secession would go forth, other slave states would join South Carolina, and the group would become an independent nation.

"Will England recognize the independence and sovereignty of the
"new state?" he asked, and replied, "The natural and spontaneous answer is, of course, in the affirmative.../we/...enter into amicable relations with all de facto States."

What about previous contractual relations with the United States? Will these apply to the South as well? he asked. Will the South consider themselves bound by engagements to abstain from and suppress the slave trade? Probably not, he speculated.

The next question then would become: Shall we recognize the Southern Confederate States without requiring as a condition that they renew and observe anti-Slavery treaties? Probably they will refuse, the writer answered. Then what shall we do?

He offered four alternatives and answered each one:

We could recognize independence at once, then try to get adherence to previous treaties on the best terms possible. This would be nearly equivalent to unconditional surrender.

We could not recognize, and abstain from all diplomatic intercourse with the Southern Confederation unless they consent to abstain from and prohibit the slave trade. This would probably not bring them to terms as it would not prevent commercial intercourse and would at most create inconvenience as much to us as to them.

We could ignore the separation, and continue to regard the Southern Confederation as part of the United States, and either
forward complaints, which would be ignored, or act "in a high-handed way" and treat anyone we caught as pirates. This option was dismissed.

We could reach a cordial agreement between ourselves and the Northern Federation to prevent the renewal of slave traffic at all hazards and by all means. It is possible that we could attain this, but we still must work within the international framework of consent.

At this point the author came to the comfortable conclusion that, apart from the effect which the creation of a Southern Confederation would have on the Slave Trade, a situation which could be handled in a variety of effective ways,

...we see no reason /why/ a severance of the Union, once effected peaceably...will be in anyway injurious to Great Britain.

On the contrary, he went on, it might very well have a good effect, especially in that

...we may expect that America will be somewhat less aggressive, less insolent, and less irritable than she has been.

No longer will she display a united front to the rest of the world. She will be more concerned with her neighbor than in picking fights with the rest of the world. She will be less prosperous. This will humble her. North and South will check each other's expansionist tendencies, and Europe will not have to do this any more. The North will be easier to deal with without
the embarassment of upholding slavery.

The more they civilize (they must pardon us the word
for assuredly they are getting rid of a barbarizing
element) the more friendly and cordial shall we
inevitably grow.

Now the writer turned to the effects of a war, probably
followed by a slave insurrection, both of which would disrupt
cotton growth.

This catastrophe would be so terrible, its
accompaniments so shocking, and its results everywhere
and in every way so deplorable, that we must earnestly
pray it be averted; but the danger of it...is so
obvious...it would be...folly to shut our eyes to so
possible a contingency.

It was not easy to overestimate the effect, he continued.
Cotton manufacture constituted the employment and furnished the
sustenance of the largest portion of the population of
Lancashire, North Cheshire and Lanarkshire, of a considerable
number in Derbyshire, Leicestershire, Nottinghamshire and
Yorkshire, and of scattered individuals in several other parts of
England, Scotland and Ireland. The actual number employed in this
industry in 1854 had been 500,000. There were certainly more
now. If one took into account subsidiary trades, and added
families, "we may safely assume that nearer 4,000,000 than
3,000,000 are dependent for their daily bread on /cotton/.
America took one-third of Britain's manufactured cotton goods,
and furnished 77% of the supply. Alternate sources could provide
at most one-third of the present supply.
The result would be that British mills would have to work half-time. Profits would depend on the fluctuation in price of both finished goods and supply. There would be an additional enormous influence on shipping.

The effects on commerce would be somewhat mitigated, however, because cotton production elsewhere would be stimulated. In addition, the higher price of cotton would encourage manufacturers to produce finer fabrics. Cheaper fabrics would become more expensive and would be superseded by linens and woolens. This would absorb some of the out-of-work cotton operatives.

As to trade with the North, the writer foresaw no change in case of war, although he predicted that the Northern States would raise tariffs as the South lowered theirs.

He was confident that "we shall...receive from the planting States all the cotton that we wish to buy and that they have to sell." If the North raised tariffs, "we shall send more manufactures to New Orleans, and less to New York..." (21)

With these final words, the writer of The Economist article echoed almost exactly the judgment of the Money Market article which The Times had run on the first of January. In this respect little that was new had been added by the inclusion of this article in the daily fare offered by The Times to its readers.
In two other important ways, however, the article offered a departure from the position expressed heretofore by The Times in its leaders. First, it was stated openly that a break-up of the American Union might bring positive benefits to Britain. Secondly, the question of recognition of a new country in America was discussed.

Woodham considered neither of these things in his comment on the Economist article the next day. His leader was titled "The Dis-united States" in the leader diary, and the editorial began with the words,

The American Revolution is advancing with rapid strides to a consummation...We look upon this prospect with unaffected horror...We deplore the political catastrophe, but our first thoughts must necessarily be given to its commercial effects.

Woodham then focussed exclusively on the economic repercussions of an American disunion and confined even that discussion to the question of an interruption in the cotton supply. He concluded his leader with an exhortation to get to work and start growing cotton elsewhere. (22)

Four days later the paper carried a report of a speech given by Montague Bernard, M.A., Chichele Professor of International Law and Diplomacy at Oxford, on "The Principle of Non-Intervention." Professor Bernard concerned himself almost exclusively with the question of intervention in Sardinia in connection with Italian unification, saying that though intervention was contrary to
international law, perhaps in Sardinia's case, the end justified the means, since the results were good. There was no mention or application of the question to the emerging Southern confederation, but the debate was on. (23)

By the end of January 1861, therefore, The Times had declared itself again on the side of freedom and against slavery, had condemned the American political system for its inherent weaknesses which had allowed this crisis to escalate, perhaps beyond repair, had disparaged the fire-eaters and ignorant masses of the South, had begun to express true alarm at the possible economic consequences of secession, had taken a first look at the question of recognition of a Southern Confederacy, and had placed for the first time before the public, but only through the mouthpiece of a quoted article, the notion of how delightful it would be if the fractious republic across the water, which had been the source of so much irritation to the British, were indeed to be dismembered.

The dissolution of the American Union was well on its way to being an established fact by that time. On the 29th of January Davis's letter from New York read ominously:

The Planting States are irretrievably gone, seduced by the hope of direct trade with Europe and commercial greatness at home.

The Border States, he wrote, did not have the same temptation, but did have an identity of interest in the possession of slaves
and a common hatred of Abolitionists. Davis predicted that Delaware and Maryland would not secede, but he thought Kentucky, Tennessee and Virginia would. Missouri was doubtful. Davis further wrote that Seward's proposals were "not...satisfactory to the Border States, and...there is great reason to apprehend a complete separation...followed by a collision." If the Border States went to the South, he predicted war. (24)

It is some measure of Davis's political wisdom that he proved to be substantially correct in his predictions. The country divided as he said it would, and war was not far away. (25)

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1. The Times, 1 January 1861, 5.


4. The Times, 9 January 1861, 8.

5. The Times, 10 January 1861, 6.

6. Times Archives, Delane Letterbooks, 10/77, 11 January 1861, from Broadlands.

7. 2, 4, and 11 January 1861.

8. The Times, 2 January 1861, 8-9; 4 January 1861, 6; 11 January 1861, 8; 28 January 1861, 6.


10. The Times, 7 January 1861, 6.
11. The Times, 26 January 1861, 8.
12. The Times, 29 January 1861, 8.
13. The Times, 12 January 1861, 6, 7.
14. The Times, 4 January 1861, 6, 7.
15. The Times, 16 January 1861, 8, 9.
17. The Times, 23 January 1861, 6.
18. The Times, 30 January 1861, 6.
19. "During the past year English shipping has fully maintained its position with the vessels of other countries...it appears that we have in our foreign trade much more tonnage employed than all the other nations combined, and that there is no prospect, after ten year's experience, of foreign competition seriously injuring our shipowners, much less supplanting them. The Times, 5 January 1861, 7.
20. The Times, 28 January 1861, 3. It is interesting to note that on the 30th of January, a despatch from the Foreign Office to Lord Lyons referring to Mr. Lindsay's return from the United States and the feelings of the Government and the commercial community re certain questions of maritime interest, suggested that it was not now a propitious time to consider the draft of a convention at the present session of Congress, but that "trusting that the state of affairs in America may shortly be so materially improved as to offer an opportunity for bringing forward the subject shortly after the inauguration of the new President..." Lord Lyons should keep this in mind and instruct Lord Russell at the first opportunity for treating of this with the new American cabinet. PRO London, Foreign Office 113, Volume 238, Despatch No. 25, 30 January 30 1861.
24. The Times, 29 January 1861, 12.
25. Delaware and Maryland did not secede, Virginia went with the South, except for its mountainous areas which remained "loyal" and ultimately became West Virginia. Tennessee joined the Confederacy, Kentucky, split equally between slave and free, refused Lincoln's call for volunteers and attempted at first to
Chapter Seven

Russell Goes to America as The Times Begins to Shift Ground

While the pace of The Times's editorial comment on American affairs slowed a bit in February 1861, behind the scenes activity increased. Alerted now to the very real danger of war in America, Delane sent a note to the man who had served him so well as foreign correspondent during the Crimean War and who, in doing so, had turned a temporary occupation into a profession. William Howard Russell, chronicler of the battles of Balaclava and Inkerman, now editor of the Army and Navy Gazette, was asked to go to the field for The Times once more. Like the old war horse he was, Russell revealed his excitement at getting the assignment in his diary entry for February 8. It read simply: "Delane's letter!" Three days later he saw Delane for an "important conference." In less than a fortnight, the necessary arrangements to leave London and go to America were being made.

(1)

Earlier in the previous year Russell had been disappointed when another reporter, Timothy Boviby, had been chosen to replace George Wingrove Cooke as correspondent with Lord Elgin's mission
to China. (2) Since the unfortunate Bowly had fallen prisoner to the Chinese and been tortured to death in December 1860, Russell, by this time, was no doubt grateful that he had missed that chance.

Russell was no stranger to hardship and danger, having endured privations and narrowly escaped death several times on his previous assignments to the Crimea and India. It would be a mistake to believe, however, that he had no worries for his life, as his lengthy diary insertion for 28 February made clear. He had gone that day to Printing House Square to make his final arrangements to go to America, receive an advance of 100 pounds from Morris, and say his farewells. When he saw Delane,

/Delane/ was very kind and sympathetic -- Most important of all. He solemnly impressed on me the necessity of not incurring any danger whatever. If you have the smallest reason to suppose that you will be exposed to any outrage or annoyance let nothing induce you to remain. Come back at once. Do not hesitate. Do not mind the result. I will take care that you are held secure and that you shall not suffer and you may depend on it...We have had quite enough already on our hands (alluding to poor Bowly) without any such addition to it as your danger would make.

(3)

Russell's cheerful, gregarious exterior belied his many worries. His wife was not well and had just recently given birth to their fifth child. The expense of his wife's many illnesses, coupled undoubtedly with his love for club life, kept him continually in debt. An additional problem was that going to
America meant he would have to obtain a leave of absence from his regular job with the *Army and Navy Gazette*. Although he was personally convinced that this was a great opportunity, and that the *Gazette* could get along without him for the short time he expected to be in America, he still had to face his employers, Bradbury and Evans. He promised them in an interview on the 18th that he would write a book for them, and assigned two insurance policies to them in exchange for a large loan. He also made arrangements with Routledge to publish his American letters, and for this he received an advance of three hundred pounds. From *The Times* he was to receive a generous twelve hundred pounds a year, plus all expenses. His debts were so large, though, that he wrote, "My salary is swallowed up, and it is a 'lucky' sort of intervention to have this American trip." (4)

Before he left England, Russell was invited to visit Morris at his country home at Ascot, there to meet John Henry Dillon, an acquaintance of Morris's who Russell described in his diary as "a determined pro slavery and South man." (5) Russell wrote thirty-five years later that Dillon

> astounded me by arguments to prove that the authors of the Union had provided for its disintegration by the machinery of States Rights; and, finally, he confided to me, as a precious arsenal containing arms for the destruction of Abolitionists and Republicans, an immense volume of articles, neatly pasted in order, from the New York *Herald*. (6)
By the first of March Russell was on his way to America. During the ocean passage he read "Olmstead's book on Slavery" (7) and "Dillon's extract from N.Y. Herald." He wrote that it was clear to me that South looks forward to career of conquest in Southern part of Continent and Mexico and Cuba. South courts war, relying perhaps on supposed recognition of France and England to help.

Meanwhile Morris had written to Bancroft Davis informing him of Russell's imminent arrival. In a long, diplomatic letter he explained The Times' motivation for sending Russell:

Mr. Russell, whom you know by name as our correspondent in the Crimea and subsequently in India, has been commissioned by us to make a tour in the United States to report upon the present state of affairs... My object in giving you this early notice of his projected visit is to explain briefly our intention in sending him. In the first place I hope you will not suppose that he is to supplant or supersede you and on the contrary his instructions are to assist and supplement your correspondence. We think that in a crisis like that which you are suffering in America, it is impossible for any one to give such particular information as we require without moving from place and place, and I know that your private concerns do not admit of your absenting yourself for any length of time from New York. We also think it desirable to receive the impressions of a foreigner who has not been mixed up with your American politics and whose sympathies are not engaged in the struggle now going on...

Many years later Russell wrote in his Recollections that he had been sent to the United States because The letters of Mr. Bancroft Davis, The Times' correspondent at New York, were not in accord with the...
views of Printing House Square. He was an uncompromising Abolitionist; his correspondence was in direct antagonism to The Times' leaders.

(10)

It is possible that Delane said something of this sort to Russell before he left, although there is nothing in the record to indicate that this was so. It seems more likely that The Times was doing just what Morris had written Davis in the above-mentioned letter, that is, sending a correspondent to America who could move about as events dictated. Moreover, if there was to be war, Russell had the kind of experience in military situations to make the informed assessments that Delane knew his readers would want. Finally, The Times leadership could count on Russell to view events from a British point of view, something they knew would be difficult for Davis.

At a later date, The Times and Davis did part company, as will be shown in a succeeding chapter. The differences in point of view which led to this breach were not yet in evidence, however, in February 1861. The Times still supported the North and roundly condemned the South for its rash and intemperate behavior. There was still hope that good sense would prevail and that the disintegration of the United States would take place peacefully, although clearly, Russell was being sent in case that did not happen. The Times, in fact, had not yet found its position, for the situation was still too fluid. Russell, in hindsight, just skipped a few months in his recollecting.
A similar situation which occurred later may be cited to support this view. During the Schleswig-Holstein War in 1864, The Times sent the veteran correspondent Antonio Gallenga to cover the Danish side of the question, while relying on Frederick Hardman, their regular correspondent in Berlin to speak for the Prussians. As Morris wrote to Hardman at that time:

I cannot altogether gainsay what you urge on the German side of this Schleswig-Holstein question...for my sympathies are with the Dane...So I have sent our friend /Gallenga/ to Copenhagen, expressly to hear the other side.

In any case, Morris's reasons for The Times's sending Russell to America during this crisis must have seemed perfectly reasonable to Davis, for The Times had done exactly the same thing when it had sent Woods to cover the Prince of Wales's visit the year before.

Davis met Russell the day after his arrival in New York, arranging for him to do some sight-seeing in the city. That evening, Russell, the irrepressible Irishman, made the mistake of giving an impromptu speech at a St. Patrick's Day banquet, to his own chagrin the next day. "I am much affected by reading my speech in the papers. Oh Lord Why did I do it?" he wrote on the 19th in his diary. His masters in London were not pleased either, as Morris made clear in a letter he wrote to Russell in April. The new Times correspondent had begun his stay in America...
Russell received calls from his friend, John Bigelow, a prominent New Yorker who was editor of the New York Evening Post, and from Sam Ward, another wealthy and well-connected friend in the city, whose sister was Juliet Ward Howe. Bigelow wrote letters of introduction for Russell to a number of influential people in New York and Washington, and arranged a breakfast for him a few days later to meet various people in New York. Bigelow noticed that Russell's head is a little turned already by the attention he is receiving. He has never experienced such an ovation before. He has hitherto been among Englishmen when the rank of people about him always placed him in a subordinate position.

Russell quickly went on to Washington and by the end of the month he had met, talked and dined with Seward, the President, and his "Cabinet Ministers." He had also had dinner with the British ambassador, Lord Lyons, whose only other guest that night had been Senator Sumner, newly elected chairman of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations. The letters of introduction Russell carried with him and the reputation of the paper he represented insured him a warm welcome everywhere. It was at this time that Lincoln compared the power of The Times to the Mississippi River, and this opinion, linked with the admiration most Americans then held for Britain, was clearly shared by the
important men Russell met in New York and Washington.

On meeting Seward and dining with him the next night in his home in the company of Seward's daughter and son, and Henry Sanford, soon to be sent to Belgium as American Minister, Russell quickly caught the measure of the man. He described Seward in his diary as

...a small man...talks a good deal and is very much given to raconter et badiner -- a subtle quick man not quite indifferent to kudcs.

At their first meeting, Seward told Russell that

...as to secession he and all his brothers and sisters seceded from home in early life but they all returned and so would the States.

Seward thought that the tariff, then being considered in the House of Representatives, would not cause any major inconvenience or stop revenues, and he told Russell further that no orders had been given to evacuate Fort Sumter, a federal fort now marooned in the seceded state, South Carolina. He invited Russell to call on him the next day. (15)

Russell made no special comment about Henry Sanford in his diary, indicating that he may not have known that Sanford was a friend of Bancroft Davis and had been for many years one of Davis's sources of information for his column. (16)

On the 26th of March, Russell wrote a long private letter to Delane, probably sending it along with his first public letter
which was published in The Times on the 16th of April (datelined Washington, 29 March). Writing to Delane from "Willard’s Menagerie, Den No. 55" in Washington, Russell described first the confusion he had found in New York which he said had left him none the wiser as to the probable outcome of the current crisis. "As far as I can make out," he wrote, "there is no one with any faith in anything stronger than the march of events." The men he had met had not impressed him. Historian George Bancroft, (Bancroft Davis’s uncle), was "a pedant without any firmness of faith in anything but Great Britain." Horace Greeley, editor of the Tribune, practiced "the nastiest form of narrow-minded Sectarian philanthropy" and "would gladly roast all the whites of S. Carolina." Gordon Bennett, editor of the New York Herald, was "so palpably a rogue -- it comes out...in the air around him, in his eyes and words, smell and voice." Russell told Delane that, in his opinion, many leading Americans "would be...very much obliged to any power which would oblige them with a war as the most sovereign remedy for the domestic cancer....They declare that the South must come back and that right soon and the opinion is indeed growing to the effect that a strong reaction will very soon take place against the Chiefs of the Secession. The wish may be father to it. The question of fighting seems to be escheved as far as possible."

Russell concluded with this insightful comment:

Below all the big talk there is a sense of humiliation at the Spectacle presented by the first
Republic to Europe altho' they talk about the moral grandeur of a conflict in which no blood is shed...I am quite certain if they should fight, and I say Lord forbid, they are quite ready for a bloody and desperate struggle.

(17)

While Russell was getting a sense of the situation in America and interviewing and getting to know the major players in the drama, British statesmen were gathering for the opening of Parliament. The Times as always carried the full text of the Queen's Speech. In regard to the American crisis the government's view was expressed as follows:

The Queen cannot express her gratification at the welcome given by the American people to her son, and the kind feeling with which even the rough pioneers of the West evidently regarded him, without declaring her sorrow that the fabric of the Republican Union should be in danger of destruction from the intolerable passion of a faction. That the United States may escape the ruin which impends, and that the mob rule, which according to all accounts, prevails in the South, may be overthrown by the vigour of the Federal Government and the returning courage of the conservative classes, is the wish of every one on this side of the Atlantic.

(18)

During February and March, The Times published seven letters from Davis, and carried numerous reprints from American newspapers. On the 7th of February, Davis's letter carried the news that five states had now seceded, that Louisiana was soon to follow, and that all was now up to the state of Virginia which favoured preserving the Union but only on the basis of the
Crittenden Compromise. (The key feature of this proposal was a restoration of the Missouri Compromise which divided the territories between slave and free.) Trade and commerce were flying away from the Southern ports, Davis wrote, and ships were clearing as quickly as possible for fear of a cessation of trade. The Southerners "are persuaded that European fleets will keep their ports open for the export of cotton," but the Republicans in the North intended to make this trade illegal and force the cotton northward. Davis enclosed a letter to the editor of the New York Times (then a Republican paper) written by a leading New York merchant which argued that the South could not prevent England from getting cotton except by ceasing its production.

Chenery commented in a leader the same day that Southern politicians were wrong if they thought secession would be received with delight by the English people and assisted with every Machiavellian art by our "aristocratic" government...Not only has the English press shown no joy at secession, given no encouragement to the South, and turned away from the bait of a free trade, but it has, as far as lay in its power, strengthened the Federal Government by earnest expressions of sympathy...

He called upon the South to "moderate their passions" and the Free States to "make every concession." (19)

A leader of Love's a week later continued The Times's criticism of Buchanan's timidity, quoted de Tocqueville on the weakness of the executive being a "standing reproach" to democracy, and
doubted the impartiality of Virginia in the terms of its resolution calling for a constitutional convention. Virginia, Lowe wrote, spoke only of satisfying the South and nothing of concessions to the North. He predicted that Virginia would be forced to join the Southern confederation. (20)

On the 12th of February a news item appeared noting that a high tariff bill introduced by Mr. Morrill of New Hampshire in the last session of Congress had now been revived and seemed sure of passage. This was the same bill to which Seward had alluded in his first conversation with Russell in March. Davis wrote in his column published on the 19th of February that while the seceded Southern States were "reconstructing" themselves into a new Federal Slave State, "Congress, in a spirit of insanity is forcing through both Houses...a protective tariff" which would probably become law before Buchanan stepped down. Since the senators and representatives of the seceding states had withdrawn, or were in the process of withdrawing from the national government, the Northern representatives now had complete control of the Congress, and could pass legislation such as this which had been successfully blocked by the southerners for so long. (21)

Chenery wrote the leader based on Davis's column that day, maintaining much the same stance as he had previously. He was amazed that the Northerners, who had talked so strongly of upholding the Union, seemed now ready to make any concession to
the South. Yet a southern United States of North America seemed about to be proclaimed, and "we may expect in a few weeks to have a representative among us from the great Slaveholding Republic, to negotiate the recognition of the new nationality." But he prophesied woe for the seceders. Southern credit was very low, state stocks were down, railroad bonds were virtually unsaleable, business was at a standstill, and even famine might threaten.

(22)

This leader certainly contained no evidence that The Times would support or give encouragement to Southern secession at any time.

A column from Davis and another leader by Chenery towards the end of the month brought things closer to a climax. The Confederate States of America had been formed using almost "a transcript of the /United States/ Constitution," Chenery wrote. Although everything so far seemed to have gone in favour of the Seceders, the tide might perhaps have turned. "The North begins to hope for the Border States..." But to force Virginia and Maryland to join the Southern Confederation, the new Southern constitution prohibited slave trade from outside the confederation only. Chenery predicted that March 4, the day of the inauguration of the new president would be "an important day in the annals of the New World." (23)

The Times now added a new contributor to its editorial page.
George Wingrove Cooke, who, as mentioned earlier, had served in China as *The Times'*s correspondent, made his debut on the American question on the 1st of March. He became one of *The Times'*s most prolific leader writers on America until his death in 1865.

Cooke's first leader was about slavery, not just American slavery, but the larger problems of the slave trade and the effects on slavery of cheap labour. He wrote that it was now clear that efforts to stop slavery had failed.

> Portugal has required all our attention to keep her at all up to the mark; Spain has imprudently repudiated all her promises; France has changed the name but not the substance; and America has continued the odious traffic at sea under the pretext of a jealousy of her national honours, and has, to her misfortune, nursed Slavery at home.

What was the solution? Slavery should be rendered useless, Cooke argued, by underselling slaves. Immigration of cheap labour from Asia would do this, and therefore should be encouraged.

> Both in India and in China we have the materials for a competition which may render the Slave Trade an extinct, because...unprofitable, trade.

Curiously, Davis's friend Henry Sanford was urging a similar move at that time in the United States. He had drafted a proposal for a "Free Cotton League" which he had first published as a letter to the Albany (N.Y.) *Evening Journal* and which he sent to
Davis, asking Davis to send it on to The Times for publication. This Davis had done, but the letter in which he described the proposal never appeared in The Times. Perhaps it provided the inspiration for Cooke's leader. Sanford had suggested importing Chinese labourers to work on new cotton plantations to be established in Latin America. Cooke's proposal was identical to Sanford's, except that the plantations were to be created in British colonies. (25)

On March 4, 1861, the day of Lincoln's inaugural, The Times carried a letter from Bancroft Davis in America. Davis wrote that Lincoln had made speeches on his trip from his home in Springfield, Illinois to Washington which were "more remarkable for their reticence than for rhetorical power." Jefferson Davis, the newly elected President of the Confederacy, had also made a triumphal procession with speeches along the way to Montgomery, Alabama. The Southern leader's pronouncements, in contrast to Lincoln's, had clearly repudiated the possibility of any reunion with the North except on the basis of the Southern Constitution. The new Southern government, Bancroft Davis said, had installed itself without any reference to the people it presumed to govern, and had given itself war powers. The new tariff bill had moved to the now Northern-dominated Senate, and was, according to Davis, so ridiculously complicated that it would be unworkable. (26)

This news provoked The Times to take its first notice of the
tariff in a leader by Woodham. Agreeing with Davis that the bill was overly complicated, Woodham said that if it should pass, "it will almost prohibit all imports into the United States from England, France, and Germany." But, he continued significantly, we do not agree with those who contend that this national tariff was the real basis for the controversy between the North and South, and that Slavery was just a blind. "We do not believe in this explanation. We are convinced that the contest for territory is the real contest between the North and South." (27)

Successive leaders on the 8th and 9th of March were assigned next to Brodrick. Commenting ostensibly on Jefferson Davis's inaugural speech, Brodrick made the tariff his real target. "It will not be our fault," he wrote,

...if the inopportune legislation of the North, combined with the reciprocity of wants between ourselves and the South, should bring about a considerable modification in our relations with America.

No one can doubt England's sincere opposition to slavery.

But the tendencies of trade are inexorable...It may be that the Southern population will now become our best customers...and the Free States will long repent an act which brings needless discredit on the intrinsic merits of their cause.

(28)

He continued in the same vein the next day.

We shall not be deterred...from looking for new sources of cotton supply...to save our manufacturers from ruin...the warmest friends of the Union cannot
expect our merchants to celebrate its obsequies by self-immolation...let Mr. Lincoln show himself equal to the occasion, and let the Free States prove themselves capable of a truly national policy, and it will soon become evident on which side English sympathies are engaged.

These leaders constituted two very clear warnings to the Northerners that they must act correctly in regard to the tariff if they wanted the support of the British.

Robert Lowe took the Times’s campaign against the Morrill Tariff a step further on the 12th of March. America, for the present, he wrote, is divided in two. The South is tainted with the blight of slavery. But mankind will judge the two sections by their actions. "Their internal institutions are their own affair; their financial and political arrangements are emphatically ours."

Referring to Brazil, a slave-holding state, as a country which "by its good faith and good conduct...has established for itself a place in the hierarchy of nations far superior to that of many Powers which are free of this domestic contamination," Love declared that

If the Northern Confederacy of America evinces a determination to act in a narrow, exclusive, and unsocial spirit, while its Southern competitor extends the hand of good fellowship to all mankind, with the exception of its own bondsmen, we must not be surprised to see the North, in spite of the goodness of its cause and the great negative merit of the absence of Slavery, sink into a secondary position, and lose the sympathy and regard of mankind.
Now Lowe was able to conclude, as Woodham had denied just the week before, that

Protection was quite as much a cause of the disruption of the Union as Slavery.

Lowe's latest claim that protection had caused the disruption of the Union was in direct disagreement with all that he had written previously. It was certainly true, however, that the protective Morrill Tariff appeared to be causing The Times to reexamine its position in regard to America. Until the passage of the tariff bill, The Times, while being critical of the federal government, American statesmen, and Abolitionists, had consistently supported the North against the South, primarily because of the slavery issue, but also because of its view that the South had no reason or right to secede. Even as The Times criticized Buchanan for his ineffectiveness and urged him to use stronger measures to put down Southern threats of secession, it excoriated Southern leaders for their intemperate demands. Now, in March, slowly but surely The Times began its retreat from this position of support for the North. As Davis had reported that the "reconstruction" of the South had begun, referring to the creation of the new Southern government, The Times too began the reconstruction of its position on the American conflict.

It is not necessary to look far for the reason. The day
The conduct of Congress upon the Tariff Bill has much changed the tone of public feeling in this quarter in reference to the Secessionists, and none here, even those whose sympathies are with the Northern States, attempt to justify the course which the Protectionists in Congress have pursued.

The question of recognition of a new nation in the South now became a subject of public debate. In a new letter from Davis, published on the 12th of March, Davis quoted a letter received by an American citizen from a British Member of Parliament and published in the New York Times which purported to state the position of the British Government on recognition of a southern confederacy. The letter would have been a month old by the time it was described in The Times.

...the whole matter of secession has been brought by Lord Russell before the Ministry...and the declaration has been made that not only will there be no recognition by Great Britain of the Southern Confederacy, but that everything will be done on her part to discountenance disunion.

The letter-writer also said, Davis wrote, that

It is utterly impossible for Great Britain to be on good terms with seceding slave-traders. Not even the needless and untimely enactment of the new Tariff Bill can accomplish such a result.

It is interesting to compare this with a despatch sent by Lord
Russell to Lord Lyons in February, at about the same time the member of Parliament must have written the letter to his American correspondent. Lord Russell's despatch concerned itself with the tone Lord Lyons should take in dealing with Mr. Seward, soon to be the new Secretary of State. Referring to an earlier despatch from Lord Lyons which dealt with "Mr. Seward's plans to prevent the disruption of the North American Union," Lord Russell called attention particularly to the conclusion Lord Lyons had reached that Seward "would not be reluctant to provide excitement for the Public Mind, by raising questions with Foreign Powers." In reference to this possibility, Russell advised Lyons when dealing with the Americans to make clear to them that while the British Government would exercise great forbearance, and valued highly the relations of peace and amity with the United States, that their forbearance sprang from consciousness of strength and not from the timidity of weakness.

They would warn a Government which was making political Capital out of blustering demonstrations, that our patience might be tried too far.

(33)

There was no mention in this despatch of recognition of a new southern confederacy, only of working for peace. Lord Russell did instruct Lord Lyons, however, to impress upon the Americans the idea that the British would not be bullied.

This was similar to what Brodrick had written in his leaders of
the 8th and 9th of March when he warned against passage of the
tariff bill. Lord Russell, on the other hand, was concerned not
with the tariff bill but with backing Lord Lyons against Seward.
Lyon had been very alarmed at Seward's deplorable tendency of
going out of his way to antagonize Britain in order both to gain
political capital with his own constituents, and to divert their
attention from domestic quarrels.

In the middle of March Lowe now wrote a lengthy leader
analyzing the proposals of the Virginia Peace Conference. He
concluded that there was no longer any real hope of
reconciliation since both sides showed no evidence of wishing to
give in to the other in any meaningful way. He referred to the
tariff as evidence of a desire in the North to take advantage of
southern secession, and to the increasing evidence that southern
leaders had been executing a "deep-laid and carefully-matured
conspiracy" which they intended to carry out.

Lowe's final words revealed his pessimism regarding the
possibility of the South's abandonment of its bid for
independence:

The South has hitherto had every advantage. It has
had what it is not likely to obtain again -- the
assistance of a ministry ready to plunder, disarm, and
betray the Central Government for the purpose of
putting them into the best position of resistance.
They are not likely to get such another chance, and
they will scarcely put themselves in a position from
which they can never again hope to emerge with so many
concurrent advantages.
Three days later, Chenery criticized President Lincoln for being so reticent about his plans. "An English Prime Minister is obliged to declare his intentions, like any other man," he wrote. Chenery alleged that "in many ways the President is an elected despot for four years" for he could only be controlled by legislation. Seward, by contrast, had been making conciliatory speeches and had become so cringing towards the South that the ultra-Republicans were denouncing him as a political coward. In a marvelous editorial ambiguity, Chenery concluded that "We are unable to see the usefulness of further reserve...." (35)

Lowe came closer to the point the next day in a critique of Lincoln's inaugural address. Characterizing Lincoln's speech as unequal to the occasion, he contended that Lincoln should not try to gloss over the differences between the two regions and pretend that there was no real quarrel. The President implied in his speech, Lowe wrote, that he would not negotiate with the South, would repossess forts and federal property which had fallen to the South, and would collect revenue, thus effectuating a blockade of the South.

"...we cannot conceal from ourselves that such a policy is neither more nor less than a declaration of civil war."

We wish, Lowe continued, that Lincoln had founded his speech more "on the actual position of affairs, and less upon the formal
requirements of the Constitution." Had Lincoln moved sooner, he might have avoided the present impasse, but now...

Would it not be better to recognize at once the formation of the Southern Confederacy and to think a little less of constitutional powers... which can end in nothing but civil war...

(36)

The next day Lowe hammered away at these points again. Lincoln was being "childish as well as dangerous" to ignore the real state of the case. He could not "emancipate himself from the shackles of a merely legal mind." His refusal to recognize that secession had occurred left no hope or possibility of reconciliation. The South could not be heard, because it must not be recognized. The South probably wanted war because in this way they could force the border states to come to their side. The only hope of avoiding war was through negotiation. Yet "Now futile all attempts at reconciliation have been is now apparent." And with Lincoln's non-recognition of the South, there could be no hope of any further dialogue. (37)

Having mounted an increasingly critical attack on Northern policies, The Times now for the first time wrote favorably about the Southern Confederacy. In a leader on the 20th of March a Times writer referred to some reprints from American papers which had been published elsewhere in The Times that day and had been devoted to the proceedings of the Congress of the Confederate States of America. The Times's writer began by complimenting the
Southern Confederacy for its good start and its exemplary behavior. Speeches at Montgomery (Alabama) had been unusually short and to the point, he wrote, and were a pleasant change from the normally exhaustless verbosity of American political utterances. By contrast, he said President Lincoln had been making what he and The Times now characterized as "semi-varlike speeches" all the way from Illinois. "With his principles he could hardly fail to bring matters to a dangerous issue," this leader-writer alleged. The Southerners, he wrote, have renewed condemnation of the Slave Trade, thrown open the Mississippi to navigation and repealed the navigation laws which excluded foreign ships from the American coastal trade. They have done this "to bring over England to their side...contrasting strongly with the barbarian illiberality of the old Union." (38)

In spite of repeated affirmations to the contrary, The Times seemed to be taking the bait offered by the South. Or perhaps it was only testing the waters. In any case, it soon drew back from this implied support for the South, and adopted a more even-handed stance, condemning both sides to the controversy with equal vigour. Woodham, in a leader on the 22nd, chastised North and South alike, the North for its tariff, and the South for its mistaken belief that its cotton was indispensable to the rest of the world. "The two jealous, if not hostile, sections of the Union will now neutralize each other," he wrote. (39)

The critical situation at Fort Sumter and the possibility of
war were now subjects of a letter from Davis which appeared March 26th. Davis reported the new American cabinet was wrestling with the question of the reinforcement of Fort Sumter. He wrote that the present administration would blame the last administration for allowing the problem to arise. (40)

From the 8th to the 22nd of March, The Times had carried almost daily leaders on the American crisis. During this time, partially in response to the new tariff and partially in response to Lincoln's new firmness towards the secessionists, The Times had become increasingly critical of the North and had expressed its first support of the South. The last leader of the month, written by Lowe, was ambiguous enough to be interpreted either way.

Lowe's subject was the methods used by North and South to raise money. The North had adopted a prohibitory tariff, he explained; the South was said to be planning an export tax on cotton. Both of these, of course, would hurt Britain. Lowe, still seeming to lean somewhat towards the North, directed his strongest words of warning at the South: "The imposition of an export duty will put an end to all hesitation in the minds of those at whom it is directly levelled." Industry would busy itself with raising up a competing industry, he confidently predicted.

Then he wrote a sentence which has been variously interpreted:

For the first time in this question our interests seem likely to be ranged on the same side as our
feelings, and we shall be forced at last into taking a part for which consistency and honour have so long pleaded in vain...

(41)

Love may have been certain in his own mind as to the meaning of these words but their interpretation in the context of the rest of The Times's leaders is not at all clear. "Interests" seemed to indicate The Times would support the South, while "feelings" had heretofore led The Times to chastize the South for its adherence to a slave system. "Feelings" also put the British ruling class on the side which opposed democracy and "mob rule." At first, statesmen in the South were blamed for giving into this mob which was described as a most despicable lot of belligerent poor whites. But by the end of March, The Times had given up the idea that the passions of the lower-class had brought on the problem, and saw a well-planned conspiracy and resolution on the part of Southern leaders, a quality which they found sadly lacking in the North.

For what had "consistency and honour...so long pleaded in vain? The Times had consistently argued that the South had no reason to secede. It had consistently pleaded with its own merchants and statesmen to develop a cotton culture in the British Empire as an alternative to that of the American South. These pleas had, indeed, been made in vain. But did these have anything to do with honour? Only The Times's consistent campaign against slavery seems to fit this prescription. Certainly, its
opposition to a high tariff had nothing to do with honour.

It almost seems that Lowe was being deliberately ambiguous in this leader so that The Times could use its considerable powers to warn the North and South against any moves which would damage British interests. The Times's leadership saw nothing in the actions and speeches of Southern leaders to make them think the South would give up on its pursuit of independence. At the same time, while Seward seemed willing to make any concession to preserve the Union, The Times detected a firmer view in the new president. Lincoln was then condemned for being merely "legalistic" in not recognizing the reality of Southern independence which The Times now saw as a fait accompli. Thus the prospect of collision and war seemed ever more real. Since the North had allowed this to happen by doing nothing during the critical early stages of the rebellion, The Times began to tilt towards blaming the North for whatever future disasters might occur.

Above all, The Times and its readers wanted peace, and business as usual. As The Economist article had made clear the month before, the dissolution of the United States would, in fact, offer many advantages to Britain, so long as it occurred peacefully. If the North were now to become intransigent and throw down the gauntlet to the South, Britain and The Times would now cast the North as the villain that caused the war, even though the South had initially provoked the conflict by
seceding. In its concern for protecting British interests, The Times conveniently forgot the issue of slavery and even allowed the slave state Brazil to join the community of honourable nations.

Thus, in the crucial months of February and March of 1861, before The Times could receive and profit from any news and analyses sent home by its ace foreign correspondent, The Times had already begun its retreat from a pro-North stance to one in which the Southern Confederacy would increasingly be portrayed as the determined, gallant, and chivalrous underdog, fighting for independence from a rich and despotic Northern oppressor.

1. Times Archives, Russell’s Diary, entries for 8, 11, 13, 15 and 18 February 1861.
2. TA, Russell’s Diary, 16 May 1860.
3. TA, Russell Diary, 28 February 1861.
4. TA, Russell Diary, 18, 20, 21, 22, 25 February 1861.
5. TA, Russell Diary, 26 February 1861.
7. Frederick Law Olmstead wrote four books about his travels in the South: A Journey in the Seaboard Slave States, (1856); A Journey Through Texas, (1857); A Journey in the Back Country, (1860); and Journeys and Explorations in the Cotton Kingdom, (1861).
8. TA, Russell Diary, 5, 15 March 1861.


12. TA, Russell Diary, 17 and 19 March 1861, Morris, 11/47, 4 April 1861.

13. "Preston King, Seward, Old Mr. Blair and Montgomery, and Sumner."


15. TA, Russell Diary, 26 March 1861.

16. Henry Shelton Sanford Papers, Box 118, Folder 7, (1854-1858), Henry Shelton Sanford Memorial Library and Museum, Sanford, Florida. Several letters from Davis to Sanford in this collection show that Davis depended on Sanford for information. One of the first, undated, but probably written shortly after Davis was taken on a trial basis by *The Times* in 1854 is marked "Very Confidential" and contains this message: "I wish to write by Saturday Steamer to *The Times*. Can you not pick up a few beads (?) of gossip and let me have a line by the mail of Thursday Eve -- just titbits and I will elaborate them -- Don't fail me -- It's worth everything to me --" The letter was signed, "Thine in profoundest secrecy." In a letter dated "2 Feb 1855" Davis wrote, "The 'Times' engagement is now put on a permanent basis. This morning I received a letter from Morris expressing entire satisfaction and appointing me as regular correspondent of the Thunderer." And again, (no date) "Dont forget to send me the news for my next letter. You are my main stay now a days, I have been too busy to collect news for myself."

17. TA, Delane, 10/88, date pencilled, "26 Mar 1861".


23. *The Times*, 26 February 1861, 9. Davis's column was on page 5.

25. Sanford Papers, Box 105, Folder 11, no date. Davis’s reply to this letter from Sanford, dated 30 January 1861, said, “The Free Cotton I sent to London in a way I think will make them publish it.” They seem to have published it in a way Davis did not intend.


34. *The Times*, 14 March 1861, 8.


38. *The Times*, 20 March 1861, 9. The author of this leader is unknown.


40. A news item which had appeared in *The Times* the day before had stated that the administration wanted to avoid a collision. *The Times*, 25 March 1861, page 9, and 26 March 1861, page 7. Thayer had written Davis during the period of the Peace Conference that no action had been taken on Fort Sumter to promote peace, and that “probably the South will be allowed to make the first aggression and spill the first blood.” That letter was dated 11 February. Davis Papers, I, 238-239.

Chapter Eight

War

At Eastertime in 1861, as men of affairs in America saw their once happy republic edging ever closer to division and possibly war, Britain's leaders repaired to their country homes for the Parliamentary recess. Delane visited Lord Ashburton at the Grange, near Alresford, as part of a group which included Venables, Brookfield, Monckton-Milnes, and the next day, Delane's good friend, "Bear" Ellice. Delane recorded in his diary that he had "a good gallop over a capital country" that day. (1)

News and comment about America virtually disappeared from The Times those first two weeks of April. On the 5th, a letter from Bancroft Davis brought word of the appointment of Charles Francis Adams, grandson and son, respectively, of the second and sixth presidents of the United States, as Minister to the Court of St. James. (2)

Adams, a Republican Massachusetts congressman who, as member of the Committee of Thirty-Three, had been in the forefront of the negotiations to reach a compromise with the seceding southern states, had first been proposed by Seward as Secretary of the
Treasury in Lincoln's new cabinet. When Lincoln rejected this idea because he preferred to balance his appointments by including a Democrat, rather than a Republican, from Massachusetts, Seward persuaded him to give Adams the country's most prestigious diplomatic assignment as American Minister in London. While both of Adams's illustrious ancestors had preceded him in this position, and both had served their country well, neither had had to face the enormous difficulties of representing a country which was about to be torn by civil war.

Bancroft Davis also wrote in his letter that the newly formed Confederate Congress had passed legislation which was in many ways "wise and sagacious", including a tariff which was simplicity itself compared to the Morrill Tariff of the North. The Southerners had also commissioned representatives who would soon be on their way to Europe to seek recognition for the new government. The race for Europe's support had begun. (3)

A leader of Lowe's in The Times of the same date began with the sentence: "The great American Revolution is slowly and painfully working itself out..." Acceptance of the division of America was implicit in everything that Lowe wrote, along with the familiar expression of hope that "/whatever/ is decided, we hope they will lead to a peaceful solution." Lowe pointed out that if the English government had been content to allow the Colonies to depart in peace, "how much of the bitterness and the evil of the separation would have been spared!" (4)
Beyond Davis's letter, Love's leader, and another short letter from Davis which appeared on the 10th, The Times kept its counsel until the 19th of the month. Davis's rather non-committal letter on the 10th (written on March 26) had brought the soothing news that Fort Sumter would be evacuated, that the people of the North were waking up to the idea that the Morrill Tariff was an act of insanity, and that all were agreed on the preservation of peace.

(5) The Times's "State of Trade" column on the 15th echoed these comforting words.

It is probably not coincidental that as The Times was refraining from comment on events in America, the Foreign Office was advising Lord Lyons to do exactly the same thing. On the 6th, Foreign Minister Lord Russell told his Washington envoy that if his opinion was sought by the Americans, he was "never to obtrude advice unasked." On the 12th, Russell sent a longer despatch enclosing a message from Seward which the incumbent American minister, Dallas, had communicated to him, in which Seward had warned against intervention in an unfriendly way in the domestic concerns of the United States. Russell told Lyons he had replied that Her Majesty's Government had no wish to intrude in argument or pass judgment on the actions of either side to the dispute in America, and now that secession had occurred was in no hurry to recognize the South, but that he could not bind his government as to its policy in regard to future events.
On the 20th, Lord Russell wrote Lyons that he understood Adams had been appointed and hoped he would arrive soon. As to the Southern Commissioners, he said that if they asked to see him, he would receive them unofficially, but not officially. (6)

Neither The Times nor the British Government knew yet that by this time Southern artillery had begun the bombardment of Fort Sumter, and that this event would rouse both North and South to an intensity of warlike fervour which would shock especially those observers who had argued that it just could not happen.

William Howard Russell, whose first letter would appear in The Times on April 16th, had already left Washington for a swing through the South when the first shots of the war were fired on the 12th. From Baltimore, he had written to Davis:

> As I found I could really do nothing at Washington except sift opinions I started today (the 12th) for Richmond. Will you forward me my letters etc to the care of Mr. Bunch H.B.M. Consul there...I am very uneasy at my wife's state of health...

(7) The prospect of war does not seem to have frightened him. Only worry for his wife was on his mind.

Before his departure Russell had written to Secretary Seward asking for privileged information on

> the extent and destination, or with the object of the preparations and expeditions...under any reservations...only to use such intelligence as might be afforded to me in the despatch which I am forwarding to the Times and of which the contents can not be known in this country till the return of the paper to this country in a month hence.
Seward seems to have acceded to his request, for Russell wrote in his diary for the 8th that he had had a meeting with Seward at 9 p.m. that evening. Unfortunately, Russell recorded in code probably the most important information Seward entrusted to him, while noting in his normal script that Seward had read to him a despatch to be sent to (?) (code) which was "very able" but "in effect...nothing more than a distinctive exposition of the Inaugural." (9)

Russell took with him on his trip through the South his American friend Sam Ward. Ward wrote to Seward that he was going on a "peace errand," and asked to see him the evening of the 9th. Seward and Ward apparently arranged for Ward to report back privately, for Ward thereafter wrote a number of letters to Seward under the alias "Charles Lopez," addressing the Secretary of State as "George Ellis Baker." (10)

Ward's first comment about Russell described him as a Northern advocate. Ward wrote:

Russell is fighting secession sword in hand. He attacks these gentlemen with great vigor. Stigmatises the whole movement as impolitic and suicidal and invariably has the best of the argument.

(11)

Russell may have argued against secession but as he had written
to The Times on March 29, he was personally convinced that the South had "shaken the dust off her feet, and /would/ never enter the portals of the Union again." (12)

Russell had written of the Northern government in his letter of April 1, (published on the 22nd in London). Lincoln's cabinet, he stated, was split into three groups: those who vindicated the rights of the Federal government at any risk, including the use of force if needed; those who believed that secession was the work of a minority in the South, that a strong party of reaction existed, and that this party would come to the front by and by; and those who would cut the cord, arguing that only the South would suffer. He wrote that he had failed to meet anyone passionately attached to the Union, while warning that England and France's influence was so great that "...an immediate recognition of /the South might/ bring on war." In any case, he thought war was likely, and termed secession "a revolution." (13)

In London, Mowbray Morris was indignant at the foolish Americans. He wrote Russell that

...The telegraphic accounts to the 6th inst...are alarming, and if they are not exaggerated, America has already begun a civil war. It is said however in the City that the private accounts received by merchants do not corroborate the...reports of American newspapers, and I should pay some attention to this qualified contradiction if my own private information do not gratify the darkest foreboding. On the whole I think you will have a taste of your old quality and be called upon again to provide [describe?] the movements of armies and to witness the shedding of blood. For my
own part I cannot resist the conviction that this revolution will have a good result for Americans. They have hitherto been too prosperous, and their national defects are just those which an uninterrupted prosperity engenders. A good dose of suffering will do them good and as regards the Southern Confederacy, if it can create a servile insurrection I shall not much regret the penalty it will have to pay for its many offenses against humanity.

Lest it be thought that these blood-thirsty views of Morris were unique in Britain at this time (and later), a letter from "one of the foremost men of England" (unidentified) which was sent by Sam Ward to Seward and was probably written in mid-April, expressed much the same tone. The prominent Englishman had written to his correspondent in Savannah:

Here we are all disposed to recognize the CSA as soon as we can do so with any decency. We of course prefer the North and South cutting each other's throats to ours. It will be very agreeable hereafter to have no American minister bullying Ld. John Russell with bluster...The North are our rivals and mean ones. The South ready to be our customers upon our own terms. But we have to mark with great circumspection else the Conservatives will trip us and Derby get the keys!

To Bancroft Davis, Morris wrote of his exasperation at the inadequate policies of the Federal government, and his conviction that the North should recognize the inevitability of the Southern separation.

Surely the time for coercion is past, and the only course open to the Government of Washington is to accept the secession of the Southern States as a fait accompli. To allow full scope to a revolution until it
is thoroughly organized, and then to oppose it seems to be nothing short of madness...Are the President and his Cabinet blind to this consequence or do they act under an imperative sense of duty which repudiates responsibility and leaves the issue in the hands of Providence. In either case they are not statesmen but executioners -- unreasoning instruments of so-called law. I cannot understand and have hardly patience to inquire into the motives of such conduct. What a spectacle for the old world -- What a triumph for absolutism and the friends of despotic government.

In the same letter, Morris reiterated to Davis that he looked for full reports from him and that Russell was "not intended to supersede you." From this, and his letter to Russell, it is clear that Morris looked upon Russell as the special war correspondent, and Davis as the regular commentator on American affairs, especially commercial matters. Two weeks later Morris complimented Davis on his reports from New York, and in fact applauded his outspoken support of the Northern side of the dispute. "It must be a great relief to you to be at last in a position to declare boldly on the side of the old government, or rather of the Northern Union against the Secessionists."

In the same letter, he expressed concern about Russell "whose letters hang fire sadly. I hope you gave him good advice about keeping up his communication with you and consequently with us."

(17)

The arrangements which had been made for transmittal of the letters were mentioned by Russell in his Diary on the 21st. He
wrote that he had sent off his letter to The Times by Sam Ward to the British Consul in Richmond for transmittal to Washington and Lord Lyons using the Adams Express Company. As Russell observed, and experience proved, communications between North and South quickly became disrupted. In a letter to Davis written from Charleston on the 24th of April, Russell said, "We absolutely know nothing of what is taking place in the North..." (18)

On May 2, Russell wrote Davis complaining that he had not gotten any letters from home. "What a melancholy disorganization your P.O. department exhibits," he grumbled. "I feel that my despatches are hardly safer to hit a steamer than if they should be thrown into the sea in a sealed bottle." (19)

Two months later, at the end of his southern trip, Russell wrote Davis from Chicago that he had just seen a file of The Times and that apparently "my letters have all gone to pot...I miss one from Charleston - One from Savannah, one from Montgomery." (20)

As Morris wrote frankly to Russell, and encouragingly to Davis, The Times held to a very cautious line editorially. On the 19th, Chenery reiterated the hope that war might yet be averted, but predicted that if war ensued, it would be a ferocious one. Americans were so excitable and vindictive, he claimed, a war "though short, /might/ be as savage as any that has been carried on even by the Spanish race." The war would be such a calamity,
he continued, "We would...hope that the good sense of the Americans and peaceful counsels of this country /might/ bring about a reconciliation..." (21)

The next day, repeating the arguments that there were so many reasons for peace, and that it was clear that the South could not be defeated, he urged the government in Washington to pause and reconsider what he described as Lincoln's "warlike intentions." (22)

On the 22nd and 23rd, the paper carried Russell's letters from Washington mentioned earlier, written on the 1st, the 5th, and the 9th, in the first of which Russell wrote that "Separation without war is scarcely to be expected." On the 5th he wrote that Lincoln's government hoped and believed that the contest must be averted, as did the Southern Commissioners, but whatever the result "the Great Republic is gone!" (23)

The dramatic news of the fall of Sumter was reported in The Times on the 26th, via a telegram of Mr. Reuter. The Times made no editorial comment that day. Curiously, Delane assigned The Times's first leader on the war to Mozley, whose leader ridiculing the event was run on the 27th. Mozley began by making much of the fact that in spite of a great bombardment, no blood had been shed. "Are they joking?" he asked, perhaps hopefully. "It is a mere spectacle," he continued, for which the "population and even the ladies of Charleston poured forth to see the
After these introductory paragraphs which treated the matter as so frivolous as to be meaningless, Mozley devoted the rest of his leader to a more serious discussion of the comparative chances of the two sides to the conflict. *The Times* apparently, in spite of its sarcasm, accepted that this was to be a real war.

In the North’s favour, Mozley pointed to “all that is outside and material.” The South, on the contrary, he wrote, had little or nothing but that which often becomes the counterbalance to everything else! There are the men of action, who can combine, conspire, keep the secret, have a plan, and carry it out without wavering or flinching...In the South there has been one steady, uninterrupted progress, towards secession and war. To the very last, President Lincoln has been behindhand.

(24) By putting aside the annoying question of slavery, Mozley, for *The Times*, was now able to find something to admire in Southern resolution.

The next day *The Times* continued to express the hope that the Americans were not seriously bent on war. Commenting on news reports that Lincoln had declared war by calling for 75,000 volunteers and summoning Congress to an extra session to begin on the 4th of July, Cooke wrote, "We hope...that...this preparation for war may turn out to be a preparation for negotiation." The latest events "may, indeed, mean all that we in England, who have been so proud of our strong blustering son, most dread, and a few more weeks may show us Anglo-Saxons rushing at each other’s
throats. But it may also mean that the President is only taking his formal position...and that he still intends to carry out a policy of procrastination." Hoping that the latter was the case, Cooke concluded with the sober reminder that British interests were so intertwined with American interests that "civil war in the States means destitution in Lancashire." (25)

Chenery, having previously characterized Lincoln as "warlike", now concentrated on the weakness of the American presidency in The Times's last leader of the month of April. The president, he wrote, could only do what his political party allowed him to do. "He can only open the war, pretty much as our own gracious Sovereign would open an exhibition," since he had no army and no constitutional authority to levy one until Congress convened in July. Chenery predicted that the Northwest would support Lincoln, but judged the Border states lost. As to the North’s chances of defeating the South, it might "have men, money, and ships, but even with these it cannot be seriously attempted to conquer and hold by conquest a dozen great territories, and some eight millions of inhabitants as active and warlike as any on the Globe." Like so many of his fellow Britons who remembered their own country’s fruitless attempts to subdue these colonies in the eighteenth century, Chenery, and presumably his editor Delane, simply could not conceive of a successful war of conquest in America. (26)

By the next day, however, the fact of war was being faced.

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Bancroft Davis's letter from America stated flatly "The die is cast and civil war now exists..." He described the division between the two combatants as a clear one. On the one side stood the supporters of constitutional government, those who favoured the preservation of free institutions, dreaded a military despotism, and believed in the noble principles of Anglo-Saxon freedom that had made England what it was; on the other side were those who preferred a military government founded on treachery and conspiracy, who would suppress the press and all the noble results that flowed from its freedom, and who regarded African slavery as a divine institution, to be fostered by the government at the expense of every other branch of industry in the state.

The Times's leader of the day, written by Chenery again, accepted the idea that war was a reality, but avoided taking a stand on the issues Bancroft Davis had described. Chenery concentrated instead on one of The Times's favourite themes: the "military ardour" of Americans. Writing that he was now led to believe that "a fierce and lasting struggle may possibly be begun," he reminded his readers of how eager America had been in the past to rush to war in Mexico, and how it had strained at the bit to fight Great Britain over "several senseless matters." "The States faithful to Mr. Lincoln have now accepted the doctrine that secession is treason, and that the Southern States may legitimately be conquered and held by the victors," he
wrote. But the confederate states were equally determined, perhaps more so. They knew that the North could not rest content with recapturing federal forts. "...The/ weaker party actually appears in greater strength than its opponents, since a knowledge of its inferiority leads to efforts and sacrifices which more than make up for its deficiencies." Predicting that the uncertain nature of the loyalty of the border states and the difficulty of marching through Virginia and North Carolina to attack Charleston would force the Northerners to attack by sea, Chenery, still grasping at straws, concluded that "...the dangers of an offensive war are so great that President Lincoln may even now well hesitate to begin it. (28)

Two days later Chenery expanded on the idea of the natural warlikeness of Americans. "While yet a child," he wrote, "he learns the use of pistol and rifle...no sooner does the trumpet sound than the American people rush into the conflict...As far as we can discern, the Northerners have not stayed a moment to inquire what is the object of the war..." In this leader, Chenery also took note of the fact that Jefferson Davis had proclaimed "letters of marque," creating privateers out of Southern merchant vessels. He pointed out that the Northern government, meanwhile, had done an about-face, and declared this Southern move illegal, although earlier the United States had refused to accept the provisions of the Declaration of Paris of 1856 which outlawed privateering. (29)
Sandwiched between these two leaders in which The Times reluctantly left off analyzing the merits of the cases presented by North and South, and began to face the fact of war and the relative advantages and disadvantages of the combatants, was a leader written by Woodham on the supply of cotton. Here we are face to face with disaster, he wrote, and there is no panic. Why is this so? The answer, he suggested, was that the South was just as interested in supplying Britain with cotton as ever. In fact, since the dispute had arisen over the question of the extension of slavery into the territories, which was simply for the object of producing more cotton, in a sense "the war itself...may be...regarded as undertaken for the very object which we have most at heart." Nevertheless, Britain must not waste time in establishing alternative sources of cotton supply. "So long as American cotton is raised by slave labour, and slave labour is held by more than half the American people to be abominable, our supplies can never be safe." (30)

On Saturday, the 4th of May, The Times published no leader, but carried the text of President Lincoln's proclamation of a blockade of the seceded states. Meanwhile, in Parliament, William Gregory had raised the question of Southern recognition on the 17th of April, Lord Wodehouse had replied (April 30) to a question from Lord Malmesbury stating that Her Majesty's Government had decided it was not desirable to intrude her advice on the Government of the United States and hoped the differences
between the North and South might be peacefully arranged, and
Lord Russell, in the House (May 3), in answer to a question by
Mr. Ewart as to whether or not, in view of the possibility of
privateering by the South, Her Majesty’s Government had
strengthened the squadrons in the Gulf of Mexico to protect
British shipping, replied that the government had directed a
naval force to the coast of America for that purpose. As to the
legality according to international law of both the issuance of
Letters of Marque by the South and the blockade declared by the
North, he stated that the government’s policy was

> to use every possible means to avoid taking part in
> the lamentable contest now raging in the American
> States (hear, hear)...Nothing but the imperative duty
> of protecting British interests in case they should be
> attacked justifies the Government in at all
> interfering. We have not been involved in any way in
> that contest by any act or giving any advice in the
> matter, and, for God’s sake, let us if possible keep
> out of it! (Cheers.)

(31)

An insight into the British official position can be found in a
private letter written by Lord Palmerston to Lord Russell at this
time (5 May). Palmerston sent Russell two enclosures with his
letter: a letter he had received from "Bear" Ellice in which
Ellice apparently suggested mediation by Britain, and the reply
which he had sent Ellice. To Ellice, Palmerston had written,

> The Danger is that in the excited state of men and
> minds in America the offer of anyone to interpose to
> arrest their action and disappoint them of their
> expected Triumph might be resented by both sides; and
> that jealousy of European and especially of English
interference in their internal affairs might make them still more prone to reject our offer as impertinent.

There wd moreover be great Difficulty in suggesting any Basis of arrangement to which both Parties could agree and which it wd not be repugnant to English Feelings and Principles to propose. We cd not well mix ourselves up with the acknowledgement of Slavery and the Principle that a slave escaping to a free soil state, shd be followed and claimed and recovered like a horse or an ox. We might possibly propose that the North and South should separate amicably -- That they shd make some Boundary Line to be agreed upon -- the line of separation between them; and that each confederation shd be free to make for its own internal affairs and concerns such Laws as it might think fit. The Two Confederations entering into certain mutual arrangements as to Trade and Commerce with each other.

Do you think the Time is come for any arrangement of such a kind, or is it not in the nature of Things and in human nature that the ...edge must be taken off this craving appetite for conflict in arms, before any real and wide-spread Desire for Peace by mutual concession can be looked for?

To Russell, Palmerston added that

Rothchild read me yesterday evening a letter from a correspondent of his at New York also urging mediation and he said he would shew it to you. (32) I stated to him also the obvious objections to any step on our Part at the present moment but I admitted the great importance of the matter and that it deserves to be fully weighed and considered. If any step were thought advisable, perhaps the best mode of feeling our way wd be to communicate confidentially with the South by the men who have come over here from thence, and with the North by Dallas [Adams’s predecessor as American Minister] who is about to return in a few days...

(33)

Although Palmerston and Russell were apparently in complete agreement as to the wisdom of maintaining a "hands off" policy in regard to the American conflict, Her Majesty’s Government did
feel impelled to declare that a state of belligerency existed.

As Russell explained in his despatch of 6 May 1861 to Lord Lyons in Washington,

The question /is/...should /the war/ be regarded as a war carried on between parties severally in a position to wage war, and to claim the rights, and to perform the obligations attaching to Belligerents.

Her Majesty's Government consider that that question can only be answered in the affirmative...

Her Majesty's Government ...can do no less than accept the facts presented to them. They deeply deplore the disruption of /the United States/...but they feel that they cannot question the right of the Southern States to claim to be recognized as a Belligerent...

(34)

The Times supported this declaration in its second leader the next day. Stating that the character of a belligerent was determined not by principle but by fact, The Times nevertheless warned that many legal questions still remained. (35) While these questions of international law were not discussed in this leader, it was clear that The Times, taking its cue perhaps from the Foreign Office, foresaw that the explosive situation on the other side of the Atlantic not only posed a threat to the textile industry in Lancashire and its workers, to British investments there and in America, and to British shipping, but that it also created a new scenario for the British government vis-a-vis neutrality and the law of the sea.

In previous centuries, Britain's position as a major European
power, a major sea power, and a frequent belligerent had induced Britain to shape and interpret the laws of neutrality to suit its belligerent status. This, at least, had been the claim of former neutrals such as the United States. Now the roles of Britain and the United States were reversed. Britain wished to remain neutral in this conflict, while the United States, claiming on the one hand the belligerent’s right to institute a blockade, argued on the other hand that a state of belligerency did not exist in the South, that this was a domestic conflict only, and that any help or recognition Britain gave to the South would constitute interference by Britain in the internal affairs of the United States.

Insofar as privateering was concerned, as mentioned earlier, the United States had refused to sign the proviso of the Declaration of Paris of 1856 outlawing privateering. It had done so because privateering had provided the United States with a handy way to create a navy against a great sea power such as Britain, if and when the need arose. The British had opposed privateering. Now the roles were changed. Jefferson Davis authorized privateering in an attempt to create a Southern navy, the United States, that is, the North, which did possess a navy, small though it was compared to Britain, shifted ground and opposed privateering in a transparent move to stop the South from creating a navy. The British were caught in between.

These questions of belligerency, blockade, and privateering,
coupled with the South's immediate moves to begin the construction of a real navy in British and French yards, and the recruitment later in the war (and especially by the North) of soldiers and sailors for the armies and navies of the two combatants presented British statesmen with major policy dilemmas throughout the war. At this juncture, The Times supported Her Majesty's Government in its determination at least to stay clear of the war, for it had reached the firm conclusion itself that neither side to the war in America had any claims on Britain's support.

On the day of the British recognition of the belligerency of the South, The Times, through Chenery, contented itself with examining considerations of how the war would be fought. Chenery predicted accurately that the war would take place in Maryland and northern Virginia, and inaccurately, that no action was likely in the West. (36)

The Times's first leader on the 7th, written by Woodham, was highly critical of both sides. Woodham argued that this civil war was not only unbelievable, but it also suffered in comparison with civil wars of the "dark ages" of history in that it was not being fought for any high principle. The North, which could have vindicated itself by denouncing slavery, was not doing so; the South, which might have been supported for fighting for its independence, had not had its independence threatened. In fact, "the contest stands out as a mere quarrel for territory..." not
a justification for civil war. He concluded with a final comparison which was bound to endear The Times to Americans, both North and South:

We cannot without the deepest sorrow see such a people precipitating itself into a civil war like the half-breeds of Mexico.

(37)

The idea of mediation may have been broached by Ellice to his friend Delane at this time, as it had been to the Prime Minister, or perhaps this was just a proposal whose time had come, for on the 9th of May, Mozley's lead article dealt with that topic. Stating that while for reasonable observers "there were/ suggestions so obvious,...that they /had/ only to be offered and they /would be/ sure to be adopted" Mozley wrote that

...a territorial division at once, a mixed commission, anything seems better than the barbarous ordeal of mutual destruction /which North and South have chosen/ in order to find out, not which is the most in the right, but which is the strongest...

He concluded, as had Woodham, that there simply was no good reason for this war, that "these thirty millions of our own flesh and blood are fighting for a shadow." (38)

Two days later, Chenery dismissed the mediation idea as useless, in much the same vein as Palmerston had written to Ellice and Russell. "...Counsel or mediation might as well be offered to the hurricanes which sweep over the Gulf of Mexico." "All that we can do is to keep aloof from the dreadful
encounter," he stated. He expressed some satisfaction at Palmerston's assurance in the House debate that British finances were not likely to suffer from the war, and Home Secretary George Cornewall Lewis's stern admonition that British citizens could expect no protection by their government if they chose to "privateer." (39)

In the same issue of the paper, Times readers were able to savour the mood in America via two letters, one from Russell, written in Norfolk, Va., on 15 April and reporting the fall of Sumter, and the other from Bancroft Davis, dated 27 April, New York. Russell, speaking of the determination of the South, wrote "It seems to me that Mr. Seward has all along undervalued the spirit and the resolution of the Southern Slave States." Davis described the assembling of troops in the North. "All feel that it is a war for national existence, and are ready to sacrifice everything rather than have the Stars and Stripes blotted out..." (40)

By the time Bancroft Davis was expressing his clearly patriotic and pro-Union convictions in his letters from New York, Russell had moved on to Savannah, Georgia. His latest letter in The Times, however, was dated April 21 and came from Charleston, South Carolina. It detailed military preparations there, which he said, were more formidable than one would expect. (41)

In a private letter to Davis he wrote of the first reactions of
Southern leaders to the news of mobilization in the North.

There is a great change in the tone of men here since the news from New York has been made public. The swagger and exultation have disappeared. New York is abused roundly, but it is obvious that they are surprised to find they are not going to have it all their own way...

They are in great hopes that Great Britain will not permit a blockade and they swear they'll keep every bale of cotton for a year to (test?) how Lowell and Manchester can stand.

(42)

From Savannah, Russell went on to Montgomery, Alabama, where he was introduced to Jefferson Davis. In his diary he wrote, "He is a very calm resolute man...spare and lean...with extremely wrinkled puckered skin on thin intellectual head." (43) The new president of the Confederate States not only granted Russell this interview; he also cleared Russell's way to further interviews and travel by directing his Secretary of State for War to prepare a sort of passport for Russell while he was in the South.

Sam Ward had written Seward, as noted earlier, that Russell argued against secession wherever he went. Ward may have exaggerated to win favour for his friend with Seward, or Russell may just have found this a good method to get his hosts to express their views. On the 13th, Russell had written in his diary, "I felt very shaky today and had a vague notion that I drank rather too much last night...but there is always great excitement in arguing with Americans." (44) Whatever may have
been the case, the Southerners were most hospitable to Russell, taking him into their homes, granting him easy access to principal southern leaders, and allowing him to inspect their military preparations and fortifications. Just before going to Montgomery, Russell and Ward were entertained at the White House Plantation where Russell reported a general desire had been expressed for the rule of a Prince of England. (45)

The idea did not appear in The Times until the publication on 28 May of Russell’s April 30 letter. Interestingly enough, it was roundly condemned by Mary Chesnut, the wife of a prominent Southern leader, in a diary entry she made sometime between June 10 and June 13, by which time she had been able to read Russell’s April 30 letter in The Times. "Russell’s letters filled with rubbish about our wanting an English prince to reign over us," she wrote. She was also critical of Russell’s assertion that the North’s mobilization had had a sobering effect on people in the South. "He actually intimates," she continued, "that the noisy arming, drumming, marching, proclaiming, at the North scares us." (46)

Mrs. Chesnut had met Russell when he had visited Charleston in April, and had toured Fort Sumter. "They say/...poor Russell was awfully bored," she had written then. "He only wanted to see the forts, &c, and news that was suitable to make an interesting article." (47)
After another meeting in May, Mrs. Chesnut wrote, "Russell of the Times wondered how we had the heart to enjoy life so thoroughly, when all the Northern papers said we were to be exterminated in such a short time. "Russell's manner I did not like. He was, I thought, snobbish. Sam Ward was as oily as ever." (48)

As to Russell's debates with his southern hosts and the reaction of these people to his views, Mrs. Chesnut opined that

Charleston people are thin-skinned. They shrink from Russell's touches.

I find his criticisms mild. He has a light touch. I expected so much worse. Those Englishmen come, somebody says, with their three p's: pen -- paper -- prejudices.

(49)

George Templeton Strong had written earlier, when the Prince of Wales had visited New York, that leading New Yorkers were great admirers of Britain. Russell found this same phenomenon in South Carolina which he described as an "intense affection for the British connexion, a love of British habits and customs, a respect for British sentiment, law, authority, order, civilization, and literature." (50)

It was this enormous respect for Britain and things British which made Americans so sensitive to anything emanating from that quarter which smelled of criticism. Palmerston was wise enough to see this. The Times apparently was not.
In London, the Government’s declaration on the 5th of May, and a proclamation of the Queen on the 14th in regard to foreign enlistment, brought on heightened tension between the North and Britain, just as the American Minister Adams was making his arrival in London. He noted in his diary a meeting with the American Bates, of the commercial firm Baring Brothers, who told Adams of his "uneasiness respecting the proceedings of the government here..." Adams talked on the 14th with M.P. William Forster, who was to be one of the North’s few friends in the House of Commons. Forster sought advice from Adams on the best way to meet Gregory’s move to recognize the South, regretted Lord Russell’s language in debate the previous week, and worried that the proclamation which was actually issued that day would complicate matters very considerably. Adams received despatches from Seward in Washington on the 17th which "expressed not a little indignation at the behavior of the Ministry here and directed me to demand an explanation."

His first meeting with Russell took place the next day at Russell’s London home, Pembroke Lodge in Richmond. After a conversation of about an hour, Adams wrote pessimistically in his diary, "My conclusion is that the permanency of my stay is by no means certain." (51)

The Times, which Minister Adams undoubtedly read immediately, continued to support the government’s position wholeheartedly,
while trying to maintain a semblance of neutrality. There were two leaders on the 15th of May, one of which Chenery wrote. In the first of these, *The Times* stated:

Being no longer able to deny the existence of a dreadful Civil War, we are compelled to take official notice of it. This springs, not from any particular favour or affection which we feel for either side, but rather from the necessity of bringing our own proceedings into harmony with the stern realities of things...

A second leader explored the question of the Northern blockade, expressing doubt that the North would be able to mount anything but a "paper" blockade which had been declared illegal by the Declaration of Paris of 1856. (52)

The blockade question came up in the House of Lords two days later and was debated by Lords Ellenborough and Derby, with Derby taking the position that a paper blockade should not be recognized, and the North should not be allowed to claim that Southern privateers were pirates, as they were doing by denying the South the right to be recognized as belligerents.

Siding with the government, *The Times* took issue with Derby the next day, arguing that "it would be absurd to say that a blockade shall not be respected unless it be completely effective." (54)

Palmerston's government, in fact, did not challenge the legality of the blockade in any significant way throughout the ensuing war. The Prime Minister's long experience in foreign affairs had taught him that while the blockade might constitute a
major problem to the British now, it was not in their long-range interest as a major sea power to challenge this Northern blockade, and thereby, perhaps, force themselves, because of precedents, to forego a valuable weapon in any future world conflict.

While the circumspect Adams was settling into his new role and attempting to assess his country's prospects in the changed international situation, an infinitely more flamboyant American, appropriately named Cassius Marcellus Clay, came to town. Clay was an American abolitionist who had been appointed by Seward as minister to Russia. Passing through London en route to his post he seized the opportunity to state the North's position in The Times by writing a Letter to the Editor. Of course, if The Times's editors had not seen in this letter a chance to ridicule the Americans, it is not likely Minister Clay's views would have been printed. As it was it provided a wonderful target for Robert Lowe's slashing pen, and he used it to prove just how outrageous some Americans could be.

Clay presented three questions in his letter which, he wrote, he had been asked by Britons: what are we fighting for? can we subdue the revolted states? and can we govern a subjugated people? (In fact, these were questions which The Times had been raising almost daily.) As counter questions, Minister Clay asked the British: where should British honour place her in this contest? what is the interest of England now? and can England
afford to offend the great nation which will still be the United States of America even should we lose part of the South?

Clay had answered his first question on war aims by stating that Northerners were fighting for nationality and liberty. In his letter on Clay's letter, Lowe asked in return how nationality could be an aim if both North and South were the same nationality. Furthermore, how can people who forcibly put down another section with which they do not agree be said to be fighting for liberty? he queried. Lowe skipped the next two questions which Clay said he had been asked, and moved on to Clay's first question to the British which referred to British honour. Clay had argued that honour should put the British on the side of the Union because if slavery were extended in the United States, it must be restored also in the West Indies. Lowe simply dismissed this argument as worthless. He gave equally scant attention to the second question regarding British interest by noting that the North's Morrill Tariff could not be more directly opposed to British interest.

Lowe concentrated his sharpest words on Clay's final question, can England afford to offend the part of the United States which will surely be the greater even if part of the South is lost. First he asked,

...is Mr. Clay quite sure that, even if we should offend them now, the people of America will bear malice for half a century; and if they do, is he quite certain that his hundred millions will all be members of one Confederacy, and that we may not then, as we might now,
secure either half of the Union as our ally in a war against the other?

In his conclusion, Lowe put the upstart American in his place in no uncertain terms. "Mr. Clay must really allow us to give our own version of the honour and interest of England," he wrote. "Our honour and interest...is to stand aloof from contests which in no way concern us...In war we will be strictly neutral; in peace we will be the friends of whatever Power may emerge out of the frightful chaos..." (55)

There are a number of interesting points to be observed in regard to this leader. First, Lowe implied that Britain reserved the right to decide in the future to ally itself with one side against the other, while at present it professed and would try to maintain strict neutrality. Neither North nor South could expect support from Britain. On the other hand, and of equal importance, neither side could be sure that Britain would not support the other.

Secondly, in his most arch and superior manner, Lowe announced quite clearly that the British did not feel a need to be told by others what position they should take.

Finally, and perhaps most significantly, he concluded with the prediction that the winner would receive Britain's blessing and friendship. No longer was the debate one of merit, interest, or moral superiority. The laurels now were to go to the champion of the battlefield.
This was the only leader on America Lowe wrote for *The Times* during the month of May. The same was to hold true for June. During these two months when Lowe had so little opportunity to speak for his journal on the American question, Delane was experiencing a distressing eye affliction which must have interfered with his editorial work. The illness was so severe that he was offered a job by Palmerston which the Prime Minister thought might be easier on his eyes. Delane apparently considered the appointment seriously, but declined the offer early in July when his eye improved. (56)

There is nothing in Delane's correspondence at this time to indicate what position Delane held personally in regard to the American conflict, but the fact that his two major workhorses, Chenery and Woodham, carried the principal load probably indicates that there was not a great deal of controversy in regard to the position the paper took editorially.

An embarrassing slip occurred towards the end of the month, perhaps due to Delane's illness. On the 22nd, *The Times* ran a leader which repeated almost word for word Woodham's leader of 7 May. The points which Woodham had made on the 7th, and which were now stated again on the 22nd were, indeed, a fairly good summary of themes *The Times* had sounded since war had broken out in America. It including such ideas as (1) the argument between North and South was only a quarrel for territory, with no
principles involved, (2) it was sad to see the shipwreck of democracy, (3) it was too late to give advice, (4) Britain wanted only to see the states united, and (5) permanent conquest by the North of the South was impossible. (57)

Woodham could never resist a few pontifical remarks from his ivory tower in Cambridge. One of these, especially, proved awkward when his leader was run the second time, with minimal changes. Woodham had started this leader by maintaining that Europe had given up civil wars and that one had to go back to the "dark ages" to find a comparable war in Europe. European wars, he seemed to imply, were at least fought over principles. But of these, he wrote, the Americans had none. Perhaps on the possibility that someone might dispute this assertion, he added that "no convictions, however deeply entertained, can justify the extremity of civil war..."

The Saturday Review, pounced on The Times's error with great glee. Pointing out that The Times had run the same leader twice, the Review came down especially hard on this civil war idea of Woodham's. "[The Times] seems suddenly to have enrolled itself in the Peace Society," it quipped, while it pointed out that "War was not very hateful to the Times in 1854."

As to The Times's leaders in general, the Review had this delightful comment to make:

The infallible authority in Printing House Square has just favoured us with another of its curious historical
essays. We know of no sort of reading more amusing than the productions of the *Times* when it gets into an historical fit...there is something so singularly grotesque in the union of solemn pretentiousness and utter emptiness. There is a delightful piquancy about the blunders of the *Times*. There is nothing of the timid, hesitating style...There is a certain dash and vigour about the *Times* which is quite without parallel...

((58))

The *Times*, of course, was not to be stopped by such frivolous criticism. On the 22nd, a leader of Chenery’s analysed Jefferson Davis’s arguments that secession was legal and justified. Chenery dismissed both the idea that states had a right to secede, and that the South had sufficient grievance against the abolitionists of the North to engage in such a violent political act. The idea of the conflicting interests of the two sections was nearer to the truth, he wrote. However, as Love had declared two days earlier, the argument was now to be settled by arms.

If the North prevails, it will prove that the Union was a nationality; if the South makes good its independence, it will prove that the Union was a partnership during pleasure.

((59))

On the same day, the full text of Jefferson Davis’s message was published, as was a letter from Bancroft Davis, dated May 8, which filled two and three-quarters columns.

On the 23rd and 24th, The *Times* carried a lengthy essay on "The causes of the American Civil War" by J. Lothrop Motley, a wealthy
and well-connected American who had just established himself as an historian with the publication of a history of the Netherlands. Motley’s very pro-North account of the lead-up to the war does not seem to have had any impact on The Times, for its leader that day took on a decidedly anti-North tone. American statesmen, it said, “do at last know their minds. After six months of the most pitiable vacillation...they have at last heard the voice to which they pay implicit obedience...” The reference here was to Secretary Seward whose criticism of Britain’s declaration of southern belligerency had just become public. We do think, it continued,

his own experience might teach Mr. Seward a little more charity and toleration for the doubts and difficulties of European statesmen. Let him remember his own uncertainties till within the last two or three weeks...Mr. Seward may believe and tremble; we are not disposed to do either the one or the other...We must entirely decline to recognize in Mr. Seward that gifted seer to whom the future is the present.

Another leader of the 24th on Motley’s essay, a leader of the same date on the Foreign Enlistment Act, a letter to the editor on the 25th from southerner Edwin de Leon, former US Consul General in Egypt, answering Clay’s letter, three columns of news from South Carolina from “Our Special Correspondent” (Russell) on the 28th, and another four and a half columns from Russell from Montgomery, Alabama on the 30th brought The Times to its final leader of the month on the merits of the American conflict which
summed up the state of opinion thus far.

Referring first to the admirable reserve with which the House of Commons had dealt with the American question, The Times stated yet again what was clearly the Foreign Office position: "We can do no good by meddling, and we may do much harm. Our object must be to keep clear of the quarrel, and allow events to run their course..." However, each party to the contest "seems bent upon driving us from our neutrality...Both sides are bidding for us, and both sides have their partisans over here. On such perilous ground we cannot walk too warily."

Then The Times added a few thoughts of its own, though this is not to claim that these views were not in accord with the majority establishment view in Britain. The Times dismissed both sides for acting upon essentially selfish motives. "National power, territorial aggrandizement, political advantage and commercial gain" were again described as the war aims of both. Now that Americans had "flown to arms with /such/ extraordinary alacrity..." The Times stated that "The sword will be the arbitrator in the New World." But sadly, it concluded, "the event teaches us plainly enough that Republics and Democracies enjoy no exemption from the passions and follies of humanity." (61)

In two short months, The Times and the British statesmen for whom the world presumed The Times spoke had moved from the pleasures of a delightful Easter parliamentary recess to the
agonies of forging a policy in regard to a war in America. During that time, while Lord Russell had consistently instructed his minister in the United States to offer no advice, and to maintain a strictly neutral posture, The Times, by contrast, had deplored, ridiculed and denounced the actions of both Northern and Southern leaders, chastising the Americans for their belligerent behavior, and expressing scorn for their greedy, unstatesmanlike rush to arms. The war was dismissed in leader after leader as a war without principle, a merely selfish quarrel for power, territory and commercial gain. While both North and South were told that Britain would stand aloof, that neither side deserved nor could expect her support, The Times warned in a rare leader from the pen of its most prestigious writer, Robert Lowe, that she reserved the right to ally herself with one combatant if she so chose. At the same time, Lowe stated that Britain's decision would be made on the basis of success on the battlefield. Convinced that the North, in spite of its preponderance of wealth and population, could not conquer the South, The Times began to express grudging admiration for the single-mindedness of Southern leaders. At the same time it made clear its increased irritation at the North's Secretary of State Seward for his criticism of Britain's recognition of the belligerency of the South. A negative assessment of Seward had already been revealed by Lords Russell and North in their confidential despatches, and had very likely been shared by members of the Foreign Office and/or Palmerston with Delane.
Through its news coverage and in its choice of features, The Times continued to bend over backwards to give its public the opportunity to read both sides of the quarrel in America. In its leaders, however, The Times began to edge away, ever so slightly, from the lofty impartiality it claimed for Britain.

2. The Times, 5 April 1861, 7.
3. The Times, 5 April 1861, 7.
4. The Times, 5 April 1861.
5. The Times, 10 April 1861, 12.
6. The Times, 10 April 1861, 12.
8. Seward Papers 2435. The letter was written from Willard's Hotel on 8 April 1861.
9. Times Archives, Russell's Diary, 8 April 1861.
10. Seward Papers 2436, 9 April 1861.
11. Seward Papers 2449, 19 April 1861.
12. The Times, 16 April 1861, 5.
15. Seward Papers, 2469, 2 May 1861.
21. The Times, 19 April 1861, 8.
23. The Times, 22 April 1861, 9; 23 April 1861, 12.
24. The Times, 27 April 1861, 8.
25. The Times, 29 April 1861, 8.
27. The Times, 1 May 1861, 12.
28. The Times, 1 May 1861, 8.
29. The Times, 3 May 1861, 5.
30. The Times, 2 May 1861, 8.
31. The Times, 3 May 1861, 5.
32. Probably his agent in New York, August Belmont.
33. Broadlands Mss., GC/RU/1138, letter and enclosure, 5 May 1861.
35. Later in the year, The Times performed a considerable service for its readers and the world community by initiating a series of thoughtful articles which examined such questions of international law as were highlighted by events of the war. These letters, signed "Historicus," were written by William Vernon Harcourt, a prominent lawyer who did not by any means always agree with the editorial position taken by The Times. History of The Times, II, 372.
36. The Times, 6 May 1861, 8.
37. The Times, 7 May 1861, 8, 9.
38. The Times, 9 May 1861, 8.
39. The Times, 11 May 1861, 8.
40. The Times, 11 May 1861, 9.
41. The Times, 14 May 1861, 10.
42. Davis Papers, II/261-262, 4 May 1861, from Savannah.
43. TA, Russell Diary, 7 May 1861.
44. TA, Russell Diary, 13 May 1861.
45. TA, Russell Diary, 23 April 1861.
47. Ibid., 50.
48. Ibid., 57.
49. Ibid., 67.
50. The Times, 28 May 1861, 9.
51. Charles Francis Adams, Diary, 13, 14, 17 May 1861.
   Microfilm, United States Library of Congress.
52. The Times, 15 May 1861, 8.
53. The Times, 17 May 1861, 5.
54. The Times, 18 May 1861, 8.
55. The Times, 20 May 1861, 8.
56. Dasent, ed., XII, II, 26, 27.
57. The Times, 7 May 1861, 8; 21 May 1861, 8.
59. The Times, 22 May 1861, 8.
60. The Times 23 May 1861, 8.
61. The Times, 30 May 1861, 8.
By the middle of the year 1861, the United States had become, in the words of The Times of London, the "Dis-United States." It was no longer just a seriously troubled nation threatened with division, but a nation in an actual state of civil war. Even before the split between North and South had become real, both contesting parties to the conflict looked for support from their greatest trading partner, Great Britain. Northern politicians simply assumed that the slavery issue would bring Britain to their side, while Southern leaders counted on cotton to force Britain to recognize their new republic.

Unfortunately, while Lincoln's new government floundered with the greatest emergency in the history of the nation, northern manufacturers, who now controlled Congress, seized the chance to pass a high tariff bill. This extremely short-sighted move, taken apparently with little thought to foreign policy implications, caused enormous resentment among the moneyed classes in Britain, and fed the anti-northern/anti-democratic sentiments of Britain's rulers.
Meanwhile, the new Confederate States of America, as part of its orderly self-creation, despatched emissaries to London to plead for recognition of the South. The old government, now the North only, sent to Britain as Minister the nearest thing it had to an aristocrat, Charles Francis Adams. Secretary of State Seward, the North's "foreign minister," immediately took the position that there was only one legitimate government in the United States, and that the conflict was a purely domestic matter. In this way he hoped to stave off any recognition whatsoever of the self-proclaimed Confederate States of America.

Both North and South were to be disappointed in these early days, however, as Britain quickly declared its neutrality, hoping somehow or other to be able to continue to maintain good relations with both parties. Seward's legalistic schemes to avoid any kind of recognition of the South were thus foiled by the cautious British, while, at the same time, Southern leaders were disappointed when Britain not only branded privateering illegal and warned its citizens to refrain from enlisting in the service of either party, but, perhaps more importantly, appeared to be willing to recognize the legitimacy of the naval blockade Lincoln declared of the South.

Diplomatic formalities with the Southern representatives were side-stepped by Foreign Minister Russell, who agreed only to talk with these gentlemen informally. Charles Francis Adams, however, as Minister of the United States to the United Kingdom, was
accorded full recognition, presented to the Queen, and received by Lord Russell at his home in Richmond. Unfortunately, (and perhaps, not coincidentally,) Adams had arrived in London just after the British had declared neutrality, and his first task set him by his Secretary of State, therefore, was to ask the British foreign minister for an explanation of Her Majesty’s Government’s behavior. Seward could not have known yet of the Declaration of Neutrality, but Lord Russell’s handling of questions in the House of Commons earlier in May had left no doubt that the British were hoping to stay clear of the conflict. Moreover, the editorial pronouncements of The Times, considered by the world at large to be the official voice of the British government, had criticized the Americans vehemently, had decried the war, and had declared that neither side was fighting for a worthy cause.

When Adams visited Lord Russell on May 18th he came away convinced that the permanency of his stay was by no means certain. Yet Russell reported to his emissary in Washington, Lord Lyons, that he had assured Adams that “we have no thoughts of assisting the South. That the Sympathies of this Country were rather with the North than with the South, but we wished to live on amicable terms with both Parties.” (1)

This fence-sitting, which seemed so sensible to the British, did not satisfy Adams. His darker interpretation of Russell’s words were coloured first by his conviction that Britain should support the North, for Adams was one of those who firmly believed
the great issue of the war was slavery. It was no doubt very
discouraging to Adams to learn in his interview with Lord Russell
that the British saw things very differently, and that the overt
support by the British which the North desired so passionately
would not be forthcoming.

Adams’s negative reading of the future of his diplomatic
mission in Britain was probably dictated also, if subconsciously,
by his puritan reaction to Britain’s wealthy and haughty
aristocracy. He had hinted at these feelings in his diary
shortly after his arrival in London:

We drove through the park just at the time of display
and the number and show of the equipages indicate the
taste and habits of the higher classes. Whilst I
cannot say I admire the elegance or the grace of their
carriages, it is impossible not to feel the existence
of extraordinary and positive wealth.

(2)

A few days later he reported that J. Lothrop Motley’s wife had
called on Mrs. Adams, speaking in harsh language of the style of
conversation on American affairs in fashionable circles. Minister and Mrs. Motley were on their way to Vienna, where the
historian of the Dutch Republic would represent the United States
at the court of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Adams’s comment in
his diary was that “the native British arrogance will burst out
at times, no matter what restraints are put upon it.” (3)

Adams was not a man like Motley who delighted in moving in
"fashionable circles." In fact, he apparently felt awkward and insecurity in the society he was expected to frequent. Some six weeks after he had arrived in London, he wrote after attending a large reception that "I did not find a soul I knew; this is one of the peculiarities of London society that you may stand anywhere in this way, and nobody will ever think of addressing you..." (4)

And a week after that:

The season of gaiety is drawing to a close, and I confess I am glad of it. A sense of duty has led me thus far to accept cheerfully all the disagreeables of society. It is putting a great deal of constraint upon my own nature which is reserved, and little calculated to push forward with any advances.

(5)

Adams was not comfortable in society, nor was he, unlike the Abolitionist leader Cassius Clay, or Bancroft Davis's friend Sanford, who had been sent to Belgium as American minister, inclined to use the press to present his country's case. On the last day of May, Minister and Mrs. Adams were entertained at dinner by Monckton Milnes, a liberal Member of Parliament who was among the small minority who supported the North throughout the war. One member of the dinner party whose name Minister Adams noted in his diary that night was "Mowbray Morris, the manager of the London Times." (6) Surprisingly, Adams seems to have made no effort whatsoever to follow up this important contact, or to make any effort to meet members of the press of whatever importance or
persuasion. Adams had had journalistic experience some years earlier in Massachusetts, which would lead one to assume that he recognized the importance of the press. But apparently he was glad to leave that activity behind, seeing himself now as a diplomat, not a publicist -- as a man who dealt with governments, not newspapers.

This lack of Adams's appreciation of the importance of wooing the press was an important omission, for the public contest for Britain's support was still going on, even if the latest journalistic pronouncements were less than favourable. Adams, of course, can be partially excused, for he had just arrived in London and was not only required to participate in the immediate diplomatic formalities, pay important calls on the Queen, Lords Russell and Palmerston, and receive countless visitors, but also to overlap with his predecessor in the job, become familiar with the office routine and staff, and find a suitable home for his family.

Nevertheless, while Adams was tending to what he undoubtedly considered to be the most important immediate matters, public attention was naturally attracted to the flamboyant Clay, who continued to speak out. By now Clay had moved on to Paris where a public dinner was held, and speeches were made to support the Northern cause. A news report of this dinner meeting gave The Times a second opportunity to deride Clay, and by implication his government, as ridiculous, rash, and extreme. An article titled
"Americans in Paris" quoted Clay as having stated that "If England, after all she has said against slavery, shall draw her sword in its defence, then we say, great as she is, she shall perish by the sword...Perfide Albion."

On the same day, a Times leader by Chenery referred scornfully to Clay's further claim that France would support the United States "when Britain mingleth the red crosses of the Union Jack with the piratical black flag of the 'Confederate States of America.'" (7)

The truth was that Lord Russell had already instructed Lord Cowley, his Ambassador in France, to seek France's concurrence with the British position on the belligerency of the South, and this agreement had been received. Moreover, the British had specifically declared themselves as opposed to privateering. (8)

To make matters worse, the transatlantic debate may well have been heightened by an article written by Adams's son Henry to the New York Times very soon after his arrival in London. Henry Adams had secretly made arrangements with Editor Raymond of the New York Times to send a bi-weekly letter from London as the Times's special correspondent. He continued this practice until January 1862. (9)

In an article from London, dated May 25, the younger Adams devoted considerable space to an analysis of London papers, called The Times of London a "sort of aristocratic New-York Herald," and wrote that a great Southern success would throw all
of the English papers over to the South. He attacked the British people for not recognizing that the civil war was a struggle between "medieval barbarism" and "modern civilization," adding that neutrality was a "disgrace to their great name." He wrote that Palmerston's Liberal ministry lacked cohesion and even implied that if the Northern government took a hard line with the British, it might cause such trouble to Palmerston's government that it would "divide and break up." (10)

Had the elder Adams known of his son's journalistic efforts, he would surely have been appalled. Months later, he took the trouble to chastise Cassius Clay for his public statements in London and Paris. (11) At about the same time, after son Henry had gotten into trouble over an article he had written for the Atlantic Monthly, Minister Adams asked him not to write for publication again. (12) As head of mission, Adams would most surely have objected to his son's adding any fuel to the fire which was already beginning to inflame relations between Britain and the North, and which it was Minister Adams's job to abate.

Among other things, Adams had learned through a conversation with Palmerston that the British considered Seward's way of doing business with Lord Lyons "ungracious and unpleasant." (13) Construing this as a misunderstanding by Lord Lyons of Seward's "awkward brusquerie which he means to be playful," he vowed in his diary to write Seward about it. By the time he did write his chief, some three weeks later, he had decided that the mischief
was being caused by Senator Sumner, the highly influential chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, who had numerous important contacts in Britain. Adams wrote, in his confidential letter to Seward:

The very hostile manner in which one of the Senators of my State is in the constant habit of speaking about you everywhere in private, must have become known to you long before this, as there was no pretence of concealment before I came away. I allude to it now only to put you on your guard as to the effect produced on yourself and your influence at this point. I know he has quoted the opinions of Lord Lyons as harmonising with his own. He has also correspondents here, some of whom acknowledge the receipt of late letters from home, though they said nothing to me of their contents. All this is important only as explaining what I cannot fail to observe here, a prevailing tone of distrust of your policy and motives...

(14)

That Adams shared at least a modicum of this distrust, if not of Seward, certainly of Lincoln and his cabinet, is clear from his diary entry of 10 June. He had received despatches from Washington containing a considerable amount of bad news. In despair he wrote:

The government seems almost ready to declare war with all the powers of Europe...I scarcely know how to understand Mr. Seward. The rest of the government may be demented for all that I know, but he surely is calm and wise. My duty here is to prevent the mutual irritation from coming to a downright quarrel..."

(15)

Neither his son, nor Cassius Clay, nor John Delane did anything to help Adams defuse the growing anger between the British and
the Northern government. The Times, for its part, carried a letter on the 5th of June from Bancroft Davis in New York which stated Northern grievances plainly. Davis's letter became the basis of an angry Times leader responding to these reported Northern complaints. Davis had written that

Great disappointment is felt in New York at the manner in which the news of the perils of this nation was received in England; nor is the expression of that disappointment always of the mildest form. Yet it is believed here that when the real issue between the North and the South -- or, rather between the Government of the United States and the rebels -- is fairly understood, English sympathy will be with the Government...The questions between the two parties are argued in England as if nothing were at issue but the right of self-government. Nothing could be further from the truth...Secession is only revolution in another form...

The Times answered Davis's charges with intense vexation in a leader written by Cooke. Referring first to American complaints at the British Declaration of Neutrality, Cooke asked, "What have we done to deserve this fierce invective?" He pointed out that Britain had not reacted so negatively when the United States had helped the Russians during the Crimean War. Americans had not protested when a Canadian regiment had been given to the Northern army, or when Englishmen had formed a rifle corps in New York.

We have not only made formal proclamations against all interference in this melancholy conflict, but we have addressed ourselves in good faith and with hearty goodwill to the prevention of any privateers going forth from our dockyards...Nothing could be more unpopular in England at this moment than any interference with this quarrel...It is quite absurd in
the Northern States to expect us to take part in this quarrel, and it is rather a sign of imbecility to suppose their scolding can affect us. When, if ever, they proclaim the abolition of slavery throughout the Union, they will have all our sentiment on their side. But we have heard no whisper of this hitherto.

(Cooke’s reference to the slavery issue here is especially interesting, if for no other reason than the fact that slavery was now only rarely mentioned in Times leaders. Cooke was, of course, correct that Lincoln’s government was following the same policy of downplaying the slavery issue. Lincoln’s administration, and the new Northern nation, had focussed on "union," rather than slavery, as their war aim for very good reasons. First, (and the few people who were really informed as to American geography and politics, such as Lowe, would have known this), slavery existed in the very capitol of the nation, Washington, D.C. Nor was this a pocket of slavery in an otherwise non-slave region; on the contrary, the District of Columbia was surrounded on the north by the slave state of Maryland, and faced, across the Potomac, with the slave state of Virginia. In short, if Lincoln and his government had declared against slavery at this point he would have lost his capitol immediately. (18)

Secondly, and The Times’s editors had shown in their discussions of the relative chances for victory of North or South that they were very much aware of this factor, Lincoln desperately needed to gain the allegiance of the so-called
"border" states, where slavery was also an established institution. Third, The Times's editors also clearly knew that, while Lincoln had indicated he did not personally favour slavery, he and his colleagues had tried in the early months of 1861 to assuage the fears of Southern separatist leaders by assuring them that they had no intention of interfering with slavery where it already existed. Delane and his leader-writers knew as well as anyone that the sticking point between North and South for decades had been the extension of slavery into the new territories. But by this time The Times had begun to interpret this as having nothing to do with slavery, but everything to do with territorial conquest.

In light of the understanding and knowledge of American affairs which The Times had shown itself to have, Cooke's assertion that Britain would have supported the North had it declared itself as waging war against slavery can therefore only be termed hypocritical. The Times's armchair strategists were realistic men who knew that such a declaration by the new Northern government was nothing short of impossible.

It is quite likely that The Times was merely beginning to reflect a swing in sentiment which was increasingly apparent in those fashionable circles American Minister Adams found it so onerous to frequent. Adams got his news from people who came to see him, such as Mrs. Motley, and, of course, from reading The Times. Seward also received a letter early in June apprising him
of this shift in opinion from August Belmont who, as noted earlier, was Rothchild's agent in New York.

...you request ed/ me to inform you from time to time of the phases of public opinion in Europe such as they may come to my knowledge...The letters received by the last steamer from England are anything but satisfactory. The Cotton interest seems to have gained so complete an ascendance over every other consideration that the Anti-slavery feeling is entirely put into the background.

Belmont added that it was his "candid opinion that the Morrill Tariff has had as much to do with this unfortunate state of feeling in Europe as any other circumstance." (19)

The Times's leaders in June 1861 increasingly demonstrated that Belmont's reading of the situation was correct, although The Times was not yet ready to declare for the South. The more candid statement of Britain's attitude was Cooke's line in the June 5th leader, "it is rather a sign of imbecility to suppose their scolding can affect us." As The Times leaders had declared at the time of the visit of the Prince of Wales to the United States in the happier days of 1860, Britain viewed itself as the older, wiser brother, dignified and reasonable, and quite disinclined to accept advice from its distinctly inferior sibling. America was seen as Jonathan, the younger, fractious, quarrelsome, hot-headed brother, who repeatedly needed to be put in his place. Now that this unfortunate division had occurred, North and South were not just one, but two younger brothers who bragged and swaggered, and preferred to settle their arguments with a scuffle in the dirt.
rather than with reasonable, responsible debate, and sound, decisive, statesmanlike actions, such as older brothers prided themselves on taking. In one way only, by this time in early June of 1861, The Times had begun to view the Southern brother as superior to the fumbling fool in the North. The Southern brother had at least decided on a policy and had gone right to work to implement it.

Three days later Cooke's important leader was followed by a comment of Chenery's. The House of Commons the night before had decided to postpone debate indefinitely on a motion of one of its members to recognize the Confederate government. In the leader, Chenery pointed, as he had on an earlier occasion, to the restraint the British had demonstrated in their Parliament. This, he said, referring once again to Cassius Clay,

...should be enough to convince the Northern Americans how foolish and ungrateful were the orations of their diplomatic representatives at Paris the other day. Short of joining the Northern States against the Confederates...there is nothing that the British nation and Legislature have not done for the American people...

Perhaps to counterbalance his criticism of Northern behavior, Chenery specifically rejected again Jefferson Davis's argument that secession was legitimate. "But on the other hand," he continued, "secession has been complete/d/," as reasonable men should realize. Chenery then laid down a warning to the North,

The North is the more powerful of the two; it is nearer to us, and speaks louder than the Secessionists, and we consequently consider it more than its opponent
when the question of neutrality is concerned. But it does not follow that the anger of the Confederates might not also be of much inconvenience, if not danger to England...a people who control the great crop which feeds three or four millions of Englishmen must...be of some importance in the eyes of...the House of Commons.

(20)

Meanwhile The Times carried reports from William Howard Russell from Montgomery, Alabama, where Russell described his meeting with the new president of the South, Jefferson Davis. He wrote that neither North nor South had been prepared for the aggressiveness or resistance of the other. In another letter from Mobile, Alabama, Russell noted that "Among the most determined opponents of the North, and the most vehement friends of what are called here 'domestic institutions' [slavery], are the British residents, English, Irish and Scotch, who are settled here for trading purposes, and who are frequently slaveholders."

(21)

On the 10th of June, The Times carried two additional, and very lengthy, Russell letters from Mobile. The first, dated May 13/14, filled three and one-quarter columns and was devoted to a description of Russell's visits to the Southern (formerly Northern) Fort Pickens, and to the Northern fortifications at Pensacola. The second letter from Russell, written May 16, occupied five columns, and was full of local colour, political comment, and descriptions of the forts and their troops.

Chenery continued to chastise the North in a leader on the 11th
of June. Bad manners, he wrote, are what characterizes the behavior of the Northerners. "The American people have acquired a habit of petulance, and almost of insolence, in dealing with foreign Powers..." They also fail to realize that their whole grievance against Britain at this date was that "we think as they thought six weeks before..."

That the people of the North should be unable to control their anger at finding that an independent foreign Power does not commit itself to demonstrations of hostility against ten millions of civilized men with whom it has no quarrel, and whose rights to independence, though now denied, were admitted by the North itself a few weeks ago, shows to what a point of irritability the Americans had been brought by years of prosperity and success.

(22)

In this, The Times's rival, The Saturday Review, agreed. In a short note entitled "American Invectives Against England," the Review wrote, "Even in the history of American ill-breeding and injustice, no parallel can be found for the extravagant display of causeless hostility to England by politicians who claim to represent the feeling of the North." After declaring that it too upheld the British government's declaration of neutrality, the Review criticized "/the/ New York press, Mr. Clay, and the American Correspondent of the Times" for maintaining in substance "that all insurgents are to be regarded as criminals..." This, they simply could not accept. (23)

Reports from Russell and Davis continued to pour in, filling
many columns of The Times almost daily. Davis told of military preparations in the North, of the debates raging in the border states, and of the disruption of telegraph services from Washington occasioned by the first hysteria over spying which had begun to beset the Northern government. (24)

He continued to report Northern irritation at Britain's neutral stance, asking "What has the United States done that England should welcome its disintegration?," and writing that people were becoming convinced that England sympathized with southern slavery. (25) He sent news of troop emplacements, clippings from southern newspapers describing Jefferson Davis's trip from Montgomery to Richmond, and reports of a dispute between a general and the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court over arrest and detention of a citizen including possible infringement of the right of habeas corpus. (26)

Davis also sent the first real military news in a letter published later in the month. He described an attack on a rebel battery near Fort Monroe (on the Potomac, downriver from Washington,) and of federal troops moving towards Harpers Ferry, the site of a federal arsenal which had been made famous by John Brown's raid before the war. (27)

On this same day the question of sending additional troops to Canada was discussed in Parliament. A week earlier Love had stated The Times's position on this question in his one leader of
the month. Reviewing relations with the United States, Love had written that the more violent the quarrels in North America, the less the British should have troops there. For one thing, it would be risky sending three thousand troops to America who would have little to do and only be tempted to go fight in the war in the States. Furthermore, an attack by the United States on Canada seemed very unlikely, for such a move would force the North to face Britain in addition to the South, northern troops were as yet untrained, and Canada had her own resources. Finally, events in Europe were unsettled enough that the troops could just as probably be needed at home as in Canada. In short, the reinforcement of the Canadian contingent was not a good idea.

On the 25th, in its columns devoted to Parliamentary debate, The Times reported that Sir J. Fergusson had argued in the House of Commons that the contemplated force was too small to do any good, but large enough to appear to be meddling in the American civil war. Palmerston answered that additional troops were only being sent as a sensible precaution, and that they were being sent now because they could not be transported easily and comfortably in the winter.

The Times made no editorial comment on this matter, but turned its attention instead to the "storm which is now raging against us throughout the Northern States," which The Times (Chenery) characterized as "strange as it is scandalous."
"appear," Chenery wrote, that

...the Cabinet at Washington has yielded to the national madness. We know not what reports respecting the British government and people have been sent home by the new Minister of the United States, but...we can hardly suppose that he can have ventured upon such statements as are attributed to "a distinguished American" by the Washington correspondent of the New York Herald /that/ "We now learn that the English admiralty is about to send a most formidable fleet to American waters...The British Ministry, we are told, strongly sympathizes with the Southern insurgents." But "only let the Lincoln Government assume a bold and determined policy towards England, and all may yet be well."

This last sentence, part of a letter The Times quoted from "the Washington correspondent of the New York Herald", is so similar to the position Henry Adams took in a letter he sent to the New York Times on 25 May that it is tempting to question the authorship of the Herald article, or wonder if some poaching might have occurred. (30)

It is clear from Minister Adams's diary entries that he was doing everything in his power to pour oil on the increasingly troubled waters. On the 12th, in a conversation with Lord Russell, Adams wrote that he "tried to act up to my instructions at the same time that I softened as well as I could the sharp edge." The issue of Seward's alleged warlike intentions arose once more when Adams questioned Lord Russell about the despatch of troops to Canada. In his answer, Russell referred to "a threat made by Governor Seward to Lord Lyons of the seizure of a British
vessel on Lake Ontario." Adam’s indulgent comment about his chief’s behavior was: "Another case of Seward’s horseplay." (31)

Towards the end of June, Chenery had a different explanation for the cooling Anglo-American relations:

...in the present case the people of the Northern States have without the shadow of reason and in spite of manifold instances of courtesy and goodwill on our part, chosen to lash themselves into a fury...No American in his senses believes that we are about to give any help to the Confederate States...The reasons advanced by the Northerners to justify their indignation are only pretexts, used to cover the real cause of it -- namely, the wound which their vanity has suffered by our not having shown sufficient admiration of the levy made in obedience to President Lincoln’s proclamation...This being plainly the case we shall not attempt to coax the Northerners into good humour by assurances of any kind.

(32)

The "levy" to which Chenery referred was Lincoln’s call to arms which had been enthusiastically met, and of which Bancroft Davis had written. Chenery’s choice of reason for Northern indignation seems a bit obscure, but he was certainly right that Northerners were "wounded" at the lack of support they felt was coming from Great Britain, just as the British were annoyed at what they considered obtuseness on the part of those Northerners who insisted on viewing "neutrality" as "hostility."

The widening perception gap was clearly expressed by Mowbray Morris at about the same time in a letter he wrote to Bancroft Davis. "What are we to do to keep out of a quarrel?" he asked in
dismay.

If soft words and the repeated expression of sympathy will not avail, what will? You say that the Times is mistaken in supposing that the South will be a match for the North. I do not recollect having seen any such opinion in the Times, and even if such a prophecy had been hazarded, I cannot take it as a justification of the hard things that are being published of us by almost all the Northern Journals. When I say "us" I mean the English people, not the Times -- The English people who both by themselves and their Government have always shewn the utmost forbearance and understanding for the delicate sensibilities of Americans.

Morris may have been concerned that the Northerners were not understanding of the British position, but he was not yet ready to give up on his Northern correspondent. That same day he wrote to Russell that "between you and Davis we cannot fail to know all that goes on in the Federal Camp and Cabinet." In the same letter he expressed some hope that Russell had managed to arrange for someone to send news from the South now that his southern trip was about to come to an end. (34)

In fact, The Times did not have a man in the South from this time until the fall of 1862. At that time, some fifteen crucial months later, Francis Lawley secretly journeyed to Richmond in the company of Colonel Garnet Wolseley, a British officer on leave from Canada, and began sending letters to The Times. Lawley's contribution to the Times's columns will be discussed in a later chapter. (35)
Russell seems to have been rather pleased to leave the South, as he wrote in a letter to Bancroft Davis from Cairo, Illinois on the 22nd of June, "I have at last got out of the land of Dixie & whiskey & am speeding on towards Washington where I hope to be by July 2d." Meanwhile, some American newspapers in the North had begun to snipe at Russell's letters to The Times. Russell had taken with him on his trip through the South an artist who he mentioned in his diary as "Young Mr. Davis --illustrator for the Illustrated London News." (36)

Apparently Mr. Davis was, in fact, associated with the American magazine Harper's Weekly, but had misrepresented this fact to Russell in order to travel in the South under his protection. In June, Russell obviously having learned of this subterfuge, wrote to Bancroft Davis that he was sending along "a letter to Harpers' Weekly respecting the blackguard part played by their artist Mr. Davis of which I have been just made aware." He also told his Times colleague that he had seen some paragraphs in the Chicago Tribune & other papers here attributing to me the most ludicrous statements..." and had resolved "to have no words with any representative of the local press as the falsehoods & misrepresentations which are the certain results are monstrous..." Finally, he told Bancroft Davis, "I am told I am very unpopular with the North & in New York. I can't help it -- I just write as I feel & see & I believe I may have the consolation accorded to the impartial of finding myself still more unpopular..."
A week later he wrote Davis from Niagara Falls, "I am sorry to see the hostile spirit which is growing up between England & the States. I believe on the side of the latter..." (38)

Whatever Russell’s personal beliefs, it was clear that his paper was attempting to adhere to the neutral position taken by the British government, while becoming increasingly irritated with the Northerners. The paper continued to print Russell’s letters in full, along with those of his less garrulous colleague, Bancroft Davis, whose columns continued to reflect Davis’s pro-North and pro-Union views. Interestingly, The Saturday Review, always ready to make fun of or criticize The Times showed a preference for Davis’s reporting for the moment, contrasting "Our Special Correspondent" (Russell) very unfavorably with Thucydides, and noting that "Our Own Correspondent" (Davis) wrote "like a sensible man." On the value of Russell’s lengthy reports, the Review made these rather sharp comments, designed to take the wind out of Russell’s sails:

...whom does this stuff please? We hear that there are families in which the letters of Our Special Correspondent are looked forward to with anxiety, are seized on greedily...But we found, on further inquiry, that these families were very idle families. Certainly we cannot fancy any man who has anything really to do of any kind, giving up so much as the shortest day to studies of this kind. Yet such is our current history. Such is the account of what is really a great event in the annals of the world, which to many people will be their one source of information, and which will probably form at least one source among others even to the future historian of the American civil war. Now
this is a sort of current history which is utterly worthless...Real contemporary records...are of inestimable value...But the inflated rodomontade of Our Special Correspondent simply conceals what few facts he may really have to tell us; and though doubtless he does not think so, the Special Correspondent is of all men in the very worst position for getting at the plain truth...if a man travels as an "illustrious stranger," he at once lays himself open to all the prejudices and bamboozlements of which illustrious strangers are sure to be the victims...The rhapsodical prating of a conceited egotist may delight the foolish, and may for a moment amuse the wise but it is utterly impossible that it can ever contribute the least mite to historic truth.

Russell read this comment on his work on July 18, just three days before he finally had the opportunity to report the first major battle of the war. In his diary he described the Review's article as "most spiteful and amusing," clearly taking it in his stride. (40) Whatever others might think, he intended to soldier on, refusing, as he wrote Bancroft Davis, to retract a line. (41)

As Russell had become more and more a source of controversy, criticized in both North and South and by some of his own countrymen, his paper, and, it would appear, British opinion in general, had become increasingly irritated with the North during the month of June. It was becoming especially distrustful of the Northern Secretary of State Seward. The same rising anger existed in America, as Charles Francis Adams wrote in his diary after reading the accounts from home. There are indications, he wrote, of "an approaching storm...The irritation against Great Britain
increases every moment and I know not precisely the way to counteract it, so long as their own maladroit ways contribute additional fire to the flame." (42)

He added a cheerful note a week later, though, after having had a meeting with Lord Russell. During this conversation the Foreign Minister had specifically disavowed reports of some despatches of his which had been criticized in American newspapers. It "seems to me as if we are going upon smooth water again," Adams wrote. (43)

It was fortunate for both countries that these two men were able to communicate well, for the leading journals in the two nations seemed less and less disposed to show any understanding of the other’s position or sensitivities. In America the rival armies were assembling on opposite sides of the Potomac, preparing to do battle. Northern journals, led by the New York Tribune, cried, "Forward to Richmond! Forward to Richmond -- the Rebel Congress must not be allowed to meet there on the 20th of July! By that date the place must be held by the national army!" (44)

The Northern Congress had also been called for a special session, which was to begin on the nation’s holiday, July 4th. By contrast, in Britain, parliamentarians were winding down their affairs and looking forward to the quieter summer recess, when they would have ample time to read the lengthy and dramatic
reports from "Our Special Correspondent" -- especially his vivid
description of the first major clash of arms of the American
Civil War.

1. Charles Francis Adams Diary, 18 May 1861, and Foreign Office,
3. Adams Diary, 25 May 1861.
4. Adams Diary, 2 July 1861.
5. Adams Diary, 8 July 1861.
6. Adams Diary, 31 May 1861. Bright and Cobden were at the party
   also.
7. The Times, 3 June 1861, 8.
   Lyons, 18 May 1861. It may be assumed that The Times was
   aware of the diplomatic initiative to the French either through
   contacts between Palmerston and Delane, or from Delane's friend
   Hammond in the Foreign Office.
9. Edward Chalfant, Both Sides of the Ocean. A Biography of
   Henry Adams. His First Life, 1807-1862. (Hamden, Connecticut:
   The Shoe String Press, 1982), 258 ff.
10. [Ibid.], 260.
    Charles Francis Adams to Cassius Clay, 14 January 1862.
13. Adams Diary, 1 June 1861.
   1861.
15. Adams Diary, 10 June 1861.
16. The Times, 5 June 1861, 5.
17. The Times, 5 June 1861, 9.


19. Seward Papers, 2481, 6 June 1861.
20. The Times, 8 June 1861, 9.
21. The Times, 6 June 1861, 12; 7 June 1861, 5.
22. The Times, 11 June 1861, 8, 9.


24. The Times, 5 June 1861, 5.
25. The Times, 12 June 1861, 12.
26. The Times, 18 June 1861, 12.
27. The Times, 25 June 1861, 5.
28. The Times, 17 June 1861, 8.


30. Chalfant, op. cit., 259, 260. Henry Adams wrote, "If our Government forces the evil to a head by resenting the course the Ministry have taken here, it will infallibly create trouble here; may even make a question on which the Ministry would divide and break up."

31. Adams Diary, 12 June 1861.
32. The Times, 25 June 1861, 8, 9.
33. Times Archives, Morris, 11/155, 27 June 1861.

36. TA, Russell Diary, 13 April 1861.
38. Davis Papers, II/280-281, 29 June 1861.
40. TA, Russell Diary, 18 July 1861.
41. Davis Papers, II/271-272, 22 June 1861.
42. Adams Diary, 22 June 1861.
43. Adams Diary, 28 June 1861.
Chapter Ten

"Bull's Run"

In the summer of 1861, in the 85th year of the Republic, Northern and Southern politicians had very different tasks facing them when the American national day, the fourth of July, came around. The "glorious fourth" was normally a day for bombastic and patriotic speeches, for parades and for picnics -- a day when the political leaders of the young nation celebrated the courage of the Founding Fathers, the virtues of democracy, and the greatness and promise of the American experiment. On this fourth of July, 1861, as The Times remarked, "With the same cries of Liberty, Civilization, Self-Government, the Rights of Man, the Rights of Communities, two angry combattants are rushing to the strife." (1)

In Washington, Times correspondent William Howard Russell returned from his trip through the land of secession on July 3rd, one day before Congress was to sit in special session. Russell decided to go to the Senate to partake of and record some of the expected rhetoric of that day. When he applied to British Minister Lord Lyons for permission to sit in the diplomatic
section of the visitor's gallery, he was told by one of the
Minister's aides, Monson, that "the condition of things with Lord
Lyons and Seward had been very bad so much so Lord Lyons w'd not
go near State Dept for fear of being insulted..." Russell made
his next call on Seward himself who, he wrote, "seemed quite
happy at being able to inform me...that a passport system had
been established now and that my passport had been signed by Lord
Lyons but now no good till he signed it and then it must be
signed by General Scott." (2) Security was being tightened, and
Russell and The Times's credit was slipping.

Perhaps this diary entry is incorrectly dated, for among
Seward's papers is a letter from Russell dated the 6th which
speaks of the same matter.

I looked in at you thru' the door yesterday when I
called on Mr. Secretary but you had an air of such
"work to be done" about you I could not bring myself to
intrude upon you, altho I would gladly if permitted
renew the pleasure of your acquaintance. The Secretary
of State informed me that it is now necessary for
foreigners to be provided with passports and I herewith
beg to enclose mine.

(3)

On the 5th, Russell called on General Scott, the aging hero of
the Mexican War who was now Lincoln's top general. Scott,
Russell wrote, was "too busy to see me." Russell was put out
even to refer to the General as "old Vanity," but he added that
he "really is a fine old lump of martial Glory..." On the same
day, he went to the Senate where he sat with his friend John
Bigelow who was in town talking to Seward and the President about taking the post of consul in Paris. (4)

He breakfasted with Bigelow on Saturday the 6th in the company of General McDowell (who was to command the Union army in the forthcoming battle of Bull's Run), and again on Sunday the 7th, where Bigelow's party also included Senators King and Wilson (both from the state of New York), Thurlow Weed (Seward's mentor) and others. Bigelow wrote in his diary that Seward was to have come but "said he had an engagement at a late hour. I judge from the way he farther talks he had no inclination to pay homage to Russell." (5)

The Times's New York correspondent, Bancroft Davis, seems to have made a trip to Washington at about this time, perhaps to cover the opening of the new session of Congress, for Russell wrote to Davis on the 4th, "Where will you put up at Washington? If you like I will look for a logement for you. I am here in two furnished clothes chests over a watercloset facetiously considered apartments." In a more serious vein he wrote, "Relations with England & France better than they were..." (6)

Davis had sent a letter to Secretary Seward from New York late in June, asking for an advance copy of the President's message to the Congress, justifying his request with the information that the London steamer sailed on the 3rd. He had added that he felt that his own "steady vindication of the policy of the government
in the columns of /The Times/ entitles me to ask this favor if it is granted to anyone." (7)

This may explain Davis's visit to Washington, although the date of Russell's letter would indicate that Davis did not arrive in time for the opening of Congress. Whether the New York correspondent was able to get an advance copy from Seward is not clear, but the President's Message did arrive in London in good time, and was published in full in The Times on the 19th of July.

Russell's travelling companion, Sam Ward, had put in a good word for The Times's "Special" with Seward as soon as the two men had returned from the South.

I hope you have been kind and attentive to R. who as I wrote you from Savannah fought Secession all the way through the South. He is as good a Northern man as you are and when you see his letters about Slavery, which will shake all England, you will see that you could have no better ally. He is...kind hearted and in controversy the ablest general logician I ever heard converse.

(8)

Ward's endorsement was probably very useful to Russell at this juncture, for, from Bigelow's comments and Russell's experiences of that week, it was clear that his access to people in high places was now less free and easy than it had been in March when he first arrived in the United States. By now, Seward and other members of Lincoln's cabinet were showing signs of strain, as well they might, for they were beset with the myriad tasks of
putting the nation onto a war footing, whipping an army into shape, procuring the essential supplies for this army, getting the army into the field quickly to satisfy the cries of the public press, attempting to institute a blockade of the entire Southern confederacy, and raising enough capital to pay for the war. At the same time they had the new worry of dealing with a proliferation of Southern spies. To make matters worse, they were faced with worsening relations with the two major European powers, England and France.

Russell no longer had the untainted cachet of representing the world’s most influential newspaper. His paper had by now taken the unpopular stand of supporting the British government in its Declaration of Neutrality, a declaration which had been made before the new American envoy could present his country’s case to the British Government. Moreover, while The Times claimed, like its government, to be both neutral and understanding, it had, in fact, become increasingly critical of the North since the new Congress had passed the Morrill Tariff.

In addition, when Lincoln had taken an unexpectedly firm stand on the Southern threat to Fort Sumter, The Times had, in outraged tones, branded him unrealistic, overly legalistic, and warlike. Although The Times had severely chastised President Buchanan for his ineffective, do-nothing policy towards the secession movement when it first became a reality towards the end of 1860, the newspaper had been equally critical of Lincoln when he took
office in March and began to act more decisively. By the time the relief of Fort Sumter became an issue, The Times had decided that the break-up of the American republic was inevitable and even desirable. The Times then declared that Lincoln and his government, being too late, were wrong to resist separation. In their view, Lincoln's show of resistance over Sumter was not only useless, it was provocative and irresponsible. Therefore, according to The Times, it was Lincoln who had forced the South's hand, and he and his Northern government who had brought on the first belligerent acts by the South.

To add salt to Northern wounds, Russell's letters, from the South, which had now begun to circulate in the North, also brought the unwelcome news that the South was arming and determined. Furthermore, Russell, like his paper, revealed in his letters his conviction, so inimical to Northern ears, that the South was gone for good.

In a letter written in New York on the 25th of June, Bancroft Davis tried to counter The Times's position that the split between North and South was irrevocable by informing his English readers of some of the complexities of the local situation. He wrote:

I see that it is still believed by some persons in England that this is a war between sections which are, each within itself, united; and this government is urged to terminate a useless fratricidal war by the recognition of the Southern Confederacy. That this is not the case, however, is plain from the following items of news which go out by this packet...
Davis pointed to the existence of a "Union ticket" in North Carolina, to the refusal of Senator Andrew Johnson of the southern state of Tennessee to recognize secession, and to the organization of a new government in the loyal part of Virginia. Nor was the North completely united, he pointed out, noting that the New York papers attacked General Scott almost daily. (9)

The idea which Davis elaborated of the existence of strong Union sentiment in the South which would bring on the demise of the insurrection, had been a favorite of Seward's in the spring. It was in direct contradiction to Russell's assessment of the unity and vigour of the South's determination to fight the North after Fort Sumter.

Chenery's leader of the same day found no room for Bancroft Davis's optimism, reflecting instead the judgment of his colleague, who, as far as he knew, was still travelling in the South. "For the present...we can see no chance of...reconciliation..." He noted that General Scott was taking his time in organizing his troops, but that this delay favoured the South. Chenery focussed in this leader on some of the economic aspects of the war as it would affect Americans. He noted that the war would cost seventy or eighty million pounds, not to mention the loss of business. On the other hand, he pointed out that the North might profit immensely by the war by "inflicting a severe blow on its opponents, and retiring from the
contest with large spoils of victory." (10)

The next day The Times printed two letters of Russell's from Cairo, Illinois taking up practically a whole page and filling five columns. On the same day, in a rare editorial reference to "Our Special Correspondent," Chenery wrote that Russell had made "good use of his time in the Confederate States... he has drawn for us a picture of the Secessionists in their military capacity." Discoursing on the tendency of some writers to be merely entertaining, or to send reports full of statistics, Chenery stated that

Our Correspondent does not append returns of the acres sown with corn or cotton; he does not express decimally the proportion of men armed with the rifle or the smooth-bore musket; but the result of reading his letters is that we all now have a considerable knowledge of the Southern politicians and people...we must say that.../his are/... almost the only letters which give us any real knowledge how things are going on there.

(11)

Times readers who hadn't had enough of Russell's long reports were treated with three more columns on the 12th, four and a quarter columns on the 15th, and four more letters from Cairo on the 16th. A brief letter from Bancroft Davis was also published that day. (12)

It was probably a lucky happenstance that The Times's editors had this abundance of material from America, for little was going on in the nation's capital. As a Times leader-writer wrote on
the 15th, London was being "emptied" as people went away on vacation. Minister Charles Francis Adams noted in his diary that "The decline of the season is now visible in the cortege in Rotten Row, and the evening drive in the Park." (13) Parliament had not yet recessed, but it was winding down, and "it /would/ soon be hard work to keep forty members together to do hastily what up to this time could not be done at all..." (14) It would also soon be hard work to fill The Times's daily columns, with Parliament, and Britain's "ten thousand," dispersed to the provinces and the continent.

Chenery may have taken a few days or weeks of hard-earned rest at this time, for Delane, who remained in town, entrusted important leaders on President Lincoln's address to Congress and on American finance to young Brodrick. Brodrick undoubtedly took a cue from his editor when he dubbed Lincoln's message as "strongly warlike," and "a straight forward and old-fashioned appeal to loyalty." Brodrick compared this call to arms with "appeals /which/ have been addressed too often by monarchs to their subjects where dynastic interests were at stake," and made fun of the peaceful claims of supporters of democracy who, Brodrick wrote, have "led /us/ to believe that /calls to war/ could never by heard with patience in an assembly of Republicans." He continued that the Presidential Address

... seems to show that the Yankees are men of like passions with ourselves that they are not only capable of going to a war for an idea, and that a sufficiently impracticable one, but of stinting themselves and
charging their posterity for the gratification of their
martial ardour.

This notion that the war was being fought for an idea, however
ignoble, was not quite in keeping with current Times thinking,
but the conclusion of Brodrick's leader was. "No war of
independence," he wrote, "ever terminated unsuccessfully, except
where the disparity of force was far greater than it is in this
case." In short, as The Times had contended for months, the
North simply could not win this war. (15)

The next day Brodrick analysed the Message further. He
described it as "unpretending and businesslike," and compared it
to a state paper of Pitt or Napoleon I "proclaiming the motives
and objects of an European war." One-third of the Message, he
wrote, was devoted to a vindication of the long forbearance of
the national government, and one-third to the "Secession
Fallacy," "Neutrality Humbug," etc., (as described by "our New
York contemporaries"). But

...what are /the objects of the war/ after all, that
transcend the paramount importance of preserving peace
between neighbors and brethren? ...the President's
Message...throws very little light /on this/. One
thing is clear, and that is that Abolitionism has
little or nothing to do with it...if we are to take Mr.
Lincoln as our guide, the English Tories have not
greatly erred in regarding the American crisis as a
supreme trial of Republican institutions...

Brodrick called attention, for The Times, to one positive
aspect of the President's Message: "It contains none of the harsh
recriminations against Foreign Powers which we had some reason to
apprehend, and which, proceeding from an official source, might have impaired, though it could not destroy, the sympathy that we have never ceased to feel for the United States."

On this point, Brodrick claimed

We have not returned railing for railing...We comment upon the acts of American statesmen as we should comment upon those of our own, though with greater caution and reserve; and when we prefer a frank recognition of the South's independence by the North to the policy avowed in the President's Message, it is solely because we foresee, as bystanders, that this is the issue in which, after infinite loss and humiliation, the contest must result.

(16)

With this leader, and through the pen of a junior leader-writer, The Times restated very politely its view that the Southern Confederacy should be recognized as a reality at once, for any war would inevitably have the same result.

Brodrick's leader on "American Finance" the next day was confined to an explanation of Secretary of Treasury Chase's proposals for raising money, and the comment that it was "gratifying to find that Mr. Chase expresses the greatest anxiety to maintain the public credit of the Union" for, if the war went on, the nation would need foreign capital. (17)

This very question was discussed in the Money Market column two days later. The writer reviewed the history of defaulting on debt by American states, pointing out that Northern states and
Southern states had balanced one another in this respect, and that the United States had a good record. Each investor would have to decide for himself about the present situation, but

...it would seem there is not much to encourage our capitalists to interfere by supplying means to either side...in a political sense it is certain that any such movement would injure our future good relations, since we should have a strong prospect that on the termination of the contest, either by force or compromise, the re-united friends would join to attribute the greater part of the miseries they had inflicted on each other to the British gold maliciously supplied by our aristocracy for the very purpose of giving intensity to the contest and destroying free institutions...

(18)

As proof that this represented a genuine current of conservative commercial opinion, it may be noted that The Saturday Review took much the same position about a week later. "There is every reason to hope that English capitalists will abstain from an investment which would probably be ruinous to themselves...," wrote a reviewer. Continuing that "Englishmen have been often assured that, although they have done nothing, they will never be forgiven, and they will be imprudent if they offer a real provocation by supplying the means of carrying on civil war," The Review concluded that "Admiration will perhaps be more welcome than money..." (19)

A more accurate judgment might have been that both North and South craved admiration and money.
In any case, the underlying idea that The Times and The Review alluded to, that any support by the British only encouraged the rebellion, was one of the main arguments being made by Northerners who very much resented Britain’s Declaration of Neutrality. If the British were now to help finance secession, the Times Money Market editor pointed out, they would be maligned no matter which side were ultimately victorious.

By the end of the month, Chenery was writing on American affairs again, and had become more complimentary of the North. He remarked approvingly that "Work, and not display, is now the order of things in the United States," and said that it was "a relief to find that the captiousness and irritability with regard to this country which marked the first weeks of the war have almost passed away..." He attributed the change in feeling less to reflection on the matter than to "the absorption of men’s thoughts to more earnest business." The United States now has "not time to trouble itself about the opinions of its neighbors."

This was essentially true, but there is some evidence that Seward had begun to turn his attention more seriously to the matter of influencing European opinion in the North’s favour. John Bigelow, the New York editor mentioned above who was a friend of Russell’s, had come to Washington in July to discuss with Seward an assignment as consul in Paris. He later wrote that "Mr. Seward said that the Government had selected me for the
Paris consulate not primarily for the discharge of consular duties, which were then trifling and every day diminishing, but to look after the press in France.  Bigelow accepted the assignment, and served his country exceedingly well in France as a propagandist, though the Emperor Napoleon, who exercised a very tight rein on the press made his task a difficult one.  (21)

As Seward staffed his foreign legations and consulates and the reconvened Congress dealt with the problems of an unexpected war, Russell made his rounds of the State Department, the British Legation, and Capitol Hill, and visited any general officer who would take the time to see him. He was particularly impressed and friendly with General McDowell, who commanded the federal troops on Arlington Heights in Virginia, across the Potomac from the Northern capital. Around the middle of the month, he took an excursion to Newport News and Fort Monroe, military installations in Virginia which were still held by the Union, where he dined with the Army commander, General Butler. Butler had very recently caused considerable embarrassment to the Washington government by taking the side of the Abolitionists in reference to runaway slaves, or "contrabands" as they were now being termed, and Russell probably thought there was a story there. He enjoyed his visit, but was so held up by lack of transport on his return to Washington, that he almost missed the first big battle of the war.  (22)

Russell knew, of course, that a battle was coming, although he
General Scott, the Northern commanding general, had drawn up a grand strategy for his government. General Beauregard, now heading the Southern army, had assembled his troops on the southern side of the Potomac menacing Washington, and the nation’s capital had become so filled with troops that it resembled an armed camp. Northern newspapers, spearheaded by The Tribune, were demanding a quick march on Richmond to settle the issue before the South had a chance to get its defenses into place. But Russell’s visits to the federal camps under McDowell’s command had impressed him only with the rawness of the troops, the lack of such important things as experienced officers and maps, and the general state of unreadiness for battle of the new recruits. In any case, he knew he would need a mount for whatever was coming, so before going to Fort Monroe, Russell had “given commissions to my friends and every livery stable keeper in Washington to get me a couple of saddle-horses and a draft animal.” (23)

Unfortunately, there was nothing ready for him when he returned, nor was he able to get information from anyone as to the latest military news. At last he heard that military movements had started and that McDowell had occupied Fairfax Court House. While visiting the Senate, “/one/ of the officers of the House came in with a note from General McDowell to tell me ‘the army would advance very early next morning, left in front.’ In the evening, he desperately negotiated the hire of two horses.
and a saddle-horse which were to be at his door "at dawn of day on July 21st." Nevertheless, presumably due to the difficulty of arranging passes and coordinating with others, he "started late that day/, which was not my fault," accompanied by Mr. Warre of the British Legation.

At Centerville, Virginia, a few miles from Manassas and Bull’s Run, Russell left his companion Warre with the gig and the "crowd of Congressmen...a few ladies, and many civilians" they had found there, and rode on ahead on his horse. His efforts to reach the front were in vain, however, and as he wrote later, "of the actual battle I saw nothing," while "of the results I saw too much." Instead of the shock of frontline troops, Russell saw only the first wave of the Northern retreat, and, as he wrote, was "involved in the panic rout of an army."

It was this shameful picture of frightened, fleeing men which Russell described so vividly to his British readers. When his letter about the battle was published in The Times on the 6th of August, it filled eight and one half columns, just shy of a whole page. This "Bull’s Run" letter, which was to have such an unfortunately negative effect on the remainder of Russell’s stay in the United States, gave a brilliant portrayal of the part of the battle Russell had witnessed.

"I sit down to give an account, not of the action yesterday, but of what I saw with my own eyes," he wrote. The language he
used in condemning the conduct of the Northern troops was as severe as it was unsympathetic. "Such scandalous behaviour on the part of soldiers I should have considered impossible, as with some experience of camps and armies I have never even in alarms among camp followers seen the like of it," he wrote. "How far the disorganization of the troops extended I know not," he admitted, "but it was complete in the instance of more than one regiment."

Of conditions the day after the battle in the close-by Northern capital, he wrote,

"Washington this morning is crowded with soldiers without officers, who have fled from Centreville, and with 'three months' men,' who are going home from the face of the enemy on the expiration of their term of enlistment. The streets, in spite of the rain, are crowded by people with anxious faces, and groups of wavering politicians are assembled at the corners, in the hotel passages and the bars."

Russell wrote, as he said he had argued before, that the task that now faced the North was to "put its best men into battle, or she will inevitably fail before the energy, the personal hatred, and the superior fighting powers of her antagonist." However, he stated further that the "arrogance and supercilious confidence" of the Northern leaders had been such, before the battle, that he might just as well have preached this message to the Pyramid of Cheops. (25)

This was the message that Russell sent: that an arrogant North had been shamefully whipped. It was soon the talk of London.
Saturday Review, commenting on Russell's account, referred to Bull's Run as the "disgraceful defeat at Manassas." (26) Charles Francis Adams wrote in his diary, "The London newspapers mostly betray a secret satisfaction with the humiliation we have met with and the correspondent of the Times delights in uncovering our nakedness." (27)

Russell made no attempt in his subsequent personal contacts to hide his censure of the Northern effort. At the time, there seemed little reason to soften the criticism for he was merely expressing the majority opinion of other journalists and public leaders who were knowledgeable about the battle. To his friend Bigelow, he wrote, a few days later,

I don't mind telling you that a battle which should never have been fought at all, was hardly fought...and was terminated by the most singularly disgraceful panic and flight on record...You used to say you wished almost that the North should be beaten in the first fight, but surely, not on such terms as these.

(28)

In the weeks following Bull's Run, or "Bull Run" as it was later called, it was clear that the two armies had both been seriously hit by this first test of arms, and that each had some wound-licking to do. Russell wrote Bancroft Davis, "It really looks as if neither side had much stomach for going on just now." The defeated general, McDowell, had been sacked, and General McClellan, who had won some minor victories in the West, had been given the command. Russell told Davis, "McClellan is
doing his work well. A great change in Washington at all events, but there will be much difficulty in licking the unruly elements sent by the States into the form of an army." (29)

Meanwhile Russell, who had relatively little to do in the battle's aftermath, began to worry about the reaction his letter might have in England and in America. He wrote in his diary on August 4, "Bull's Run about known by this time." (30)

The issue of The Times which contained Russell's letter arrived in America towards the end of August. By this time, unfortunately for Russell, the outrage that Northern newspapers had initially expressed at the Union's ignoble defeat had been forgotten in the patriotic fervour of rebuilding the army for the next campaign. Russell's blunt and uncompromising description of the rout now raised a furor in the North. As Russell described it later, "The general conclusion was that I had spun out of my own brain a curious battle-piece as unsubstantial as 'the stuff that dreams are made of'...The Chicago Tribune published a letter which stated...that I 'did not see the rout at all.'" (31)

In his own defense, Russell wrote to Bancroft Davis,

...I dare not ask you what you think of the Bulls Run letter because it was not fairly treated -- By that I mean that when I said I would leave the American Journals to describe the fight and then distinctly said I only would give a description of the retreat as I saw it. I left Delane to precede my letter by such accounts from the American papers as could be best formed into a narrative of the fight to precede my letter. Instead...it was made to do duty for what it was meant for -- an account of the battle. I feel
it is my doom to be the best abused man in America on both sides...

(32)

Russell was guilty of some rationalizing here, for he had, in fact, concluded his Bull Run letter in a slightly less humble tone: "Let the American journals tell their story their own way. I have told mine as I know it..." The implication was clear that Russell considered his version to be the accurate one, not just an addendum to other reports from Northern newspapers, whose value he had discounted earlier in his letter. He had described at least some of these journals as being "...conducted avowedly by men of disgraceful personal character --the be-whipped and be-kicked and unrecognized pariahs of society in New York..." As a demonstration of their foolishness, he wrote, "in the very midst of repulse and defeat, /they were/ permitted to indulge in ridiculous rhodomontade towards the nations of Europe, and to move our laughter by impotently malignant attacks on 'our rotten old monarchy,' while the stones of their bran [sic] new republic are tumbling about their ears." (33)

The prospects of war had, indeed, attracted an extraordinarily large contingent of newspapermen to Washington, and these men, some of whom were experienced reporters and most of whom were not, went to extreme lengths to report any kind of news or rumour in the most extravagant terms. General McDowell, in spite of this, or perhaps because of it, had encouraged the press to be on
hand for the battle to insure that any portrayal of the fighting be as accurate as possible. He had even joked that the journalists should all wear white uniforms "to indicate the purity of their character/s/". He had also advised them to keep together and out of the way. (34)

The journalists had not "stuck together," of course, some of them had gone to the front as early as July 17th, and, predictably, they had seen different parts of the action than Russell, if for no other reason than his late start on the 21st. Their stories reflected that.

In London, the day after Russell's long report of the battle had appeared in The Times, the newspaper devoted a leader to an examination of an American fault which The Times loved to criticize, viz., the unfortunate American tendency to exaggerate. In the same leader, The Times expressed yet again its contempt for the Northern press. Cooke wrote, in a matter reminiscent of The Times's rather supercilious reaction to the firing on Fort Sumter, "If we are to believe the American press, an American battle has never yet been so dangerous as an American passenger boat...The hostile forces shell each other out of strong fortresses without losing a single life..." He described once more the panic, flight, and loss of artillery pieces, and referred to the statement Russell had made in his letter that if Beauregard (the Southern commander) had been aware of the state of panic he could have entered Washington. "All the Northern
press says upon this subject," Cooke wrote, "is to congratulate themselves that the enemy did not know in what a fright they were."

Now that the Northerners had found that "the Southerners are not to be walked over like a partridge manor...," Cooke continued, "...we can expect them to/... call out a few more millions of Volunteers, and... make confident demand upon an incredulous world for a few more hundred millions sterling..."

His conclusion about the Northern press was not designed to win friends in America:

These people [the Northern press] do all in their power to alienate our sympathy... for they are amenable neither to courtesy nor to misfortune. Nothing civilizes them. They seem to think that at all seasons and upon all occasions, England is a safe target for their insults and their threats.

Whatever the quality of the news sent to them by their reporters, the avid newspaper readers of America snapped up the stories of the battle. Many of the accounts were quickly republished in pamphlet form. The full report of the battle filed by Edmund Stedman of the World, for example, ran to forty-two pages when reprinted. (36) As soon as Russell’s letter arrived in America, it too was printed as a pamphlet, and received wide circulation.

Russell, who had already complained that his Times letters had
been pirated and reprinted, now had the added discomfort of being associated with a very uncomplimentary account of an embarrassing defeat, and his paper's rather nasty condemnation of the whole Northern journalistic fraternity. (37) As might be expected, these journalists retaliated by attacking Russell. His letter was variously described as "Russell's Run," and "John Bull Russell's Bull Run romance;" and he was called "London Stout Russell," "Bombast Russell," "that Cassandra in breeches, Dr. Bull Run Russell," and "this bilious LL.D., the snob correspondent of the London Times." (38)

The sentiment against Russell became so intense that a delegation from the Herald "called on Seward to demand explanations of Lord Lyons and to turn Russell out of the country." (39) Russell bravely wrote, in a letter to Bigelow, that "I'm not kilt yet, tho' the Herald is doing its best to get me assassinated," but he was beginning to worry. (40) He was used to public outcry, after all, having endured much of this type of criticism when he sent back unwelcome facts from the Crimea. That had been in his own country, however, and his paper had been on the spot to protect him. Now, in war-torn and trigger-happy America, he became considerably disturbed at the heightened peril of telling the truth as he saw it. Not only was he disparaging of what he considered to be the extreme unreliability of the news which was being printed in the Northern papers. Now he began to worry at the prospect of being pilloried
for reporting the unpopular. In the letter he had written to
Bigelow right after Bull Run, which Bigelow reported he received
as he embarked for Europe, Russell had suggested rather
melodramatically:

> When you left America last, you left also

> A free Press -- Prosperity -- A Constitution-- Habeas
> Corpus -- Peace

> I hope you may come back and find them. There is now

> No freedom of the press -- A passport system --
> Domiciliary visits --

> Police surveillance -- Fort Lafayette -- a bastile --

> No freedom of the person --

> War calamity and distress --

> Irresponsible Govt.--

(41)

If Russell was disturbed and worried in America, his editor in
London, Delane, was exuberant. Not only was he complimentary
about Russell's report of the battle, he was clearly elated that
the North had been humbled so nicely. On the eve of publication,
of the letter Delane wrote Russell:

> I can't describe to you the delight with which I and
> I believe everybody else read your vivid account of the
> repulse at Bull’s Run and the terrible debacle which
> ensued. My fear is only that the US will not be able
> to bear the truth so plainly told and that having been
> cockered (?) up with all manner of figments, he will be
> apt to resent in his own most unpleasant manner the
> strong purgative you have administered to the National
> vanity...
In his next paragraph Delane assured Russell that Great Britain would not be adversely affected by the sordid fray in America.

Pray do not believe a word the Yankees tell you about our dependence on this d---d cotton. We can do very well without a single bale for this year and before next you come, we shall have India sending it in such abundance that Dixie's land may keep every thing she grows. There is no kind of panic here about /cotton/...and Belmont, who came here last week was most ludicrously surprised to find the only languid interest we took in the whole affair. He had expected to find London in a New York fever and found it...much more intent upon Goodwood than on either North or South.

In regard to military matters, Delane wrote with the authority of the powerful nation he represented:

...the pretty little fleet we already have in /American/ waters acting in concert with Mr. Jeff Davis, /can/ raise their paltry blockade and turn all the tables against them in a week. Not that we desire to do anything unfriendly or to commit any breach of the most sacred neutrality but simply that we don't mean to be bullied by a so-called Power that can scarcely defend its Capital against its fellow citizens...

(42)

In spite of Delane's overweening confidence, Mowbray Morris showed concern for Russell’s delicate position in a letter he sent off to Bancroft Davis the day the Bull Run letter was published in London. "I am very anxious about Russell," he wrote. "He writes so plainly about the Bulls' run affair...that we all believe some enraged patriot will shoot him through the head for telling disagreeable truth." Putting the military defeat in a larger context, Morris told Davis that "It is
generally thought that Scott has been compelled to take the offensive against his better judgment, so that Democracy, it would seem is incompatible not only with good civil government but also with military success." He hopefully concluded that "If the end of all this turmoil should be the ascendance of intellect & refinement over mere numbers & brute force, the present suffering, both of North & South, will not have been too dearly purchased."

As one gentleman to another, Morris concluded, "You must allow me to express my sympathy towards yourself personally. I feel very strongly how great a sacrifice of domestic peace and worldly prosperity these bad times impose upon you." (43)

Morris wrote in much the same vein to Russell a week later. He expressed his pleasure that Russell was so cheery, mentioning, as he had to Davis, that everyone in London had thought "Russell /would/ be lynched" as a result of his letter. He reserved his strongest words for the Northern newspapers.

What a press! Is it the result of cheapness or of an utterly brutal state of morals? Are we to come to that sort of thing here in England? Under the guidance of Bright and Gladstone I suppose some such result would overtake us -- but Thank God -- Bright and Gladstone are not yet our Masters.

Morris’s next comments about the British reaction to news of the battle confirmed Adams’s judgment noted earlier:

I can’t quite understand the feelings in England about this quarrel -- when the news of the defeat of the North arrived -- every one shouted for joy -- and
yet I don’t think there is any real sympathy for the South. Perhaps the joy was simply because somebody had been licked...

(44)

These opinions of Morris’s were a private answer to questions Russell had posed publicly in his letter of 24 July, published in The Times on August 10. "What will England and France think of... (the battle)... is the question which is asked over and over again," he had written. In regard to reaction within Lincoln’s administration to the battle results, Russell wrote, “It is to the credit of the President and his advisers that they have recovered their faith in the ultimate success of their cause, and think they can subjugate the South after all.” (45)

Delane put off committing his paper to any position on this long-range military question by giving the next editorial assignment to Woodham who could be relied on to write from a more philosophical and detached perspective in Cambridge. In his leader, Woodham intoned first what had by now become Times dogma, that all England wished to see was an end to the war without harm to either party. The significance of recent events, he then wrote, was that it proved what would result from an overdose of Democracy. He concluded comfortably...

When we see that unlimited democracy conveys not the slightest security against the worst of wars and the most reckless extravagance, we may apply the moral at home, and congratulate ourselves that the old British Constitution has not been precipitately modelled after a Manchester design.
Another letter arrived from Russell and was printed the next day. Russell told of the great change that had come over the views of the members of the Cabinet, who, it was claimed, had favoured seeking the reconstruction of the Union through a war with Great Britain. (Russell was referring to Seward here; Seward had made just such a proposal to Lincoln in the spring.) Now, Russell wrote, "the most favourable disposition is evinced to cultivate our good graces, not by any sacrifice of principles, but by the adoption of a tone at once calm, just and dignified, which will be appreciated by the Foreign Office." He had particularly good things to say about Lord Lyons who he described as "the discreet and loyal nobleman who represents Great Britain" and who was "perhaps/ the only Minister /from a foreign country/ who has really been neutral..." (47)

This intimation that the North might change its ways by calming down and being pleasant to Britain brought no praise from The Times that day. Instead, Mozley took the occasion to condemn Americans who are "too apt to think /themselves/ absolutely right" about everything. He referred to Russell "who has been for some time in the United States discharging for the British public, not to say for the whole world, the same services he did so well before in the Crimea and in India." But "nowhere," Mozley wrote, has his liberty of speech been so furiously arraigned, and
his vocation so denounced, as in the United States. (48)

During the remainder of the month of August, Delane entrusted the American leaders to Woodham, Mozley, and Brodrick. There was a leader by Mozley on the 14th, commenting on a Bancroft Davis letter of the same day which gave some details about Congressional action on taxes. On the 17th, Woodham wrote on "cotton" expressing much the same confidence Delane had shown in his letter to Russell, that there need be no concern about a shortfall in cotton supply, and that any future shortage would be easily made up from sources elsewhere in the world, especially India. The Times knew, as did the business community, that the war had come at a very convenient time for British cotton importers, wholesalers, and textile producers. In fact, 1860 had been an outstanding year for cotton production, cotton had been in oversupply, prices had come down, and manufacturers had been forced to close their factories to avoid overproduction. Now the fear of shortages caused by war had actually driven up the price of cotton in British warehouses, producing great wealth for the jobbers who controlled the supply, and pushing the smaller and weaker textile manufacturers to the wall. Since it was confidently believed that this would not be a protracted war, and, even if it were, that the laws of free trade would bring forth additional supply, the business community was in general agreement that there was no need to worry. (49)

Another leader on "American finance" from Woodham's pen
appeared on the 19th, again in reference to information supplied by Davis on American taxes. Disappointingly, and contrary to Davis's earlier predictions, the American Congress had left the Morrill Tarriff intact. To finance the war, it had, among other measures, passed the nation's first income tax (3% on annual incomes over $800). A letter from Russell on the 20th discussing the South's chances of winning and the reorganization of the American army in the wake of the Bull Run defeat went unnoticed editorially, as did the transcript of a speech given by William Roebuck in Sheffield in which he expressed true British outrage at the "unseemly audacity, the overbearing insolence of Americans (hear, hear)" which he said "had withdrawn from them all sympathy on the part of the people of England (hear, hear)."

On the 24th, The Times carried another letter from Russell in which he referred to the right of the Northern defensive line as "our right" and to the Southern troops on the "other side" as "the enemy." (51)

The Times either did not note or did not care about this slip of Russell's, but The Saturday Review may have been referring to it when it carried a short essay, early in September, about correspondents taking on local colour.

As Special Correspondents are not absolutely exempt from the weaknesses of human nature, it would be unreasonable to complain that, like the chameleon, they take their colour from the food they live on...Even Mr. Russell, during his Southern tours, was half a
Secessessionist, and on arriving at Washington took exactly the composite tint which characterizes that distracted capital. The Correspondent at New York, on the other hand, has followed the fluctuations of opinion in that focus of Northern agitation with admirable fidelity. If this predominance of local influence may throw doubt on the correctness of narrated facts, it gives us the best assurance that the more important matter of the real state of feeling at any moment is reported...in a manner to be entitled to the most entire confidence.

On the 26th, Brodrick distanced himself from Woodham's Tory incantations against "Democracy" in a critical leader dealing with the newly strengthened executive in the North, and the potential threat this posed to liberty in a democracy.

European observers, struck with the helplessness and insignificance of the President in times of peace, were tempted to predict that he would become a mere cypher in time of sedition or war, and the vacillations of Mr. Buchanan when the secession crisis occurred went far to confirm this. The last four months have revealed to us...the fallacy of such anticipations. The stability of the Federal Constitution has been severely tried, and it has not come unscathed out of the trial; but the damage sustained has not been on the side of authority, but on that of liberty.

Citing the suspension of habeas corpus, the seizure of telegrams, and the punishing of certain conspiracies, Brodrick exclaimed, "Why, the 'vigorous measures' of a limited monarchy are mild palliatives compared with the desperate self-coercion of a republic in extremities."

Did this mean that "Jeffersonian policy" was about to break down, as Macaulay predicted? Brodrick suggested caution. "For
our own part, we are not disposed to adopt too hastily any of these hypotheses," he wrote. The Americans had already done many things which observers had predicted were impossible. He concluded that "...it will not surprise us ...to hear our cousins boasting that their Budgets are the most exorbitant and their National Debt the biggest and the most rapid growth in creation." (53)

The next day there were two important letters from Russell and Davis. Davis described the growing opposition to the Republicans which was based in the abstract on anti-slavery, but also fed on the growing charges of corruption in the War Department, and the feeling that the government should not aim to subjugate the seceding states. The question of slavery had been highlighted by the queries of General Butler to Secretary of War Cameron in regard to the "contrabands," or runaway slaves, whose numbers had been increasing dramatically. Cameron had replied that if the owners were in rebellion, the slaves should be freed, while if the owners were loyal, the slaves should be held and put to good use for now, but the owners should be compensated after the war. As The Saturday Review had noted, Davis reflected opinion in New York, from whence was to come some of the most determined opposition to the war.

Russell wrote on this same subject from Washington. "For good or for evil," he predicted, "the issue between the North and South is rapidly approaching to...a contest between slavery and
abolition. It is not improbable that within a day or two the
President will declare that all slaves within the lines of the
United States Army become free." (54)

Russell was a bit too hopeful, and his predictions, while
dramatic, were premature. Lincoln's government was still
struggling with the need to play down the slavery issue in order
to hold on to the border states. It did not publicly embrace the
anti-slavery cause for another year.

Russell had earlier reported Prince Napoleon's visits to the
Northern armies. Now, in this same letter, he used the occasion
to illustrate the ridiculous extremes to which Northern
newspapers would go. He wrote that one paper had described
Prince Napoleon's visit as a prelude to breaking the blockade in
concert with England, while claiming that Prince Napoleon was a
spy and that the United States navies should be prepared to
defeat the combined British and French fleets.

August drew to a close with a comforting Money Market report
detailing the facts, noted above, that overproduction in America
the previous year had produced such an abundance of cotton supply
that manufacturers need not worry.

...time is all that is wanted to supply ourselves
from other sources than the Southern States. I
therefore look forward with more cheerfulness to the
future of the cotton trade, and believe that without
any violent strain upon the industry or resources of
Lancashire we shall be enabled to break up the monopoly
which the Southern States have so long enjoyed.
The same day Woodham penned another tired essay on American finance that followed very closely on his earlier leader of the 19th. He asserted that the North was bound to be ruined by the war, that the "great ball of debt" would grow, that forcible subjection of the South would prove a "hopeless task," and that no country in the world could ever support such enormous expenditures as would be required for pursuit of the war. (56)

Mozley finished the month with a leader on the 30th which echoed the Money Market article of the 28th. "There never was a time when we were better prepared for such an emergency," he wrote. "All the markets are glutted with cotton goods." The important thing, he noted, was that this great war would withdraw from constructive purposes at least half a million men, and "all that will be so much strength and so many hands taken away from all the reproductive industries of America, from cotton, sugar and tobacco." "Who shall say," he concluded, "whether the United States we used to admire, or even envy, may not before long be a page of history?" (57)

For the North, the summer had begun with a special session of Congress called to address the task of putting a nation on a war footing. In June and July, a volunteer army had poured into Washington amid confident cries that the war would be over in three months. Northern Generals Scott and McDowell, acceding to
the public outcry for a quick campaign and march on Richmond, had thrown these raw levies into battle too early, with disastrous results. The panic and rout which the Northern Army had experienced at this first battle of Bull Run had been reported by William Howard Russell in vivid detail to The Times, to the delight of his editor, Delane, who rejoiced that the North had suffered such a stinging defeat. Russell's immediate superior, Mowbray Morris, had written to him in a more sympathetic vein, expressing his worry that Russell's frankly uncomplimentary account might endanger his personal safety.

At the time of the battle, Northern newsmen had described the conduct of the Federal troops in equally negative terms as Russell, but by the time Russell's letter arrived in the United States a month later, the North had regained its patriotic resolve and had turned to re-building itself for a longer and more concerted war effort. Russell's disparaging account of the Northern battle effort, and his paper's even more caustic comments on Northern newspapers, had produced an immediate backlash in the northern journalistic community. Russell was not shot at, or "lynched," as Morris had thought he might be, but a delegation of newsmen from the New York Herald had brought in a petition to Secretary of State Seward asking for Russell's expulsion from the country.

In London, in leader after leader, Times had ridiculed the North for its boasting and exaggeration, criticized it for
engaging in a useless war, and predicted its economic ruin. Nor had it offered much encouragement to the South. Although The Times gave credit to Southern leaders for having gone efficiently and purposefully about their business of establishing independence, The Times told its readers not to invest in the war effort of either side, and especially not to worry about a future shortage of cotton which the South was counting on to bring Britain and France to its side. The Times reported what the business community knew, that the war had come at a very convenient time for cotton wholesalers and textile producers. Cotton was in oversupply, prices were down, and manufacturers were closing their factories. The fear of shortages caused by war had driven up the price of cotton in the warehouses, and would weed out weaker textile houses, improving the prospects for the mighty. Moreover, The Times had crowed, this war would give Britain a heaven-sent opportunity to break the monopoly which the South had established in cotton production.

To the British ten-thousand, departing London for their country homes and vacation wanderings, The Times had brought the good news that a dangerous commercial rival, a democratic republic at that, was apparently continuing in an even more determined manner to pursue a foolish course of self-destruction.

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1. The Times, 5 July 1861, 9.

2. Times Archives, Russell Diary, 4 July 1861.

Perhaps the "Seward" Russell had referred to in his diary was the Secretary's son, Frederick, who served his father as secretary. Alternatively, the letter may have been written to Frederick, not Seward.

4. TA, Russell Diary, 5 July 1861.

5. Bigelow Diary, 6 July 1861.

6. Davis Papers, II/282, 4 July 1861.

7. Seward Papers 2491, 27 June 1861.

8. Seward Papers 2495, Sam Ward (alias Carlos Lopez) to George Ellis Baker (Seward), 7 July 1861.


11. The Times, 10 July 1861, 8.

12. The Times, 12 July 1861, 12; 15 July 1861, 6; 16 July 1861, 5.


15. The Times, 18 July 1861, 8. As noted earlier, Brodrick wrote in his memoirs that he had not agreed with his mentors at The Times as to the line they took on the American Civil War. This leader is an interesting illustration of the ways in which he adhered to the views being expressed by his paper, while inserting some of his own ideas. Woodham had strongly denied that there were any principles involved in the American conflict. Yet Brodrick asserted in this leader that the Americans were warring "for an idea."

16. The Times, 19 July 1861, 9. This leader seems to fit quite nicely with The Times's earlier leaders. The tone is a good bit less provocative, however, than one which Love, Chenery, or Woodham might have written.

17. The Times, 20 July 1861, 8, 9.

18. The Times, 22 July 1861, 7. This, in fact, did occur when
the war ended. A list of British subscribers to Confederate loans was published in Washington, and apparently included such notable names as that of William Gladstone.


23. Ibid., 625, 626.

24. Ibid., 628.

25. The Times, 6 August 1861, 7, 8.


27. Adams Diary, 6 August 1861.

28. Bigelow, op. cit., 359. The letter was written 27 July 1861.


30. TA, Russell Diary, 4 August 1861.


32. Davis Papers, II/293-294, 24 August 1861.

33. The Times, 6 August 1861, 8.


35. The Times, 7 August 1861, 8.


37. TA, Russell Diary, 24 August 1861; also Davis Papers, II/293-294, same date.

38. Starr, op. cit., 56, 57.

39. TA, Russell Diary, 26 August 1861.
40. Bigelow, op. cit., 370, 27 August 1861.

41. Ibïd., 359, 27 July 1861.

42. TA, Russell Papers, I, Delane to Russell, 5 August 1861.

43. Davis Papers, II/289-290, 6 August 1861.

44. TA, Morris, 11/187, 14 August 1861.

45. The Times, 10 August 1861, 7.

46. The Times, 12 August 1861, 6.

47. The Times, 13 August 1861, 7.

48. The Times, 13 August 1861, 6.

49. The Times, 14 August 1861, 6; 17 August 1861, 8.

50. The Times, 19 August 1861, 6, 8; 20 August 1861, 7; 22 August 1861, 7.

51. The Times, 24 August 1861, 10.


53. The Times, 26 August 1861, 6.

54. The Times, 27 August 1861, 8.

55. The Times, 28 August 1861, 5.

56. The Times, 28 August 1861, 6.

57. The Times, 30 August 1861, 6.
Chapter Eleven

Russell Reviled as
The Times Policy Hardens

As resentment towards The Times and Britain mounted in the aftermath of Bull Run, William Howard Russell began to feel uncomfortably isolated in the North. Fearing that some "enraged patriot" might, indeed, take a potshot at him, he took care to appear only on horseback in order to be "exempt from insult." (1) He had been in America for five months now, and was beginning to pine for home.

Some time in August he wrote to his editor, Mowbray Morris, asking for some local gossip, and especially for news of Delane's eye affliction. Morris replied at the end of the month,

...Your remonstrance against the dryness of my letters I feel to be well deserved. My aversion to personal talk and writing of all kinds is, I know, exaggerated and unreasonable. But I would have told you about Delane's eye, if it had come into my mind whilst I was writing to you...

He told Russell that the Times staff had all wanted Delane to take a good long holiday at the time of his illness, but "our friend is not easily driven from his post." It had been a bad
time, he explained, right in the middle of a Parliamentary session, and "society has strong allurements for him."

So he knocked off night work for a week -- put himself on a strict diet -- bled the affected part -- and in a very short time got nearly well.

Morris told Russell that Delane was about to go on holiday now, that Dasent would soon be back from the land of the Geysers (Dasent was an expert on Iceland), that "poor Bird" (Times correspondent in Vienna) had broken down completely, being threatened with "softening of the brain," and, having apparently sent him some derogatory information earlier in regard to Sam Ward, concluded "You are now on your guard /about Ward/ and that is enough." (2)

On the 1st of September, Russell wrote in his diary, "There is a calm on my mind about all things American but I am by no means at all calm about things at home." (3)

His newborn child was not well, and his wife remained an invalid. As his worries mounted, he turned to personal letter-writing, sending, in his words, "a very short and very stupid letter to Times and Deenyman [his wife] and to Delane..." (4)

It seems likely that he indicated in those letters that he would like to come home, for again Morris wrote to him, this time on the 16th, beginning his letter with the firm statement, "I do not find any difficulty in advising you to remain in America for
the present at least." He did not base his case on the undoubted fact that *The Times* needed him there, but stressed instead that a departure at this juncture would "be decidedly injurious to your character...It would be said that the New York press had succeeded in intimidating you, and that in fact you had run away rather than meet the consequences of your misrepresentation of American things." In England, of course, such charges would be known to be false, "but the majority would believe it, /and/ your reputation as a bold and enterprising correspondent would be damaged." Besides, Norris continued in a vein which he knew would appeal to Russell's professional and adventurous instincts,

...consider what the result would be of dropping a thread in the narrative of this great civil war. On your own showing the season of hostilities is only now beginning. The campaign, if there is to be one, must date from about this time and it would be said that the moment that real work was to be done you /packed/ your case and went home.

In short, "avoid all unnecessary risk to health and limb but don't leave your post," Norris counselled. He added a rather cryptic note which referred to a letter Russell apparently sent him from Sam Ward which said, "I now see how it is that he has established himself so well with you." (5)

Some weeks earlier Sam Ward had written Seward under his "Carlos Lopez" alias, "I hope there is to be no spite shown toward Russell -- If in his place I were restricted I would throw up my commission and return home and leave Europe to infer that we cannot bear truth." (6)
But Sam Ward's influence with Seward may have been on the wane. On the 12th of September he wrote to Seward's son complaining, "It wld have been agreeable to have found a line of acknowledgement if only as proof that my letters have been rec'd and contents noted..." He included in his note to Seward an extract from a letter he had received from Russell which said, "Dillon (a known friend of Delane of the Times and a partner in the great house of Morrison & Co) writes savagely to say there is a party in the North formed which will send all the Abolitionists to Gehenna and then will say to the South 'come let us treat.'" (7)

In the weeks before he wrote his "short" and "stupid" letter home, Russell had given every indication of increased irritation at his vulnerability, his annoyance at some of the colleagues with whom he had to associate, and his treatment by the high and mighty. On the 7th of August he had been excluded from a dinner given by Lord Lyons for Prince Napoleon to which the diplomatic corps had been invited. He noted sarcastically in his diary, "..it was considered that I was not good enough...yet/ I surely stand in as high a position who have been called the unaccredited ambassador of the people as some of my Lords guests that day..." (8)

Later in the month he mentioned meeting a new journalistic colleague from England, "Edge, who says he is a great man of
'Star'.../and is/ a thoro' snob and complete cockney." (9)

Russell quickly developed a strong distaste for Edge who chose strange ways to try to ingratiate himself with the famous correspondent. On the 2nd of September, Russell wrote, "Edge little beast came in this morning to show me a caricature of myself by way of being agreeable...I am represented looking thru a huge glass and drinking London stout." (10) A few days later, "That little excrement Edge came in and went out leaving a bad taste in my mouth..." (11)

Edge had also been the bearer of bad tidings in regard to an American journalist who had been the source of many of the innuendos Russell had suffered as a result of his Bull Run letter.

Edge...told me about a ridiculous comment in the Chicago Tribune by Dr. Ray, a fat elderly man who introduced himself to me near Fairfax Court house, he said he saw nothing of what I saw! I can't help his blindness, fortunately, I stated nothing that cannot be corroborated by well known people for a man has little chances in standing on his private character. (12) The next day Ray was described as "the fat ass of Chicago Tribune," of whom Russell vowed he would take no notice. (13)

By the end of the month, Russell boasted that "Ray has been dangerous but as now nothing because I can at any moment crush him out, put dirt on his head and prove him a mean malicious liar." (14) By the next day, Russell had decided to take action: "I dictated a letter to Sumner by way of reply to Dr. Ray and
Russell was indeed running into difficulties. On the 4th of September, he had written in his diary that there had been some fighting, but that he had not been able to go to the lines because he found that his pass was no good. He had received his pass from General Scott, but it was no longer useful, for Scott had been pushed aside by younger men. ("Poor old Scott...officers who pass him on the street do not salute him.") On the same day, Russell wrote that two of his English friends had told him he could earn a thousand pounds a month lecturing if he were to return home. "I wonder is it so..." he mused, obviously thinking of alternatives to the frustrating situation he found himself in in America. (16)

At least Russell was welcomed by the new hero of the moment, General McClellan. He was asked to go for a ride with the General on the 6th of September at 3.30, but pleading work, Russell postponed the interview until eleven that evening. The General "rec’d me in his shirt & we had a very long talk...He told me Beauregard had packed up tents & that I might be wanted at any hour." (17) In fact, nothing happened for many weeks, but Russell prepared for any eventuality by getting a pass for the interior lines the next day. He was comfortable with the military, but worried about the politicians and the Northern press. On the 12th he wrote, "I am satisfied all the party men here are furious with me," and the next day, Friday the 13th, "I
saw a notice today that a petition was being sent to Seward against me for 'treasonable' misrepresentations." (18)

The next day he wrote to Bancroft Davis of his problems, asking for advice. In regard to the sniping by journalists, he said he agreed with Davis that "the least said in reply...the soonest mended" but added that "I was anxious to show 'soldiers' that I did not err so much as was supposed to be the case." He sent Davis a letter "which I have had printed merely that my friends eyes may be spared -- I have sent only 3 copies of it out & wish it to be kept as quiet as possible." It was not meant for publication, he wrote. Referring to critical letters he had received from Raymond of the New York Times and Senator Sumner, he told Davis he was enclosing letters from these men, adding, "It becomes serious when a man is lectured upon as if he were a wild beast & when petitions are being circulated against him by foolish people for treasonable misrepresentations printed by an Englishman in an English newspaper, & reprinted here without his consent..." He defended Delane's editorial policy to Davis, suggesting that though he might be "a little out in his tone," it was probably Dasent who was now in charge at Printing House Square. (19)

Delane was, indeed, out of town, and Dasent in the editor's chair, but the paper's "line" was Delane's, not Dasent's. Russell decided to write to both. His complained that he was having to bear the brunt of all the anti-British, anti-Times feeling in the
North which, he suggested, could have grown up as a result of the hard line The Times was taking. In addition, he couldn't understand why The Times relied so heavily on quotations from the New York Herald, a paper for which he had nothing but contempt.

If the remark has been made to me once I heard it fifty times lately: 'Why does the Times quote the New York Herald almost exclusively and give its name in the American news particularly after the language it has used towards you?' and I must confess I have not been able to answer the question. By lies, incessant attacks to which I cannot reply, the paper and its congener have succeeded in creating a dangerous feeling against me. They take me as the exponent of Englishmen, England, and the Times, and would like to avenge themselves upon me...Davis writes from New York that it is the bitter leaders in the Times that do the harm and excite the people, and that I shall be made the scapegoat of people's sins at home...

To Dasent he sent much the same message, in even more graphic terms. "Welcome back from the Geysers...the Salmon...and ruins of Iceland," he began. "I send you a few lines to beg that you will treat me gently as may be..." Pointing out that he was, in effect, a hostage "for the good behavior of the Times" and that as a hostage, he "could lose much of /his/ value if /he/ were exposed to the peculiar processes of reasoning by which convictions are changed in the land of liberty," he nevertheless wrote that he didn't want to "muzzle" the Thunderer, only to request a little less vinegar. The Northerners were "in such a sore irritable state here that a drop of acid plays the divil and makes them leap like dervishes," he wrote. He then repeated the
complaints he had made to Delane about The Times's frequent quotation of The Herald. "The fact is," he continued, The Herald's information is frequently false and when it is true the other papers are about as well informed. It is now doing its best to embroil the two countries, and its game is to denounce 'The Times' as a secession paper...Their mendacity as journalists is equal to their infamy as men...I really believe they are...Southerns or in the pay and interest of Richmond...There is only too much ground for irritation against us in the way in which the Englishmen here express their desire to see the Union broken up...Just imagine the Herald persisting in saying I sent my Bull Run letter to Bunch our Consul at Charleston before it went to London.

(21)

The next day he wrote again to Davis, asking "Can you tell me what there is in my letter dated 10th Augt ... to make people so angry? I beg of you to treat me as a friend as far as criticism is concerned and to give me the benefit of your advice..."

Meanwhile, as he had told Davis in the first letter, and as he wrote to Dasent, there was nothing going on in Washington, and, McClellan's assurances to the contrary, he didn't think the army would stir for some weeks. Therefore, he had decided to go West for a few weeks "to change the air." Clearly, Russell needed a break. (22)

Davis had problems of his own to consider, which were soon to become The Times's problems as well. He seems to have developed a cough which wouldn't clear up. Russell had heard of this, from
Davis probably, and had sent his sympathy to Davis in his letter of the 14th, suggesting that he "try some sea place where the air is soft..." Davis's law partner, D. B. Eaton, also wrote to him on the same matter: "...I hope you find yourself very comfortable and I trust, as I believe, that you will add to your strength & through that means get relief from your cough. I am glad you have taken its care in hand in season & have such good assurance of medical care & nursing. Tailler & I will take care of the business..." (23)

Davis's cough is, therefore, well documented. This is an important point, for Davis gave up his work as Times correspondent towards the end of the year, citing ill-health as his reason. Davis's departure from The Times has been interpreted as having been occasioned by disapproval by The Times of his avowedly pro-North position. It seems more likely that the illness came at a convenient time for The Times to replace Davis with someone whom they thought would more accurately reflect a "British" view. (24)

Davis's need for a respite came at a bad time for Morris, for not only was Delane out of town, but Morris was undoubtedly worried about the possibility that his star war correspondent might desert his post. Perhaps for these reasons, Morris's reply to Davis was exceedingly curt. "I have nothing to say about your leaving New York except that I regret the cause equally with the effect. This time is, as you observe, inconvenient for
absence." His only other remark was not one of sympathy, but of exasperation. "How long will it be before American Statesmen open their eyes?" (25)

Delane, by now, was back from his European holiday, but continuing his vacation with a few quiet weeks at his home at Ascot Heath. (26) He received Russell's letter, forwarded to him by Dasent, and wrote Dasent, "I am puzzled by the letter you sent me from Russell. I fully believe in his danger and that nobody but himself would be able to evade it; but I should be very loath indeed to withdraw him. So, I write and beg him to be careful but to hold on and avoid public rooms and mixed society -- which is much like telling him to avoid mosquitoes." (27)

As Russell fretted under the attack of some of the more irresponsible portions of the Northern press, The Times continued its editorial pronouncements about the war in America in much the same vein as before. Cooke criticized Britain's sending more troops to Canada with the basic contention that Canada should take care of itself. On the same day, a letter from Bancroft Davis discussing the measures being taken in the North to finance the war, was commented on sourly by Woodham, who wrote, "Our correspondent enumerates with positive unction the number and variety of taxes available against the pockets of the American people." While we agree that these taxes can be levied, he continued, will the American people pay? ".../If/ the Americans are really to accept this permanent weight of taxation they will
either be compelled to remodel some of their institutions or they
will display such qualities of integrity and self-denial as have
never yet been held to distinguish Democratic communities." (28)

Two days later Woodham wrote, "The United States of North
America have ceased to be.../Subjugation/ of the South is next to
impossible, and its submission in the highest degree
improbable...All the incidents of the war appear to be in favour
of the Confederate States." (29) A leader from Woodham's pen the
next day on cotton added nothing to the points The Times had
already made many times before. (30)

Brodrick displayed a much more creative approach in two leaders
written on the 9th and the 10th. In the former, he considered the
issue of slavery as one of the causus belli of the American war.
Mrs. Stowe, the celebrated author of Uncle Tom's Cabin and an
ardent abolitionist, had written to Lord Shaftesbury, the great
English social reformer, arguing that the war was a great
anti-slave crusade. Brodrick, noting that wars seldom spring
from a single cause, cited commercial jealousy as certainly
having had its share in breaking up the Union, and "/a/ longing
for independence, with a fixed resolve to make the South the
centre of a new experiment in government" as an equally important
cause of the war. ".../Among/ the notions that we may...dismiss
is the notion that" the liberty of the African race "is the gage
of battle." "Slavery," he wrote, "is thrust in the
background...in fact, there has been an extraordinary silence of
the Northerners on the issue of Negro rights and...only the small
but active party of which /Mrs. Stowe/ is a member...has
abolitionist aims." (31)

The next day Brodrick commented on a letter from Russell which
had described the reactions of American newspapers to the defeat
at Bull Run, and Russell's opinion that

the North is in such a mood that the Government is
encouraged to proceed to the most extreme acts in
repressing opinions hostile to their measures. It is
now a crime against the United States to denounce the
war, or even to cry aloud for peace, and there is a
spirit abroad which promises to make the struggle last
as long as men and money can be found to bring it to an
end.

Brodrick's leader defended Russell's description of the battle,
noting that "his censure of officers and/or troops was no more
than he had written of our own troops during the Crimean War." He
ridiculed the idea of "one journal" which had implied that
Russell's letter had actually been written in London by men at
The Times who were "tools of an oligarchy which thirsts for the
ruin of the whole American nation and so regulates its policy
towards North and South as to enhance to the utmost their powers
of mutual destruction..." (32)

The next day he turned to the other important point raised by
Russell, that is, the restrictions on individual freedoms which
were now being adopted in the United States as war measures. In
this leader he took the Northerners to task for requiring visas
for entry into the North. He expressed understanding at the
necessity of regulating the ingress and egress of Southerners, but claimed that this restrictive measure was akin to punishing a whole student body for transgression of a few bad actors. One by one, he wrote, war was removing the charms of democracy. (33)

This proved to be one of Brodrick's last important "American" leaders for the duration of the war. As has been noted earlier in this work (Chapter One), Brodrick wrote in his memoirs that he was rarely used to write on America during the Civil War because of his known sympathy for the Union. In his leaders, he had not hesitated to criticize the North on its down-playing of the slavery issue, and on the threats to individual freedom he saw developing in the North. His overall tone, however, was never as harsh as those of his colleagues, and underneath the criticism, one detects a desire on Brodrick's part to caution the North, as a friend, rather than an enemy, not to lose sight of these valuable moral imperatives as it fought to preserve the Union. By contrast, the leaders of Chenery, Love, and especially Woodham, evinced an almost gleeful, "I told you so" air, as they pointed again and again to the shortcomings of Americans and commented on what they were convinced was the breakdown of the American democratic experiment.

The Saturday Review made an interesting comment on the feud that had developed between the North and The Times over Russell's Bull Run letter.

It is hardly fair to be severe on the Americans for
the soreness which they show under the graphic handling of the Times' correspondent, and the pointed sarcasms of the sermon preached upon the text of Manassas...we doubt whether a neutral correspondent who had given an equally correct description of our military mismanagement during the Crimean campaign would have been much more popular here than Mr. Russell seems to be just now in Washington.

(34)

Despite The Review's understanding, The Times showed no disposition to follow its lead.

Towards the middle of the month of September, news came of a successful combined military and naval operation against two forts, Clark and Hatteras, which controlled access to Hatteras Inlet and Pamlico Sound in North Carolina. This victory greatly improved the North's ability to blockade the Southern coast. Woodham noted the Federal success, almost with enthusiasm, mentioning also that, in the West, General Fremont was preparing to descend the Mississippi, and concluding that this meant the war was finally heating up. (35)

On this same date, The Times had the opportunity to balance this positive news from the North with a comment on one of the stranger occurrences of the war, when Lincoln's administration sought the aid of General Garibaldi as commander-in-chief of the Federal armies. (36) The Times leader writer wrote: "It costs an effort to take in the extravagant oddity and the humiliating character of this proposal." Indeed it did.
Both Davis in New York, and Russell in Washington had written letters reporting the Hatteras victory. At the same time, they had enthusiastically told of a proclamation of General Fremont according to which any rebels in Missouri who could be proved to have been active in the field were to have their property confiscated, and, more importantly, their slaves freed. Davis described the proclamation as "one of the most important documents of the war." He knew, if the proclamation held, that at least one objection of The Times to the Northern position might be removed, for the proclamation could be the first stage of a transformation of the war into an anti-slavery crusade. Russell was convinced of it. He wrote, "...the proclamation of General Fremont is really bringing the issue to that which I, for one, believed it must come if the war went on -- a war of abolition -- a fight between the Northern Abolitionists and the Southern Slaveholders." (37)

A week later Russell told Times readers that Fremont's proclamation had caused a split in the cabinet. The President cultivates Seward, he wrote, but exhibits a "rude vigour of his own." Seward minds his own business, but others do not. Russell described some of Lincoln's far-reaching powers, noting that these had come as a surprise to Englishmen who thought of an American president as a mild sort of "Chief Magistrate." Meanwhile, Russell wrote, the South had taken to describing Northern armies as "Lincoln's 'mercenaries,' 'hordes,'"
'barbarians,' 'savages,' etc. Russell thought Lincoln was a most moderate man who did not favour the view that the North was making war against slavery. (38)

Russell was right. In the weeks that followed, Abolitionists in America were exultant at Fremont's Proclamation, but the border states were not. Lincoln was caught in the middle, not for the first time in his term of office, and he adopted a characteristic course. "Having found that the Pathfinder [Fremont] would not hesitate to embarrass him politically," one Civil War historian has written, the President very adroitly removed Fremont from command, rationalizing his action in opposing the Proclamation by noting that it had gone further than the Congress had allowed. (39) Fremont had acted prematurely, with the result that he rendered himself hors de combat. As Brodrick had written on the 9th, slavery was still to be carefully kept in the background.

Hardly a day went by without some news or comment about America appearing in The Times, although The Saturday Review remarked, "The Times has lately afforded us less amusement than might have been expected...As a general rule, its leading articles...have been simply dull rather than in any marked way absurd." (40)

On the 23rd of September, Love was given the assignment, rare for him, of writing a leader on American affairs. He used as his text the advice the Russian Ambassador Gortschakoff had recently
given to America to seek peace. He rather sneeringly noted that the Russian counsel would probably be well received in America because of the long existence of cordial sympathy between American democracy and Russian absolutism, while England was being blamed for everything and heaped with abuse. (41)

The next day Chenery repeated Lowe's points in more measured tones. "Good advice," he wrote about the Russian's initiative, "but obviously not to be taken by a proud and obstinate people." (42) Two letters from Russell appeared on the 24th, and a Money Market column was devoted to the question of American finance on the 25th. (43)

On that same day, one of Bancroft Davis's last letters for The Times appeared. It was an eloquent statement of the Northern position. For the past month, he said, he had been visiting the interior of all the New England States, "travelling from town to town on the saddle." From this vantage point, he had attempted to gauge the tenor of his countrymen in regard to the war. The conclusion he had reached from this opinion sampling was that the misapprehension in some parts of Europe that "this war is carried on at the North by an unrestrained mob, in opposition to the judgment and wishes of the intelligent and educated classes, and in violation of law; and that the public liberties either have already fallen beneath the blows of usurpation, or are soon to be yielded a ready sacrifice" could not be further from the truth. On the contrary, he wrote, "the war has the support of all
It was simply not true, as was so often alleged, he wrote, that the war was begun at the North.

The people of this part of the country, engaged in peaceful pursuits, had no desire for war, and did everything they could to avoid it. It was forced upon them by the conspirators of the South, who rose in rebellion against the common Central Government, because they were dissatisfied with the result of an election...What possible course was open to the Government, except the one it adopted?

It was equally unsound or illogical to attribute America's present troubles to the form of government that exists here, he continued, "as does at least one authority eminent on both sides of the Atlantic." (Davis was referring, of course, to The Times.)

Democracy has sins enough to shoulder without loading her down with the sins of this rebellion. Indeed, if it be true, as is often charged, that the rebellion began in a conspiracy of the aristocratic part of the community against the rule of the lower classes (which is entirely untrue), how can that rebellion be charged against a democratic form of government?

Especially on the Continent, he wrote, there is a great deal said about this war being the result of the will of a mere numerical majority.

It is there assumed that this is a controversy between an aristocratic minority defending their rights on the one side, and democratic numbers, on the other side, seeking to enforce the will of an arbitrary and accidental majority.

"Greater nonsense," Davis wrote, "was never uttered." Lincoln was elected by a minority and did not control Congress. Had the
South remained in the Union, and, therefore, in the Congress, Lincoln's administration would have been "ground to powder." But the revolt of the South had "compelled all parties at the North to unite..." The truth was that the North had been attacked, he wrote,

not by a minority fearing an invasion of rights, not by an aristocracy fearing the rule of the mob, but by a faction defeated in an election and unwilling to surrender power; by the most uncontrollable part of the Democratic party -- the part that had fostered Fillibusters, protected pirates, bullied the rest of the world, defied all government at home, and was unwilling to submit to the mild rule of the Conservative and educated part of the country.

Davis predicted: "It requires no great prophetic powers to foresee that, as the war goes on, Northern patriots will be rapidly transmuted into Abolitionists; " /Indeed/," he said, the "process is going on every day." He ended his letter, as his masters required, with figures on the price of gold, and a report of the reception of the new government loan. (44)

Lowe treated Davis kindly in his leader that day, as befitted a valued colleague. He admitted that it "does not become the Powers of Europe to fasten upon the existence of civil war in America as a proof of any extraordinary vice in her institutions or a peculiar stigma on democratic government." He agreed with Davis that "there is no evidence to show that the war has been forced upon the educated classes of the North by the power of the mob." He even joined Davis in the view that the war had been caused by the "unwillingness of the faction of Southern
statesmen, defeated in the election for President, to surrender
the power of which they had so long held the monopoly." But,
granting all of that, Love still firmly held to the view that
reconquest was not a workable solution and that the South should
have been let go.

The almost unanimous opinion of England is that the
only possible termination of the conflict which would
have the least chance of healing the wounds of civil
discord would be a separation on fair and reasonable
terms..../It is/ better to break up the Confederacy
into two parts than to create a nominal unity by
constructing a sham Confederation out of the conquerors
and the conquered.

At about the same time Russell wrote a curious letter to
Bancroft Davis from Chicago, indicating some of the same
reservations he felt about the ultimate utility of the conflict.

I for one should deeply deplore any permanent
serverance of the Union & I have no doubt the North if
properly handled & directed must prevail in beating
down the Southern opposition. But what will come then
--- Not a Union such as existed before, but an armed
confederate holding a portion of its territory by a
military occupation --- There is indeed I believe much
of good in this war to the American people for it will
purify the air, divert them from a universal hunt after
place & contracts & dollars & elevate the whole moral
sentiment of the great race which has such a glorious
land & generous impulses, but which pardon me for
saying it required a little humbling --- as much as ever
John Bull did --- & that is saying a good deal.

The month of September had been a month for regrouping, for
travel, and for vacation for Russell, Davis, and Delane. Russell,
restless at inaction and increasingly beset by criticism for his Bull Run letter, had written a multitude of letters to his friends, before fleeing to the West for a breather. In London, The Times's back-up editorial staff had continued to attack the North and Democracy, while they eagerly awaited reports of real fighting. Brodrick had been given the opportunity to write several leaders, then was retired from the front line for the duration of the war. In one of his last letters to The Times, Bancroft Davis had sent from New York a hard-hitting rebuttal of most of the arguments which had been made by The Times since it had begun to hone its anti-North position. Love, who could not be intellectually dishonest, had admitted the validity of most of Davis's case, except for the one important point upon which The Times rested its whole editorial policy. Whatever the merits of the case, The Times firmly believed that the South could not be reconquered, and should have been let go in peace.

1. Times Archives, Russell Diary, 30 August 1861.
2. TA, Morris, 11/214, 30 August 1861.
3. TA, Russell Diary, 1 September 1861.
4. TA, Russell Diary, 6 September 1861.
5. TA, Morris, 11/229, 16 September 1861.
6. Seward Papers 2526, 24 August 1861, Sam Ward (Carlos Lopez) to George Baker (Seward).
7. Seward Papers 2539, Carlos Lopez to FW Seward (son), 12 September 1861. Dillon was the same pro-South contact who had been introduced to Russell by Morris, and who had supplied Russell with the clipping book which the reporter had read on his Atlantic crossing in March.

8. TA, Russell Diary, 7 August 1861.


10. TA, Russell Diary, 2 September 1861.

11. TA, Russell Diary, 7 September 1861.

12. TA, Russell Diary, 26 August 1861.

13. TA, Russell Diary, 27 August 1861.

14. TA, Russell Diary, 31 August 1861.

15. TA, Russell Diary, 1 September 1861.

16. TA, Russell Diary, 4 September 1861.

17. TA, Russell Diary, 6 September 1861.

18. TA, Russell Diary, 12, 13 September 1861.


21. TA, Delane, 10/114, 15 September 1861.

22. Davis Papers, II/297-298, 16 September 1861.

23. Davis Papers, II/299-300, 24 September 1861.


27. TA, Delane, 10/119, "Tuesday," [October 1861].

28. The Times, 2 September 1861, 6.

29. The Times, 4 September 1861, 6.

30. The Times, 5 September 1861, 5.

31. The Times, 9 September 1861, 8.

32. The Times, 10 September 1861, 6.

33. The Times, 13 September 1861, 8.

34. The Saturday Review, 12, #307, 14 September 1861, 260.

35. The Times, 17 September 1861, 6.

36. Sanford, U.S. Minister to Belgium and Davis’s friend, was involved in this affair.

37. The Times, 16 September 1861, 7; 17 September 1861, 7.

38. The Times, 23 September 1861, 7.


40. The Saturday Review, 12, #308, 21 September 1861, 295.

41. The Times, 23 September 1861, 6.

42. The Times, 24 September 1861, 6.

43. The Times, 24 September 1861, 9; 25 September 1861, 5.

44. The Times, 25 September 1861, 7.

45. The Times, 25 September 1861, 6.

46. Davis Papers, II/301-302, 25 September 1861.
When John Bigelow arrived in Paris near the end of September 1861 to take up his consular duties he wrote to his chief, Secretary of Seward, in Washington:

"Our country has lost all its prestige here and nothing but a series of military successes can reestablish it. Even if the Union were divided, we should be insulted every day until we showed ourselves through our military force. Now is the time therefore for us to fight."

(1)

Shortly before this, Seward's minister in London, Charles Francis Adams, had written, "...there is a very general impression in commercial circles that a recognition is in agitation.." (2)

As if to confirm this bleak assessment, the banker August Belmont, Rothchild's agent in the United States, wrote Seward from Wiesbaden:

"...recent information which has reached me from reliable quarters.. indicate clearly that at no distant day the French and English Governments contemplate an intervention in our affairs under the plea of putting a stop to the war between the two sections of the Union,"
in order to prevent the serious derangement which its continuation would necessarily inflict upon the commerce of the world.

While Seward could do little about the military situation which was now in the hands of General McClellan, the necessity of preventing recognition of the Confederate States of America by either France or Great Britain was a matter of greatest urgency to him. With such truly serious matters to be attended to, it must have caused him no small amount of annoyance, therefore, to be required to respond to a memorial which had been presented to him asking for the expulsion of Times correspondent William Howard Russell from the United States.

His reply to the petition was reasoned, but testy. "It has been the habit of the Government of the United States to take no notice of representations, however obnoxious, made by the press of foreign nations," he began, but to pay attention only to "language and actions of the Executive organs of foreign States." Therefore, he had not read, nor, he averred, had any other member of the Administration, given much attention to the foreign press, "engrossed as we all necessarily are, with urgent public duties and cares." If the foreign press was in error, it was up to the free press of America to correct it. The national government depended on the support of its own people, not upon the goodwill of foreign nations. "If it be assumed that the obnoxious paper may do harm here, is it not sufficient reply that probably not
fifty copies of the London Times ever find their way to our shores?" he asked. And if it has been widely copied by the United States papers, are these papers not the ones to blame?

His conclusion was that he did not favour interfering with the press unless there was a clear public danger. He did not see such a danger in this case, "even if one foreigner does pervert our hospitality to shelter himself in writing injurious publications against us for a foreign press." Many more foreigners, he said, just as intelligent, were joining the Union forces daily. "Could there be a better illustration of that great fundamental truth of our system?" he asked triumphantly.

The Times was unusually charitable in its comment on this letter the day of its publication in London. "The reply of Mr. Sevand is in substance sensible enough, though there is an evident under-current of spite, directed against English opinion in general, and the Times newspaper in particular," it wrote. "The real truth is that the Americans are sore at the description which our Correspondent gave of the flight from Bull’s Run," the leader continued. "Will not America permit foreigners to write freely?" it asked mildly.

In spite of Sevand’s contention that his government paid scant attention to the opinions of the Times, he was clearly concerned at the tide of opinion in Europe against the North. In the fall
of 1861, he specifically put together a mission to be sent to three major European capitals to supplement the work of his diplomatic representatives there. These unofficial ambassadors were to present the North's case to influential leaders in London, Paris and Madrid on an informal basis. The men ultimately chosen for this job were his good friend Thurlow Weed, Archbishop Hughes of New York, and Bishop McIlvaine of Ohio.

Count Adam Gurowski, who served Seward as translator and clerk, wrote in his diary when he heard of the appointments,

The collateral missions to England, France, and Spain, are to add force to our cause before the public opinion as well as before the rulers. But what a curious choice of men!...Thurlow Weed, with his off-hand, apparently sincere, if not polished ways, may not be too repulsive to English refinement, provided he does not button hole his interlocutionists, or does not pat them on the shoulder...But doubtless the London press will show him up.../And/ Hughes to act on Louis Napoleon! Why! The French Emperor can outwit a legion of Hugheses!

(6)

Some months previously, the Confederate President Jefferson Davis had designated James Mason, former chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, and John Slidell, former Senator from the state of Louisiana, to take the Southern case to Europe. It was hoped that these men might succeed in obtaining the diplomatic recognition which their predecessors, Yancey, Rost and Mann, had failed to achieve. Mason and Slidell left Charleston aboard the steamer Theodore, ran the blockade, trans shipped to a
British mail packet, The Trent, and were enroute to England, as Weed, McIlvaine, and Hughes prepared to leave America in the early part of November.

As these two missions converged on Europe, William Howard Russell, back in Washington after a trip to the West (where he had been arrested for shooting on the "prairie" on a Sunday), continued his usual rounds, scouting for news. His friend Sam Ward told him he had dined with Seward recently, and that Seward had told his Russell had been neglecting him -- hadn't been near him for two months. "I must explain to Mr. Secy how that is," he wrote in his diary, complaining, "I am below the level of a State paper." (7)

The next day he noted that he had written a "very civil letter to McClellan requesting a pass to visit all ye lines." He also mentioned Ward again as being "on some very..curious old game...I fear he does not always tell the truth does he?" (8)

He apparently got Morris's reply to his homesick letter of September, for he wrote on the 7th, "...Morris says avoid all danger Lord how Funny. Why I am living in an air of danger and only the fondness of Providence saves me. But I feel I have a sort of public duty after all..." On the unreliability of the Northern press he wrote, "There is not a word on which anyone can rely now in the papers wh. is proof that in times of peril a press like that of US can be kept in order not from patriotism
but from pure pressure above all." (9)

Russell certainly did not agree with Seward’s boast about a free press in America.

By the 18th, Russell had still not gotten his pass, but he wrote of Lord Lyons driving out with Seward "over ye camps," and noted that he met Marcy, McClellan’s father-in-law "on my way & fancied he either cut or did not see me," so he must have been with Lyons on that visit. "There is an immense difficulty before me in the way of marching with McClellan’s army if the Presd or McClellan disapproves of it & it is my intention to repair to Seward tomorrow & to Cameron [Secretary of War] & to take the lion by the horns, as an American writer in the West said." (10)

Five days later he had still not received a reply from Cameron. (11)

The Federal government would soon be holding its collective breath over the outcome of a combined naval operation against Port Royal, a fine port on the South Carolina coast. "Bill Seward I hear pretends to say 3 months will finish the war if the Naval Expedn succeeds...nous verrons..." Russell wrote in his diary on the 6th of November. At the same time, Russell noted the mission Seward had organized to go to Europe "to counteract Slidell & Mason" would be comprised of Edward Everett, (former Massachusetts Senator, Secretary of State, Minister to England, Governor of Massachusetts and President of Harvard), "McIlvaine &
Kennedy...but somehow or other the Mission is broken off & now there is talk of Thurlow Weed and Bishop Hughes...Thurlow is a very crafty old fellow but he will be of small weight among the polished politicians of France & England..." (12)

In the more public comment Russell sent in a letter reporting the coming Northern mission, he was less contemptuous of its participants. Weed, he wrote, "is an astute, clear-headed able man, who has managed company on his side of the House for many years with success and profit, and the newspaper he edits is one of the best written and most decent in the United States. Bishop Hughes is a Roman Catholic prelate of attainments and political experience...skillful, and anti-English. He has worked the Irish element in the States for a considerable period and has used it in favour of Mr. Seward." (13)

In London, during the month of October, The Times reacted to American news as it arrived, along with the occasional speech on America given by an M.P. in the hustings. On the 3rd of October, there were two columns devoted to a speech of William Forster, a pro-North M.P. who said "It would be an eternal disgrace to us if we interfered for the South and for Slavery." On the 5th, Chenery wrote that the military campaign could be expected to begin in earnest, now that the hot months were past, with the main action being in Virginia and along the coast. In grave tones, he stated that

/ the time is now approaching when the great and
perhaps the final trial of strength must be made
between the Northern and Southern States of America.

Woodham devoted a leader on the 7th to the theme that the American experience would give the British a good opportunity to test the efficacy of a volunteer army. A Letter to the Editor from Southern diplomat Yancey was published on the same day, as a reply to Forster's speech. In his letter Yancey contended that the South did not advocate a renewal of the slave trade, but that it was up to each state to do what it thought proper.

Woodham analysed the development of British opinion in regard to the war in a leader on the 9th. He described that opinion as having moved from favouring the North to its present position that the two sections were as irreconcilable as Greeks and Turks, and that therefore there could be no compromise, and conquest was impossible. He claimed that the North had lost its initial advantage by its behavior. "Their behavior towards us was so unwarrantable; their menaces were so insolent, and their exactions were so fierce and irrational, that it became impossible to regard them...as before."

On the other hand, the Southerners, through their very silence and secrecy, had not exposed themselves to the same kind of criticism. "When...the Southerners, without bluster and bombast, but with a stern and quiet determination, took their position...against the Northern invaders...it was not in human
nature to view such an achievement without a certain amount of admiration." (16)

A letter from Russell from the hinterland (Racine, Wisconsin) dwelt on his feud with the Northern press, and now turned on Secretary Seward. Referring to Seward’s reply to the petition to expel him from the United States, Russell wrote...

...his acquiescence in certain unknown, anonymous accusations in secret memorials against me and his hypothetical insinuation that I had perverted the hospitality I am said to have received...are neither candid, nor generous, nor ‘hospitable.’ He claims he never read the letter, but seems to accept the accusations it makes.

(17)

The twin problems of Britain’s need for cotton and the interference the Northern blockade presented to the satisfaction of that need were dealt with by Chenery and Lowe later in the month. These gentlemen maintained that Britain would remain neutral and not interfere in the war, while they pointed out that the need for cotton might become irresistible. Chenery noted that the blockade was clearly contrary to international law because it was ineffective. However, Lowe wrote later that he was pleased that the Americans were interpreting the Law of Blockade in favour of belligerents, pointing out that the North in doing so were accepting the British view in branding the war as something more than a domestic conflict. With familiar sarcasm he noted that "/As/ soon as the question is not that of
abusing our Government, but of condemning our ships, it is
discovered that a war exists." (18)

Bancroft Davis attempted to present the Northern case again in
a letter from Massachusetts. The Union party of Massachusetts did
not sympathize with an Abolitionist speech of Senator Sumner, he
wrote, but "Abolitionism, pure and simple, is increasing." The
alacrity with which the moneyed classes furnish the government
with the "sinews of war," and the working classes with the "bone
and muscle," gave him little reason to believe that English
counsels of peaceful separation would be listened to.

Nothing occasions more surprise among intelligent
Americans than the unanimity with which the English
Press tender such counsel, for all thinking men here
agree that such a course would be dishonourable...The
loyal people of the United States can see no difference
between the rebellion here and any other rebellion,
except that this rebellion is entirely without
provocation.

Comparing the South to Ireland and India, Davis argued that if
rebellions had broken out there, Britain would have done the same
thing as the North had done. He rejected the idea that there was
a similarity between the rebellion of the South and the rebellion
of the United States against Great Britain, pointing out that the
South had rebelled against a North it had dominated. Moreover,
when the United States rebelled against Great Britain, it did not
plant a hostile power on its borders. Finally, he asserted, any
nation which assented to its own dismemberment was not worthy of
respect. (19)
One more major event was to take place which would lay the groundwork for the crisis in Anglo-American relations that occurred one month later. Russell reported that Lord Lyons had written a despatch "which was/ not a very remarkable paper, nor quite worthy, perhaps, of the Foreign Office" in which he protested the suspension of habeas corpus in regard to British citizens, citing the U.S. Constitution to support his case. Seward, before replying to Lord Lyons, sent out a circular to governors of the Northern states urging that the ports and harbours be fortified to prevent the evils of foreign war incited by Southern agents, making it clear that he was referring to England as the potential invader. This circular, Russell wrote, "reawakens alarms of those who fear war with England (or those who want war with England) -- or who fear England will break the blockade." Claiming that the Americans simply reacted violently to all things English, while they counted on and courted the French, Russell wrote, "England/ may not look over a hedge, while France can steal a horse if she pleases." (20)

The Times leader that day, written by Robert Lowe, referred to the portion of the circular in which Seward cited Washington's traditional advice that America involve itself in no entangling alliances. In observing that dictum, The Times wrote, the Americans should have added another, viz., "While they ally themselves little to foreign nations they should, to insure their observance of this precept, quarrel with them as frequently and
violently as possible." In particular, this works out, Love claimed, that "Whenever you find yourselves in a difficult position, pick a quarrel with England."

From Wall Street, Bancroft Davis sent a judgment contrary to that of his colleague in Washington who was fearful of an Anglo-American war. "Government Sixes (which may be called the Consols of the United States) are selling to-day at 96 1/2..." he wrote. "It /therefore/ seems fair to assume that Wall Street, at least, does not see a serious international difficulty in the correspondence between Lord Lyons and Mr. Seward." The publication of this correspondence was unfortunate, however, for it tended to exasperate the ill-feeling between the two countries, Davis wrote. Underneath it all, Americans believed more and more that "England sympathizes with Southern slavery in its attack upon the institutions of this country," he continued, asking, "What can there be more fatal to the cause of liberty and good government in the world than that such an alienation should spring up between Great Britain and the United States?" (21)

Over the next two days, Love was given the opportunity to deal with the Americans again. On the 6th, taking a cue from Russell, he criticized Lord Lyons's language on the habeas corpus issue, while he was equally critical of the behavior of Lincoln's government. The case had been argued poorly by Lyons and ably by Seward, Love admitted, but we still think American "acts have been illegal as regards their own citizens, and a violation of
the rights of nations as regards ours," Lowe concluded. (22)

On the 7th, Lowe displayed his best form when he delivered a stinging rebuke to Bancroft Davis's opinions, expressed the day before. We didn't need to be told by our New York correspondent, he wrote acidly, that

what is called 'the public mind' in the Northern States of America is very ill disposed towards this country. We might have gathered the fact from Mr. Seward's circular to the Governors of the States, advising them, in substance, to prepare themselves for an attack by Great Britain.

We have known all along, Love wrote, that the governing class in America doesn't like us. He cited as instances that proved the point: the sympathy and assistance given by American citizens to rebellions of the French Canadians, the violent language used in regard to the disputed boundary in Oregon, the refusal by the Americans to allow search of their vessels, which had ruined the efforts to suppress the slave trade, and the seizure of the island of San Juan while the matter was under negotiation. "We have borne all these things patiently," Love claimed, "and we do not regret it...but those from whom we have endured all this must not think to take us by surprise when they inform us that they do not like us...our fault is of...a deeper die. In acts we have been neutral and impartial, but we have had the presumption to form an opinion, and having formed it, to publish it."

Love then restated The Times's opinion. First, secession had destroyed the Federal Union which could not be reconstituted on
the old basis. Second, since a revolution was inevitable, it should have been accomplished peaceably. And third, the North was really contesting for empire, and the South for independence. (23)

With this leader, Lowe enunciated clearly The Times's fully matured position on the American conflict. The stage was now set for the occurrence of the incident which would trigger "The Trent Crisis."

Just before this event occurred, however, the North successfully completed its attack on Port Royal in South Carolina. Chenery, for The Times began his lead on this military victory with the words, "We must do justice to the energy of the Federal Government." The fleet had been well fitted out and skillfully handled. Nevertheless, Chenery expressed doubts as to the purpose of the move. If it was to satisfy the public cry to "do something," this had been accomplished, he said. It gave the Federals a position on the Atlantic coast, it enabled them to open a port into cotton country, and it demonstrated that the Federals could be successful. It also would require the Confederates to move some of their own troops from Northern Virginia. Beyond this, The Times withheld comment. (24)

On the same day, a news item appeared in the paper announcing the arrival in Cowes of General Scott, "late commander in chief of the U.S. Army," and Thurlow Weed and his daughter, all of whom
were bound for Le Havre. (25)

On the 8th of November, the day after the North’s attack on Port Royal, U.S. Navy Commodore Charles Wilkes challenged the British mail packet, *The Trent*, and took from it the two Southern emissaries, Mason and Slidell, with their private secretaries, declaring them to be "contraband of war." He delivered them first to Fort Monroe (in Virginia), then, on instructions from Washington, to Fort Warren (near Boston), where they were imprisoned, pending a decision as to their disposition.

In America, Russell recorded his first impressions of this startling development in his diary:

> As I was going over to Ld Lyons I met Mercier [the French Minister] wrapped in his cloak who told me ye extraordinary news that ye US vessel of war San Jacinto stopped ye Trent in ye Bahamas & took Mason & Slidell...Extraordinary excitement in ye Chancellory...It seems at first blush as if there could be no way of getting out of the affair at all...the evening papers full of the affair...The tone is ridiculous enough as it assumes nothing unusual...was committed...The State Dept has as yet said nothing...There will be great irritation in England I am certain but all here say Palmerston is a rank coward in spite of blustering.

(26)

Unable to get anything out of the State Department and the British legation ("The orders are that ye Legation are not to speak of it"), Russell wrote in his diary that he was worried at the responsibility that rested on his shoulders for sending the news to London.
It is very probable my letter may be the first detailed acct of ye arrest of Mason & Slidell in England & as everything depends on the way in wh ye news is broken I feel a very great responsibility. God help me.

(27)

By the 22nd, Russell reported that

The American papers are now in the full cry that is it all right & that nothing can be done. A bad conclusion I think.../Had/ great difficulty in getting thru with my letter as I was nervous fuddy and uncollected. My wits too got all loose & astray but at last at 4 I was ready & gave the parcel to Haworth at the Legation.

(28)

Russell's letter did not, in fact, bring the first news of the Trent affair to Britain. On the 28th, the details of the capture arrived with the Trent itself, and the ship's purser became the authority in England for the facts of the case. In the Money Market column of that day, the affair was described as the "aggression," and it was reported that "A large portion of the public...continued to regard the act in the worst light, as a confirmation of the indications so long given by Mr. Seward of his desire to involve this country in a collision at any cost. Nevertheless, an unanimous confidence is expressed that our Government...will maintain the national dignity too well to be betrayed into irritation..." (29)

In its first comment on the incident, The Times departed from
its usually knee-jerk hostility to the North, while it told its readers how difficult that was. Cooke wrote, "It requires a strong effort of self-restraint to discuss with coolness the intelligence we publish to-day." Cooke dealt first to the legalities of the situation. Noting that by its Declaration of Neutrality, the British Government had placed itself in a very different position from that which it had occupied in former times, Cooke admitted that when Britain had been a belligerent it had claimed privileges over neutrals "in high-handed, and almost despotic manner" which "banded all the Maritime Powers of the world against us." It must be remembered, however, he wrote, that those were different times. "We were fighting for existence, and we did in those days what we should neither do nor allow others to do...."

Even if the diplomatic envoys could be considered as "contraband of war," as Wilkes contended his legal course would have been to take the ship itself into port, Cooke argued. "The result might, no doubt, have been the same, but if the proceeding was irregular we have surely a right to demand that these prisoners shall be restored."

In any case, Cooke counselled, our first duty must be to remain calm. It is inconceivable that the government of the Northern States wishes to force a conflict "with the Powers of Europe. We hope, therefore, that our people will not meet this provocation with an outburst of passion." Appealing to the "reasonable men
of the Federal States -- and they have some reasonable men among them" not to provoke war, Cooke concluded:

Even Mr. Seward himself must know that the voices of these Southern Commissioners, sounding from their captivity, are a thousand times more eloquent in London and in Paris than they would have been if they had been heard at St. James's and the Tuileries.

(30)

On the 29th The Times was full of American news and opinion. In addition to a leader on the seizure of the Confederate emissaries, there were comments in the Money Market column, two Letters to the Editor, an item of American military news, two reprints of comment from British newspapers, (the Manchester Guardian, and Birmingham Daily Post), a reprint of an article from the American Atlantic Monthly about Federal troops in Washington, and a description of Southern defenses at New Orleans. In addition, a description of a Meeting of Ministers noted that Viscount Palmerston had received Earl Russell, the Duke of Newcastle, the Right Honorable Chancellor of the Exchequer, and several other members of the Cabinet early in the forenoon at Downing Street, and had called a meeting of the entire Cabinet for 2 o'clock that day. (31)

The leader of the day was titled "American Outrage," and restated the legal position Chenery had attempted to express the day before. A fresh opinion had been received by now from the Law Officers as to the legality of the American action. These
gentlemen had determined that even if the United States had the right to "stop and search," "it is contrary to International Law for the officer of an armed cruiser to make himself a judge at sea." When this has happened before, the government has disavowed the act and given an apology, Chenery wrote, and that is what should be done now. The Confederate Commissioners "must be restored with a sufficient apology," he concluded. (32)

This leader was undoubtedly based on official information, for The Times had been privy to the opinion(s) of the Law Lords since early November. Russell had written in his Diary on the 26th of November that he had received a letter from Delane, apparently dated the 13th, that "law officers give it as opinion U.S. steamer might take Mason & Slidell from ...the steamer according to Lord Stowell's decision!" It had been common knowledge that fall on both sides of the Atlantic that Mason and Slidell had run the blockade and were on their way to the Continent, and it was equally well known that the Americans might try to intercept them. Palmerston and Russell, therefore, had queried the Law Officers about this eventuality at least three weeks before the event occurred, and these experts had concluded, in line with British precedent, that the seizure could be made lawfully. (33)

That the seizure was not a total surprise is further documented by a confidential despatch sent by Minister Adams to Seward on the 15th of November reporting a conversation between himself and Lord Palmerston. The interview had been requested by the Prime
Minister, and was in reference to the James Adger, an American vessel which arrived at Southampton early in November. Palmerston said that he assumed, Adams wrote, that the Adger had been sent to Britain to intercept the steamer on which Mason and Slidell would arrive. He said he didn't know whether this could be done or not, but informed Adams that it would be highly "improper and would prejudice opinion in Great Britain against the United States. He also said, Adams reported,

"It surely could not be supposed that the addition of one or two more to the number of persons who had already been some time in London on the same errand would be likely to produce any change in the policy already adopted. He did not believe the government would vary its action on their account, be they few or many."

(34)

The Prime Minister's strategy was apparently as follows: having determined from the Law Officers that his government would be on very shaky grounds in protesting such a seizure because of their own precedents, he chose to inform Adams quietly that the British would not take kindly to such an action, particularly if it took place in or near their own territorial waters. At the same time he assured the American Minister that his government had no intention of departing from its policy of neutrality by recognizing the Confederates. He stated further that the addition of Mason and Slidell to the already numerous Confederate contingent in Britain would not make his government any more likely to grant the Southerners their desired recognition.
That Palmerston's intentions in the fall of 1861 were to play down any differences which might develop between Britain and the North is made clear in a long letter he sent Lord Russell on the 18th of October, in which he dealt with numerous foreign policy matters. "As to North America," he wrote,

\[\text{our best and true policy seems to be to go on as we have begun and to keep quite clear of the conflict between North and South -- It is true as you say that there have been cases in Europe, in which allied Powers have said to fighting Parties..."in the Queen's name, I bid you to drop your swords"-- But those cases are rare and peculiar -- The love of quarrelling and fighting is inherent in man and to prevent its indulgence is to impose Restraints on natural Liberty; a State may so shackle its own Subjects but it is an Infringement on National Independence to restrain other Nations.}\]

The only excuse would be Danger to the Interfering Parties if the conflict went on but in the American case this cannot be pleaded by the Powers of Europe.

Palmerston continued, in this letter, that he agreed with Russell that the want of cotton would not justify interference in the American conflict unless the distress caused by the shortage became much more severe. In a crossed out portion of the letter (which must have been a draft) he noted the difficulty of any rupture with the United States, particularly in the winter "because our communication with Canada would be cut off, and we have not there a garrison sufficient for War Time." He concluded:

\[\text{The only thing to do seems to be to lie on our oars and to give no Pretext to the Washingtonians to Quarrel with us, while on the other Hand we maintain our Rights & those of our Fellow-Countrymen.}\]
In contrast to the firmly neutral course advised by the Prime Minister in regard to the American civil war, The Times had by now become engaged in an increasingly bitter feud with the Northern government, first, over the North’s policy, which The Times considered misguided, of fighting for the union, and, perhaps equally importantly, for mistreating its favorite war correspondent. With the advent of the Trent Crisis, however, The Times adopted a more tentative stance.

The day after the news of the seizure arrived in London, Charles Francis Adams wrote in his diary that "The newspapers today are rather moderate under the fear that the law may be against them, but the temper underneath is violent enough. The law officers of the crown are to give another opinion this day, which looks as if the Government wanted to have a different one." The next day his expectations were confirmed. "The law officers of the Crown have modified their opinion as I supposed, and now the dogs are all let loose in the newspaper. The position of Great Britain now is that the offence require apology and restitution of the men." Wilkes had made a mistake in not taking the whole ship plus its contents into prize court. ".../On/ such miserable issue is the peace of fifty millions of people to be staked!" (36)

On that same day (a Saturday), a leader in The Times reported on the Cabinet meeting the previous day which had been called to
discuss the "recent outrage on the British flag." "We may say," Chenery wrote, (undoubtedly with official blessing), "that the Cabinet has come to the conclusion that the act of the Captain of the San Jacinto...is a clear violation of the Law of Nations, and one for which reparation must be at once demanded. In all probability the next steamer will carry out a despatch, instructing Lord Lyons to demand reparation, which, if unsatisfied, would require him to withdraw his mission. "We hear there is a possibility that the seizure was the act of the American Commander /acting/ on his own...We fear, however, that the Federal Government had deliberately determined to seize the Southern Commissioners," Chenery continued, citing the affair of the James Adger as proof. Also, "...we are informed that General Scott has declared, since his arrival at Paris, that the seizure of the Southern Commissioners had been the subject of Cabinet discussions at Washington long before he left." (37)

By Monday there was different news. From telegraphic despatches The Times had learned that "the Captain of the San Jacinto seems to have acted very much on his own responsibility. This would diminish the difficulty of the Federal Government and give Seward room to disavow the act. But we must own we have but small hope of such a disavowal." Warning the Americans of their foolishness, Love, who wrote this leader, stated that "We want the Americans to understand we will not put up with anything more." (38)
Other reports appeared in The Times which were more conciliatory. A Letter to the Editor on Saturday, signed "JUSTITIA," cautioned that the question was whether the injury Britain had sustained was one of form, or of substance. "...Unless it is perfectly demonstrable that if the Captain of the San Jacinto had carried the Trent into New York she could not legally have been condemned I cannot think that we are entitled to push our demand to the extreme point of requiring the restitution of the Commissioners." (39)

On this question of intent and liability the newspaper debate continued, as Britain waited for a reaction from the Americans.

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1. Seward Papers 2542, John Bigelow to Seward, 23 September 1861.
2. National Archives Microfilm, Despatches from United States Ministers to Great Britain, Roll 73, Vol. 77, Despatch #43, 14 September 1861.
3. Seward Papers 2543, August Belmont to Seward, 25 September 1861.
4. The Times, 8 October 1861, 7.
5. The Times, 8 October 1861, 6.
6. Adam Gurowski, Diary, (Boston: Lee and Shepard, 1862), I, 119. The comment was in the section broadly dated November 1861.
7. TA, Russell Diary, 4 October 1861.
8. TA, Russell Diary, 5 October 1861.
9. TA, Russell Diary, 7 October 1861.
10. TA, Russell Diary, 18 October 1861.

11. TA, Russell Diary, 23 October 1861.

12. TA, Russell Diary, 6 November 1861. Everett at first accepted the commission, then declined after the death of a son.


14. The Times, 3 October 1861, 4; 5 October 1861, 8.

15. The Times, 7 October 1861, 6, 8.

16. The Times, 9 October 1861, 6.

17. The Times, 13 October 1861, 9.

18. The Times, 21 October 1861, 6; 24 October 1861, 8.


20. The Times, 5 November 1861, 6.

21. The Times, 5 November 1861, 7. By this time, the two columns were differentiated as follows: Davis's column was titled "The Northern States of America," and he was described as "Our Own Correspondent." Russell's was titled "The Civil War in America," and he was "Our Special Correspondent."

22. The Times, 6 November 1861, 8.

23. The Times, 7 November 1861, 6.


26. TA, Russell Diary, 15 November 1861.

27. TA, Russell Diary, 18, 19 November 1861.

28. TA, Russell Diary, 22 November 1861. Russell sent his letters to The Times along with the Legation's mail.

29. The Times, 28 November 1861, 5.

30. The Times, 28 November 1861, 8. The point made by The Times was to the importance of Mason and Slidell echoed a comment which had been made by Prime Minister Palmerston to Minister Adams two weeks previously. This conversation will be described later.
31. The Times, 29 November 1861.

32. The Times, 29 November 1861, 6.

33. For the text of a letter from Palmerston to Delane, 11 November 1861, describing this decision of the Law Officers, see Dasey, op. cit., 36.

34. Despatches from United States Ministers to Great Britain, 1791-1906, Adams to Seward, Microfilm Roll No. 74, Volume 78, 15 November 1861. Also, Dasey, op. cit., 36, 37.

35. Broadlands Manuscripts, GC/RU/1139, Broadlands, 18 October 1861.

36. Adams Diary, 29, 30 November 1861.

37. The Times, 30 November 1861, 8.

38. The Times, 2 December 1861, 6.

Chapter Thirteen

Two Missions to Europe - II

When news arrived in London of the removal from a British mailpacket of the Confederate emissaries, Mason and Slidell, by the commanding officer of a U.S. warship, the British lion roared. While Americans in the North were jubilant at the capture of two such despised secessionists, the British were outraged at this act. It was viewed as just another example of the foolish behavior of the insolent Northern government, and proof of the warlike intentions of its Secretary of State Seward. The British cabinet instructed its minister in Washington, Lord Lyons, to inform the Americans that the Southern Commissioners were to be returned, and an apology given, or Lyons was to withdraw his credentials and leave the United States. Meanwhile, in Britain, the nation was put on a war footing.

Britain's press supported the government almost unanimously, after some initial fumbling while the Law Lords worked out a position which would justify the British outrage. Well-informed members of the British establishment were not unaware that the British had behaved in identical fashion to the Americans in
years past. On Monday the 2nd, The Times quoted The Saturday Review's leader of the 30th. Like The Times, The Review had supported the government wholeheartedly, but unlike The Times, it had added this caveat to its essay: "...we none of us wish that the demand by our government to the Americans should be put in any but a conciliatory way." The Review reminded its readers that Britain did not come into the conflict blameless. "We have ridden roughshod over neutrals in our time..." it said. Nor was The Review willing to believe "that this act [by the Americans] has been out of set purpose to insult England." (1)

Times correspondent William Howard Russell's first letter about Mason and Slidell's capture, dated the 19th of November, came several days after the initial news, and was published by The Times on December 3. Russell began his report by carefully noting that he did not intend to prejudge the case. He told the facts of the seizure, as he knew them, and of the first jubilant American reactions. Soon after the initial excitement, he wrote, the Americans had had second thoughts, and the leading question had become, What will Britain say? The Cabinet Council which was held immediately had not been so "radiant," but after the weekend intervened, by which time the Government had had an opportunity "to take up a definite line, and to suggest to their organs some form of vindication," all the papers had begun to speak as if it were the most natural and ordinary thing in the world to board a steamer and take "ambassadors" from her. (2)
A letter from Bancroft Davis published on the same day gave vivid expression to the tenor of the American reaction. Davis was not nearly so cautious in his approach as Russell had been. "No event short of a general victory on the Potomac could have given greater satisfaction to the nation, for no two men are more identified with the origin of the conspiracy," Davis declared. He seemed to have no doubts about the legality of the action, and in fact, wrote that there might be more of this sort of thing, now that the Confederates were buying so many of their military supplies in Britain and transporting these materials to the South.

I have reason to think that the Trent is not the last English vessel that may be stopped and visited by the American men of war in those waters. A trade in arms and munitions of war, and in military supplies of various kinds between British subjects and the Confederates has been going on for some time, in violation of Her Majesty's proclamation of neutrality...The Government, in order to prevent this in future, is fitting up steam vessels in the port of New York, which are to be despatched on the special service of breaking up this trade...

On another note, Davis made the point, as Russell had written increasingly from Washington, that there was a rapidly increasing sentiment to make the war one of emancipation. It was "idle to suppose," Davis wrote, "that while the North is sending its men into the field by quarters of a million and spending its money by hundreds of millions it will long refuse to use the most potent engine of war at its command." (3)

The next day Delane selected Robert Love to write one of two
leaders devoted to American affairs. Speaking for The Times, Lowe laid blame for the capture of Mason and Slidell on both Lincoln’s government and on The Times’s favorite bête noire, the Northern press. “The act of Commodore Wilkes may be due to his own personal vanity or wrongheaded patriotism, but we cannot doubt that we owe it mainly to the tone taken towards us by the Government, and violently re-echoed from the Press of America.” Comparing the foolish Americans to the sensible English, Lowe wrote that the latter had acted

...with a heavy sense of the responsibility they incur, and a suitable reluctance to commit themselves to the awful alternative, to which they now stand engaged, of reparation or war. How different the tone of the New York journals from whose columns we gave copious extracts. How light the manner, how flippant the treatment, how utterly unworthy of the greatness of the occasion...

(4)

That this “responsible” posture taken by The Times was not one that Delane would have chosen, had he had his own wish, is amply demonstrated by a letter he wrote to Russell a week later. In this very frank note, he reviewed the occasions in recent years when Britain had gone to war as a prelude to his opinions in regard to the Americans. Britain had fought in the Crimea, he wrote, because it had been so long since the country had enjoyed the “luxury” of war. It had backed Palmerston in the recent Chinese War to show that “we ought to support our envoys.” But this was another affair entirely, he stated flatly.
It is based on a real, downright, honest desire to avenge old scores; not the paltry disasters of Baltimore and New Orleans, but the foul and incessant abuse of the Americans, statesmen, orators and press, and if we are foiled by a surrender of the prisoners, there will be an universal feeling of disappointment. We expect, however, that they will show fight -- and hope for it, for we trust that we will give them such a dusting this time that even Everett, Bancroft and Co won't be able to coin victories out of their defeats.

That Managing Editor Mowbray Morris was not quite as eager for war as his chief is evident from a letter he had written to Russell two weeks earlier, when the news had first arrived in London. "Public opinion here is very much excited," he had written, "and there is danger of our Government taking some rash step. The "Hero" was immediately despatched from Plymouth with sealed orders and there is great hurrying to and fro of Ministers and their satellites. Altogether your release is not unlikely to come in a way we did not reckon upon..." (6)

But Delane was in charge, and he seized the opportunity to fill his paper with news, comments and facts of all kind that pertained to the present crisis. To demonstrate Britain's readiness for the war he looked forward to with such pleasant anticipation, Delane ran a leader on the 4th which stated that Britain was in an excellent state of preparedness. A list of the composition of the US Navy was carried that same day. The same list had also been run on the 2nd as a reprint from The Spectator, with the comment that even if all the American ships
were in operation, (a situation considered to be unlikely), there
would not be enough to protect the six or seven points on the
Federal coast open to attack while the Navy continued to blockade
the Southern coast. (7)

As luck would have it, Thurlow Weed was in Paris when the news
arrived of the Mason and Slidell capture, as was General Scott,
now retired from the Northern command. The Times had quoted
Scott in its leader of 30 November as having stated that the
American cabinet had discussed the interception of the
Southerners before he even left Washington. Since the culpability
of the American government now hinged on the question of whether
or not Commodore Wilkes had acted on his own initiative or at the
behest of his superiors, Thurlow Weed and Consul John Bigelow now
swung into action to deny that Scott had ever said such a thing.
Bigelow drafted a letter which Weed showed to Scott for
approval. The General signed the document, and Bigelow and Weed
immediately distributed it to the press.

Scott’s letter actually appeared in The Times on the 6th of
December (although it may have been in the 5th, in late
editions), while Cooke’s leader based on the letter was run on
the 5th. In his letter, Scott first denied the statement which
had been attributed to him that the Federal Government had
ordered the capture of Mason and Slidell. Not only was it untrue,
he wrote, but he had never said such a thing. He further stated
that the United States was not interested in warring with Great
Britain. The seizure of Mason and Slidell should, in any case, not be construed as an unfriendly act by Great Britain, since there was no question of the legal right of search. Whether Mason and Slidell were "contraband", Scott said, could be argued by the diplomatists Secretary Seward and Earl Russell. Moreover, "the pretence that we ought to have taken the Trent into port, and have her condemned by a Prize Court...furnishes a very narrow basis on which to fix a serious controversy between two great nations." (8)

If England thought that Mason and Slidell should be surrendered, the letter continued, it must be in favour of revision of International Law on the rights of neutrals. Quoting from the London Times leader of November 30, he tried to shift the blame for the ill-will between the two nations back to the British. "That the over-prompt recognition as belligerents of a body of men, however large, so long as they constituted a manifest minority of the nation, wounded the feelings of my countrymen deeply, I will not effect to deny," he averred, continuing that many in American now believed that England wished the North evil. But statesmen must rise above these considerations, he maintained, and "an event so mutually disastrous as a war between England and America cannot occur without some other and graver provocation than has yet been given by either nation." (9)

Scott's letter was, of course, a great deal longer than the
above summary, and its phraseology was a good bit less direct. It did nothing to mollify The Times, however, which immediately went on the attack. "General Scott grievously mistakes the feeling of this country if he believes that good relations between America and England are to be preserved by /his suggestions/," Cooke wrote. "We have sent to Washington not to open a controversy but to demand a restitution," he stated. As to precedents for Wilkes's act, The Times contended that "International law...changes with the necessities of society, and both General Scott and his friends at home must be prepared to accept as International Law not what we or others have done in old times, but what we should be permitted ourselves to do in the present day." (10)

In other words, International Law should now be changed, since the British (or "others") saw fit.

On the same day The Times published a speech by its favorite enemy, John Bright, who consistently championed the Northern cause during the war. Bright argued in a speech in his constituency in Rochdale that Britain should suspend final judgment on the Trent question. The dispute should be decided by International Law, not by the British Government, he said. The war in the United States had been caused by slavery, Bright contended, and therefore Britain should remain neutral. He compared the present situation to that of Italy, where the British had maintained a neutral position but had sympathized
with the establishment of a free Italian kingdom. "We have not given a similar cordial sympathy to the people of the Northern States of America," he said, although one or two statesmen, as for instance, the Duke of Argyll and Lord Stanley, had spoken with liberality, fairness and friendliness of the United States. But, Bright argued, Earl Russell had misrepresented the question when he said the North was contending for empire and the South for independence. Moreover, he concluded, England’s leading journal, (Bright was referring to The Times here), had not published one fair, honourable, or friendly article on American affairs since Lincoln took office. (11)

Bright’s arguments were just the type of meat upon which The Times loved to feast, and Cooke, accordingly, went cheerfully to work. "In any great crisis we are always anxious to hear Mr. Bright," he wrote. "If insult has been done to us as a nation, if our commercial interests require a definite course of policy, and if the country is unanimous and we have all thoroughly made up our minds, we then instinctively pause, and wait for the speech of John Bright."

Bright might have been making his speech in Boston, Cooke wrote, since he spent most of his time defending the North against the South. His claim that The Times had "poisoned the minds of the people of England and...irritated the minds of the people of America" was unjustified, Cooke stated. We think we have been very moderate, Cooke wrote, and have from the first
advocated moderation, humanity and peace, while Bright has
smeared at International Law. "Let America judge by the speech of
her greatest admirer in England how little can be said for her
outrage upon a friendly, although a neutral country," Cooke
proclaimed, while concluding that Bright's voice was a voice
"without an echo." (12)

That the British nation was prepared to avenge its honour by
warring with the North is incontrovertible. Bright, himself,
wrote to Charles Sumner urging the Northerners to back down,
because of the intensity of feeling in Britain. Charles Mackay,
who would soon take over from Russell And Davis as correspondent
in the North for The Times, wrote Secretary Seward, "The people
are frantic with rage, and were the country polled, I fear that
999 men out of 1000 would declare for immediate war." (13)

Even that friend of the North, the Duke of Argyll, supported
punitive measures against the North. In a letter to Gladstone
(who favoured moderation), he said he was "against submitting to
any clear breach of international law, such as I can hardly doubt
this has been." His reasons were very different from The
Times's, however. He was truly in favour of a revision of
international law from that which had been advocated by the
British fifty years earlier, for, as he wrote,

If such an act as that committed by the San Jacinto
be allowed, I see nothing which would prevent any
European Government seizing on board of our ships any
refugees from their revolted provinces, who might be
coming to England (as so many do)...Kossuth, for
example, came from Hungary, probably in a British Mediterranean steamer. If Captain Wilkes be right, an Austrian frigate from Trieste might have taken him out of the packet as "contraband of war."

(14)

It was clearly not necessary for any newspaper to do anything in these early days to keep up Britain's fighting spirit. Thurlow Weed, still in Paris, had sent an urgent message to his chief in Washington on the 2nd that "The storm in England and France intensifies." He argued for conciliation in the strongest terms, writing two days later, that he thought General Scott's letter had done some good. When he arrived in London, however, he was even more appalled at the strength of the reaction to the seizure of Mason and Slidell. He again pressed for conciliation, writing to Seward, "Surely this cannot be a time you choose for War with England, when all her People are with the Government, and when everything here is upon a War footing." (15)

Weed wrote Seward that he hoped to deflect some of the feeling against the North by placing letters and leaders in various London journals. "Much of this mischief has been done here by the Press, many or most...controlled by Confederate/s/...It may be too late now, but I could, with some means, soon change their tone," he wrote. (16)

One of the most important rumours Weed wanted to counteract was a story then circulating in influential circles about Seward. In general, Weed had written, "/there/ is general distrust of and
hostility to yourself, how created, or why, I know not. It has been skilfully worked. Most of it comes from the Duke of Newcastle, who long since said substantially what appeared in The Times yesterday...I was told yesterday repeatedly that I ought to write the President demanding your dismissal. (17)

The story Weed referred to that was said to have originated with the Duke of Newcastle had to do with a conversation the Duke had had with Seward when he had visited United States with the Prince of Wales in 1860. According to the Duke, Seward had told him that if he were to become Secretary of State in some future administration he would have to find some way to fight with the British. This remark, clearly made in jest, was now being cited in London as proof that Seward wanted war.

As part of his "propaganda" campaign, Weed sent a Letter to the Editor to The Times which was published on the 14th of December. In this letter, Weed did his best to counteract the impression the Duke of Newcastle story had created.

As far as The Times was concerned, however, the letter merely offered Robert Love another opportunity to disparage an American and assail the North. In the third leader of the day, Love began by noting that Seward was well known for his advocacy of attacking Canada and annexing that region to the United States. Seward, he added, had taken a deliberately anti-British stand when he sent his circular to the Governors in October, advising
them to fortify their seaports against attack. Now, Love contended, during the Trent affair, Seward had acted again in an anti-British manner by ordering that Mason and Slidell be kept in strict confinement, and by refusing to communicate with the English Minister in Washington. If fact, Love stated flatly, Seward had “a deliberate and long-cherished intention to do us an injury,” and nothing Thurlow Weed might write would change that situation. (18)

Weed’s efforts to reconstruct Seward’s public image would probably have failed no matter what had happened. But, as luck would have it, his letter was published on the same day and right next to a column of news which was a bulletin from Windsor Castle reporting the seriousness of Prince Albert’s illness. For the next few days, concern for the Prince’s health eclipsed the news from America. When Albert’s death was reported on the 15th of December, The Times’s circulation jumped to 90,000, as the British nation temporarily turned its attention to its domestic affairs, and forgot America. (19)

During those difficult weeks, when Minister Adams and quasi-Minister Weed knew nothing of what their government might be deciding in Washington, Russell was doing his best to learn what the Americans would do, and report it to his countrymen. He had shared Delane’s letter of the 13th of November containing the first opinion of the Law Lords with his contacts at the British Legation. Now it seemed that the other members of the diplomatic
community thought he might be a good source of news. The Russian Minister, Stoeckl, called on him on the 29th of November, as did Baron Gault (Prussia) and M. Blondel (Belgium) on the 2nd of December. Senator Sumner came to see him on the 1st, seeming "very anxious as to the course of England." On the 3rd, Russell received an invitation to dine with Simon Cameron, Secretary of War, which he accepted. But from none of these contacts did he get any real information about Mason and Slidell. Instead, he wrote to The Times of the President's Message, which gave no clue as to the outcome of the affair. He also reported on the imminent circulation of paper currency.

He had dinner with Colonel Schweitzer, aide to General McClellan on the 8th, talked with Sumner again on the 14th, dined with Seward on the 17th, and Stoeckl, the 18th. To his colleague in New York, Bancroft Davis, he wrote, "I dont know anything more than you do except that I think there is a disposition here to back out if they can & give up the men sooner than have a foreign war on their hands - There is not a single diplomat here who sustains them. Even the Prince de Joinville & the Orleanists are dead agt the seizure." (20)

When he saw Lord Lyons on the 20th, Lyons "was friendly and nervous as usual" and "said he hoped I would tell him anything I heard as to the President's Message to Senate." On the 21st, Russell wrote "...My Lord [Lyons] has several interviews with Seward who gives 'no sign' of what he will do. The surrender is
asked for & also reparation -- if not ultimo ratio Lord Lyons
goes home in that case with all his flock & I with him. But with
all their fearful brag & bluster the Yankees will not be such
cursed fools as to go to war with us. They are too cute to give
us such a chance..." (21)

The next day (Sunday), Russell "wrote to Monson," at the
British Legation, for news. Monson "came in & told me a great
deal. Seward not replied yet to demand for extradition of Mason
& Slidell. War alternative...My Lord does not expect definite
reply before [Wednesday?]..." Russell wrote a "meager letter" to
The Times the next day, then "Sat up talking with [Olmsted]" who
told him "there is a belief that England wants only a pretext for
a quarrel with US. We certainly have had no lack of pretexts."
He played cards with "Lawley Anson & Co" on the day before
Christmas, talked with his friends Riggs (the banker) and Stoeckl
(the diplomat), and mentioned being with Anthony Trollope, who
had come to America to write about the war. (22)

On Christmas Day, Russell still was in the dark. He sent a
letter to Davis in New York that said, "Up to this date Mr Seward
has not sent in his reply to the formal note handed to him at a
friendly but official interview by Lord Lyons on Monday morning
nor has he given any intimation of the view he takes of the
demand. If Mason & Slidell are not given up war is - I fear -
inevitable." (23)
By the day after Christmas the news had leaked that Mason and Slidell would be released. "General impression that M & S will not be kept," Russell wrote, adding "...rather unlucky for me." (24)

The next day he sent the news off in a letter to The Times, noting in his diary that "This spoils my prophecies." He also wrote that "The seceshes are down in the mouth as to Mason & Slidell," as well they might be.

In London, during this anguishing period of waiting, The Times displayed an unrelenting determination to maintain a firm stance vis-a-vis the North. From the dismissal of General Scott's letter, the demolition of Bright's arguments, and the contention that Thurlow Weed's letter had only made the North's case worse, The Times fought hard to dispell any notion that Britain might relent. It assailed Seward as "a reckless adventurer" who "can evoke at will all the wild passions of a sovereign mob." It quoted a letter of Russell's approvingly, that "the Everett's and Sumners" would be unable to make a case for what the North had done. And it attacked Lincoln for having said nothing about the Trent in his message to the Senate. "It is hardly possible to imagine a Government sunk so far below its duties and responsibilities as to allow all this to go on and make no sign either of assent or dissent," wrote Robert Love. The President, he asserted, "has abandoned the vessel of the State to drift helpless before the gale of popular clamour." (25)
At the same time, there were indications that the nation, while
united in defense of its honour, was not so eager for war as
Editor Delane. Curiously, the Money Market column reported, as
early as the 3rd of December, that if "the slightest indications
should be brought /in the next two or three mails/ of a desire
/by the Americans/ to restore a good understanding there will be
eagerness on all sides to pave the way for it." While the fear
was expressed on the 4th that even if the "present offense were
repaired some new one would be immediately contrived by the party
in the Northern States who are determined to force us into
hostilities," by the 5th, the judgment was that "Everyone is
certain that the most earnest desire of Lord Palmerston and his
colleagues corresponds with that of the nation to obtain a
pacific solution, and that the demands which have been sent out
have been framed in accordance with this spirit." (26)

On the 10th, the paper carried a letter from Joseph Pease,
president of the Peace Society who urged all Christians to work
to convince leaders of state of the necessity for peace. On the
19th, a call for arbitration was made by the Society of Friends,
and summarily dismissed by The Times. "The document before us can
only be regarded as one more customary protest against war...we
see no chance /that arbitration would be effective/ nor can we
suppose that arbitration on this one case would prevent the
thousand insults with which we are threatened." The Times took
the same position in reference to another proposal for
arbitration made by Richard Cobden the next day. The day after Christmas, it rejected a third such proposal, this time from Lord Ebury, with the disdainful judgment that the idea was fit only for the pulpit. "Does any man in his senses believe that without the possession of military and naval strength it would be possible to get the American Government to listen to us at all?" The Times thundered. (27)

Still the news from America did not come. On the 28th, The Times wrote that winter gales had caused the delay in receiving the news. By the second day of the new year, Cooke wrote encouragingly that "The tone of the New York press has moderated under the influence of the serious and resolute attitude of the British government" (which The Times had done its best to maintain, of course.) A letter from Historicus two days later argued that arbitration would be ineffective, backing up The Times's stand of the week before. (28)

On the 6th, Woodham wrote a leader which was actually conciliatory. After first disclaiming any fault by the British for the present crisis, he suggested that "if /the Americans/ will make an end of it now, we shall not raise it again, and owe them any grudge about it; and we trust that when the sound sense of the real American people is brought to bear upon this matter they will be as ready as ourselves to let bygones be bygones." (29) It was apparent that the war spirit had begun to ebb.
It is also probable that Delane had received by this time a letter sent to him by Russell, written on the 20th of December, which made clear that Russell had developed some reservations at the idea of warring with the Americans. Russell told Delane that there had been some good articles in the American press on the Mason and Slidell affair, "in reply to the opinions expressed in the English papers and by the Law officers whose ground as far as I can judge is neither broad nor very firm."

"As to this war question," Russell had written, "I wish we were entering upon it with cleaner hands... There is too much of a legal subtlety in the points raised...If U.S. were all right we might pick a quarrel with them on any grounds we pleased. Now his condition will excite sympathy in the rest of the world..."

Russell wrote that he had talked to Seward the day before the despatches arrived from England, and had found him to be in very good humour. Everything in his letter indicated, however, that he was preparing to leave Washington with Lord Lyons, thus, counting on war.

At last, on the 9th of January, the news arrived that the United States had decided to avoid a showdown by releasing the envoys, to the considerable gratification of those who did not favour war. Cooke wrote for The Times, "...the Old World is no longer at enmity with the New...We draw a long breath, and are
thankful." Less charitably, he continued, "It is a great victory though it is but an escape from being obliged to conquer." Claiming that the crisis had produced a major diplomatic coup for the aging Prime Minister, Cooke concluded:

It is indeed a rare triumph to grace the latter years of a life so happily prolonged that Lord Palmerston has found, and has used, the opportunity to curb the arrogance of the only people which has in this generation entered systematically upon a course of offense towards England.

(31)

In the fall of 1861, two rival missions had been sent by North and South to the major capitals of Europe in an attempt to win the favour and, for the South, the official recognition, of these European governments. The Northerners had become increasingly worried that the goodwill which they had expected in Europe was, instead, becoming antagonism, and they hoped to turn this opinion around. The Southerners were anxious to achieve de jure recognition while the triumph of their first military victory at Bull Run was fresh.

The capture of the two Southern Commissioners by Northern Commodore Wilkes brought the rivalry of the two combatants to a new high in the diplomatic arena. The press on both sides of the Atlantic carried on a spirited public debate, while the British and Northern Cabinets decided in private what steps they should take. The Times of London was jammed, during the entire period of the crisis, with editorial comment, letters from its readers.
and from the United States, reprints of comment from newspapers in both countries, and learned discourses on the legal aspects of the controversy. Even the death of the Prince Consort on the 14th of December barely caused The Times to skip a beat in its coverage of the crisis. It carried on a relentless attack upon the misguided Northerners, their thoroughly reprehensible press, and their Secretary of State Seward whom The Times stated repeatedly was determined to war with Britain at any cost. Over the suspenseful six weeks between the arrival of the news of the envoy's capture and the word that Lincoln's government had decided to release the captives, The Times reflected its editor's desire for war with the Americans by dismissing with contempt every suggestion for arbitration or peace, or any argument which might be made for the Northern side. It held with steadfast conviction to the notion that the Americans needed a good trouncing, a belief Delane was sure he shared with the vast majority of his countrymen.

1. The Times, 2 December 1861, 8; The Saturday Review, Vol. 12, # 318, 30 November 1861, 548.)
2. The Times, 3 December 1861, 7.
3. The Times, 3 December 1861, 8.
4. The Times, 4 December 1861, 8.
5. Quoted in History of The Times, op. cit., 373. The
letter was dated December 11, 1861.


7. The Times, 2 December 1861, 8; 4 December 1861, 8.

8. This sentence is curiously similar to Adam’s comment in his diary on the 30th.

9. The Times, 6 December 1861, 7.

10. The Times, 5 December 1861, 6.

11. The Times, 5 December 1861, 7.

12. The Times, 6 December 1861, 6; 7 December 1861, 8. The attack on Bright was repeated by Woodham the next day.


15. Seward Papers 2504, 2606, 2609, Weed to Seward, 2, 4, 7 December 1861. A note on Weed’s letter of the 7th, "Rec. 25 Dec," indicates that the letter may have arrived in time to have some influence on the decision to release Mason and Slidell which was made that day.

16. Seward Papers 2608, Weed to Seward, 6 December 1861.

17. Seward Papers 2609, Weed to Seward, 7 December 1861.

18. The Times, 14 December 1861, 6.


21. TA, Russell Diary, 26, 29 November, 1, 2, 3, 6, 14, 17, 18, 20, 21 December 1861.

22. TA, Russell Diary, 22, 23, 24 December 1861.


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24. This remark is difficult to interpret. Perhaps Russell had hoped for war, knowing that in that case he would leave Washington and perhaps go home. It is also conceivable that he had put some money on the outcome of the crisis. On the 29th of November, he had written in regard to the news in Delane’s letter “I sent Larry (?!) over to Riggs with D’s letter to see if it could be made of any use -- How I should like to make a little money with honour or without discredit...”

25. The Times, 9 December 1861, 8; 10 December 1861, 8; 17 December 1861, 6.

26. The Times, 3 December 1861, 4; 4 December 1861, 7; 5 December 1861, 5.

27. The Times, 10 December 1861, 10; 19 December 1861, 5, 8; 20 December 1861, 6, 10; 26 December 1861, 5, 8.

28. The Times, 28 December 1861, 6; 2 January 1862, 6; 4 January 1862, 7.

29. The Times, 6 January 1872, 8.

30. TA, Delane, 10/136, 20 December 1861.

31. The Times, 9 January 1862, 8.
Chapter Fourteen

The Changing of the Guard

The first major crisis in Anglo-American relations during the American Civil War came to an end when Mssrs. Mason and Slidell were released by the Northern authorities, but the civil war itself was far from over. The bloody, bitter conflict would engross the North American continent for three more years, creating, in the international sphere, an ever increasing number of points of friction between Britain and the North. In the fall of 1862, Britain would come close to recognition of the Confederacy and thus intervention in the war, and in 1863, the two nations would nearly come to blows over the building and arming of Confederate warships in British yards. The on-going debate over recognition, blockade, and the arms trade, coupled with the increasing distress experienced in the textile industries in Lancashire as cotton supplies dwindled, the dismay of peace-lovers at the incredible bloodshed in America, the varied reactions to Lincoln’s emancipation of the slaves in the Confederacy, and the allure of far-off military campaigns, would continue to absorb the attention of Britain’s press in the next few years, with the Schleswig-Holstein War providing the only
major diversion in 1864.

Unfortunately for The Times, however, in January of 1862, just as the first real war scare had been weathered and major military action between North and South appeared about to begin in America, The Times's "first team" of Bancroft Davis in New York and William Howard Russell in Washington was about to leave the field. By January, Davis had already resigned because of illness, and Russell, whose stock had dropped ever since Bull Run, would soon find that he no longer had entree to men of influence in Washington. By the spring of 1862, he would be gone.

These staff changes would have little impact on the editorial policy of The Times, however, for by now the "Thunderer" had determined its position on the American conflict. Henceforth, The Times would select its correspondents to reflect its own views, to observe and report the story from America as The Times, in London, sought fit. As would become clear in regard to the replacement of The Times's regular New York correspondent, the pro-Union opinions of a Bancroft Davis would no longer be tolerated.

By this time in 1862, The Times was convinced that the North was the villain of the piece. While The Times had not accepted the South's argument that it was warranted in fighting for its independence, the newspaper held strongly to the view that the
South was bound to become independent no matter what the North did. *The Times* believed that even if the North were successful in reducing the South, (and it did not think this could be done), the task would require such bloodshed, such waste of resources, and would leave such a residue of bitterness that the Union, as formerly constituted, could never again exist. Ignoring the fact that the South had "fired the first shot," *The Times* blamed Lincoln's government for the war since Lincoln had refused to accept the historical inevitability of the breach between the two sections, a postulate *The Times* considered to be elementary. The slavery issue, which *The Times*, like Britain's Prime Minister, had previously treated with such prominence and almost as a sacred topic, was referred to less and less in *Times* leaders, as Lincoln declared "Union" to be the nation's war aim and refused to embrace abolition. Now *The Times* accused the North of fighting an unprincipled war whose only aim was "empire," conveniently ignoring the fact that the South's fight for "independence" was also a fight to preserve slavery and extend it to the new territories. *The Times* also branded the North's Secretary of State Seward as an irresponsible adventurer in international politics who was anxious to stir up conflict, particularly where Britain was concerned.

In the North, the conviction had arisen and was held with equal firmness by Union supporters, that both *The Times* and the British nation, for which it believed *The Times* spoke, had been so unfair
in their treatment of the war that The Times's advice and comment was no longer regarded with the respect it had formerly been given. The positions taken by The Times and Britain merely served as confirmation to the embittered Americans of the North that Britain was, indeed, "perfidious Albion." To Northerners, it appeared that the much admired Mother Country whose support would have been welcomed with such great rejoicing had chosen instead not only to desert its former children in their time of crisis, but apparently to rejoice in their misery. While they could understand a national government acting in its own self-interest, they were stung and wounded by The Times's bitter attacks on their motives in fighting what they viewed as a war of national survival. As Thurlow Weed put it so simply and succinctly in a letter to Secretary Seward shortly after the Trent crisis, "The Times is fiendish." (1)

It would be wrong to think that The Times had lost all of its former influence in the North, for the Americans were almost pathologically concerned about Britain's reaction to anything they did, and they looked to The Times for this information. Now, however, the Northern government, reacting like a disappointed, unrequited lover, turned away from making any real effort to win The Times's and Britain's overt affections. Old habits were hard to shake, though, and Thurlow Weed remained in Europe a few more months in early 1862, meeting and talking to influential leaders as he attempted to place articles and paid
spokesmen in the few journals willing to maintain some neutrality of viewpoint, if not to espouse the Union cause.

After Weed's departure, Northern emissaries such as William Thayer and Henry Sanford urged Seward to finance additional propaganda missions to Europe to turn the tide of opinion which had set in so bewilderingly against the North. Seward contemplated another Weed mission in the fall of 1862, this time accompanied by the veteran statesman Edward Everett who had been unable to join the first delegation, but the threat of a disastrous election defeat persuaded Seward that Weed, at least, was needed more at home than abroad. Seward would send future missions to Europe for different reasons, such as arguing the illegality of the construction of Confederate warships in Britain's shipyards. "Propaganda," as such, however, would be left henceforth to its ardent field practitioners, Henry Sanford and John Bigelow, as Seward concentrated on other matters. Seward did not discourage these men from their vigorous efforts to influence opinion in Europe, in fact, he welcomed such initiatives so long as they were taken outside of government channels. But he did not again resort to the kind of high-level propaganda effort he had used in the Weed-Hughes-McIlvaine mission.

As Seward wrote to Sanford in 1863, he had enough problems with public opinion at home, without worrying unduly about public opinion abroad. (2)
Moreover, as he gained experience in the diplomatic arena, he noted a difference between the inflammatory nature of newspaper comment and the more soothing tones of diplomatic language. Writing to Bigelow right after the Trent crisis, he said:

"Judging from a manifest difference in the tone of the European Press, and that of the representatives of European States here, on exciting topics, I am constrained to believe that much of what is said in London and Paris is designed to quiet interested or sinister complaints made there, without expecting to produce effects here. But this is confidential."

A further indication of his thinking in regard to the press is revealed in a letter he wrote to Thurlow Weed on the subject of the Duke of Newcastle story which had been used at the time of the Trent crisis to prove Seward's belligerent intentions in regard to Britain. He instructed Weed to seek out the Duke personally, in order to give to him Seward's own view of the incident. He advised Weed not to carry on a public debate, however, stating flatly, "I will not go into the newspapers with anybody." (4)

Seward was abundantly aware of the power of the press, but he believed first and foremost in personal contact.

Furthermore, like many of his fellow Unionists and like Palmerston himself, Seward believed that only military success would win friends for the North in Europe. As he wrote rather
plaintively to Sanford in July 1863, "Generally everybody respects your home when all its doors and windows are perfect...But just abandon it, let the doors fall off their hinges and the window glass be broken...and the wicked boys will soon make a tenement for the bats and owls." (5)

To Bigelow, who had written to urge the propaganda value of an emancipation proclamation in 1862, Seward replied,

Do you think the European Press would view our cause with more favor if we were to put a proclamation of Emancipation on the bayonet point and carry it forward into the Slave States?...I am certain that the Press...would be even more severe upon us if we were to do that! when we are not advancing into but receding from the Gulf States...

(6) Seward's prediction was absolutely correct, although the incorporation of emancipation as a war aim proved ultimately to be beneficial in the public opinion battle. The groundswell of support which it prompted, however, was not to develop until 1863-64, by which time the military success of the North seemed much more likely, even as The Times's anti-North position became inflexible.

In America the easy access William Howard Russell had had to information sources upon his arrival in Washington had continued to evaporate since the unfavorable reaction to his Bull Run letter. Russell had written to his editor, Delane, just before the news broke of Mason and Slidell's release, that he was no longer on such good terms with General McClellan, now in command
of the Union forces. "He has been distant and inaccessible so I don’t go near him at all now a days," he wrote. Moreover, although Russell stated that he was anxious to go with the troops if war between Britain and the United States did not force him to leave Washington, he also feared that it would be "by no means safe for me to accompany his legions into action with the State of irritation which exists plus Bulls’ Run even if there is nothing worse than an irritating diplomatic row." (7)

In fact, as Russell wrote at the end of that letter, he was "longing for a glimpse of home." Poor Morris, The Times’s managing editor, was now faced with a star "special" correspondent who had had enough of foreign living, and a valued regular correspondent who was ill. Two days before Christmas, Morris had opened his mail to find a letter from Bancroft Davis resigning his New York post on the plea of ill health, and Delane had received a telegram from Russell announcing his approaching departure for Mexico. (8)

To his unhappy "special" Morris wrote, "I have commissioned Davis to appoint a successor pro tem: but where am I to find another Russell?"

To Davis, Morris wrote,

...I assure you in all sincerity that your resignation of your post causes me great grief & anxiety. We have been in correspondence a long time, & I have always looked forward to a still longer continuance of our intercourse...It is however a consolation to know that we part as friends, & that

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nothing has happened between us to cause any bitterness or estrangement.

That Davis was truly ill was without doubt. What actually caused him to give up his *Times* assignment is nevertheless somewhat open to question. In October, his friend Sanford had written him from Brussels, "I read your letters in the 'Times' with great interest and pleasure...You are about the only remaining means for the access of truth to the columns of the mendacious spiteful organ of the fears and hatred of the Governing class in England..." (10)

To this letter, Davis replied, towards the end of November, ...I ought before this to have answered...I must plead the old excuse of business...and a new apology for me -- ill health. Last July I took a severe cold and have not been able to break it up: and now, with winter coming on, I have thought it most prudent to close up business affairs so as to get a respite till Spring from everything except the Times work...You hear from me weekly in The Times. From all quarters I hear approval of tone of my letters. The Times people themselves are certainly magnanimous to publish a series of letters so much opposed to their own views. I should have resigned long ago had I not felt it almost a duty to the Country to remain, and had I not seen that they print my letters.

After speaking so generously of The Times's treatment of himself, Davis made clear in his next paragraph, however, how bitterly he disagreed with England over its American policy.

We are drifting into a war with England if they don't change their abusive and insolent tone of their comments upon our government & people. A fair and candid criticism ought not to excite feeling -- but
when we are told that our officers are vulgar fellows, unworthy the association of gentlemen, that our [government?] is a failure, that our society is so vulgar that Southern gentlemen have to separate from it -- & that our struggle is one for Empire, it excites a popular indignation that can hardly be imagined in a country like England. It grieves me to see it -- for a war with England would in my opinion, be suicidal to our liberties although fatal to them.

(11)

In spite of the clear intent Davis expressed in this letter to continue his Times letters, he broke off his relationship with The Times sometime early in December 1861, as evidenced by the arrival of his resignation letter in London just before Christmas. Perhaps he had hoped to continue, but an unfavorable medical prognosis had forced him to change his mind. Or perhaps he had been enlisted by his friends in Washington to help with the American propaganda effort in England. He and his wife sailed for England in January, where he made contact with Weed whose mission was to argue the North’s case with influential men in London and Paris. "Bancroft Davis arrived last night," Weed wrote. "He is popular and can do good." (12) A few days later, Weed added, "I have asked /Davis/ to remain a month...and...I am sure you will pay his Expenses." (13) In February Davis wrote Sanford again, this time from London: "I have already stayed longer than I expected at Weed’s request...We stay here till Parliament opens and then go at once to Paris." (14)

Before Davis left London he had an interview with Earl Russell, Milner Gibson (M.P.), and a Mr. Greg, ("one of the Customs
Commissioners...who is considered as an authority in finance matters). In all of these interviews he was quizzed primarily about the financial state of the North, with emphasis on the question of the ability of the North to pay for such an expensive war. This was, presumably, because his being from New York established him in the minds of his British interlocutors as an expert on finance. It also spoke to the major concern of these men of wealth, whose fortunes were so intimately tied to the American economy. As he described the opening of his conversation with Earl Russell to Seward,

He began with "You are just from America?/
"Yes.
"What news did you bring?/
"On what subject?/
"Where are you from?/
"New York.
"On the finances then."

(15)

After his delay in London to help his country's cause, Davis's next destination was a sanitorium in Mentone where the doctor confirmed the diagnosis he had received in New York. ".../My/ right lung is attacked," he wrote to his friend Sanford, but since it was in its primary stage, "with care it may be first
arrested, then controlled and then cured." (16) To Seward he wrote that he was "trying to patch up a hole in one of my lungs," but expected to be back in London in June when "I shall be much pleased if I can be of any further service in the good cause."

He wrote also that he had had a breakfast meeting with several Cabinet Ministers before he left London, after which, he thought, their eyes had been "partly opened." (17)

The Times, meanwhile, had arranged to hire the American Charles K. Tuckerman to replace Davis. Morris, who got Tuckerman's name from Davis, wrote Davis,

I think that, if he [Tuckerman] is disposed to take pains, he may do us good service. We do not want discussions upon the question of secession, nor ought we to be the mouthpiece of the out & out advocates of the Union - What we require (if you must forgive me if I say that you have failed in this matter) is full & accurate information respecting the policy & the domestic condition of the Northern United States. The army & its movements are Russell's care; but to the New York correspondent we look for those facts & details which persons engaged in commerce & who have invested their money in America would desire to have for their guidance.

(18)

Tuckerman went right to work, and "took pains," as Morris had said he should. He accepted the position in a letter to Davis on January 14, and wrote to Secretary Seward on the 17th, informing him of his new assignment and asking for his assistance.

You will probably agree with me in thinking that if my pen is guided rightly these letters in the 'Times' may be the means of creating a healthful tone among the English people, and they are millions, who read them.
All classes in Gt. Britain look to the 'Times' with more or less respect and many involuntarily shape their private opinion of public affairs from what this influential Journal says.../therefore/ I write to you frankly to enquire if you can directly or indirectly put me in a way to obtain in advance or at the time, such political information...as will be of interest & advantage to English readers.

(19)

That Seward seems to have acceded to his request is evidenced by the fact that Tuckerman sent him two more letters asking for information, one in reference to the blockade question, another having to do with the landing of British troops in Portland (Maine). (20)

But Tuckerman's efforts were in vain. His Times assignment was terminated quickly, so quickly in fact, that it is clear that The Times had always looked upon him as a stopgap only.

On the 6th of January, The Times had published a review of a book written by James Spence, a Liverpool merchant, entitled American Union. In this book, described by Southern historian Frank Owsley as "the most effective [Southern] propaganda of all by either native or Confederate agent," Spence had argued the right of the Southern states to secede, and had described the fundamental differences between North and South which, he contended, made secession inevitable. (21)

Three days after this review appeared in The Times Morris wrote to Spence:
The interest you take in American affairs and the ability with which you have handled them induce me to think that you may not be indisposed to enter into a regular correspondence with this journal.

We are desirous to engage the services of a gentleman of character and proved capacity, to proceed at once to New York and to reside there as correspondent for the Times.

(22)

Clearly, The Times liked the things Mr. Spence was writing, and chose him because his views squared with those of Printing House Square. Spence did not accept The Times's offer, however, although he became a frequent contributor to the paper and remained so for the rest of the war.

Now Morris had to move even more quickly to fill the New York slot. By the 11th of February, he had hired Charles Mackay, sometime poet, former editor of the Illustrated London News, and a man who had travelled and lectured in the United States and was personally known to Secretary Seward. Morris wrote about him to Russell:

Davis' appointee won't do at all -- he has all his predecessor's prejudices without any of his talent -- In fact no American will serve our turn whilst this contest lasts. We must have an Englishman and I think we have found the right man -- Perhaps you knew him in England -- Charles Mackay. He will leave Liverpool on the 22nd and fix himself at N.Y. He is to preserve a strict incog if he can -- At any rate he will forbear to parade his connexion with us and leave people to find out.

(23)
Morris had written to Tuckerman a week earlier along much the same lines.

"We entertain serious doubts as to whether it is expedient under existing circumstances to rely for information or to trust to the political guidance of any gentleman owing allegiance to the Federal Government...I am personally convinced that the Times ought to be represented in New York by a British subject...The question however is not yet decided..."

He held out some hope to Tuckerman that if he could be "temperate" and "impartial," The Times might not bother to go to the expense of sending out someone else. It seems very likely, however, that Mackay had already been hired by the date Morris wrote this letter to Tuckerman, since Mackay sailed for New York on the 22nd, and knew he was going when he called on Adams on the 17th. Well after Mackay was on the high seas Morris wrote to Tuckerman (on March 4th) to inform him that his assignment had been terminated. (24)

In his reply to Morris in regard to this dismissal, Tuckerman took the opportunity to point out to Morris the ways in which he had tried to correct "popular errors abroad" in his letters, all to no avail. He listed the opinion in Europe that the blockade of the Southern ports was ineffective, the alleged "'intentional insult' in the unfortunate affair of the 'Trent'; the so-called 'Mob law,' supposed to prevail in the Northern States; the presumed inability of this Government to sustain its financial measures; the relative strength & resources of the conflicting Sections; [and] the question of the ultimate re-union of these
states" as topics upon which he had tried to set *The Times* straight. But Tuckerman was clearly on the wrong track here, for, as Morris had written to Davis, *The Times* did not want argument and advocacy from their New York correspondent. *The Times* had made up its mind on these questions. (25)

When Tuckerman wrote to Seward to tell him that his engagement with *The Times* had come to an end, he wrote that both he and Bancroft Davis had expected that the position would be permanent, "not doubting that the London Journal would abandon its false position with regard to our country and permit my views, however unpalatable, to appear in print." This rather optimistic view was, in truth, probably not shared by Bancroft Davis, who had written Tuckerman from London that he assumed, from what he saw there, that *The Times* would not publish his letters "till affairs should take such a turn that they would be ready to pump the other side." (26)

As Morris struggled to find an Englishman for New York who agreed with *The Times* on the American question and could be relied upon to report the commercial news so necessary to *The Times*’s wealthy readers, Russell was becoming more restless in Washington. He chafed at the inaction of the Federal armies, worried about his wife and his financial situation, and smarted under new charges that he had taken advantage of inside knowledge to make money on the stock market. Unfortunately, there are no diary notations for these first six months of 1862 which might
document Russell’s private thoughts, but he did write some letters to Harris and Delane at this time. (27)

Russell wrote to Delane on the 16th of January that Wikoff of the New York Herald had arranged a reconciliation between his editor, James Gordon Bennett, and Russell. He opined that this had occurred because Bennett had concluded that he couldn’t get Russell out of the country, and he feared that his treatment of Russell would cause The Times to “push” the Herald less (It will be remembered that Russell had complained about The Times’s overreliance on The Herald before.)

He also described a thoroughly reprehensible attempt by an unnamed American to bribe Russell to write more favourable articles about the United States “so as to influence The Times in its ‘general tone’. Sam Ward had acted as the go-between in this ill-advised adventure. Russell wrote that he had begged Ward “not to speak to me on such matters again,” but to go directly to his editor. “You see what cursed scoundrels there are here who believe God himself is venal,” Russell concluded. (28)

Whatever Sam Ward’s game was is not clear. He seems to have been trying throughout this period to establish himself as an unofficial and undercover operator in his country’s cause. He continued to write letters to Seward and to his son Frederick, trying to keep Seward’s ear. He suggested more than once, for example, that he could be sent to Europe to do what Weed was
doing, perhaps ever more effectively. On the 8th of January, he "puffed" Russell in a letter to Frederick Seward.

...Russell...speaks with unmodified admiration of the acts and policy of the Secretary -- He says he wants to help the North..."Give me a good fight and anything like a victory and I will do you all ample justice."

(29)

A letter from Thurlow Weed from London, which probably arrived at just about the same time, carried a different opinion of Russell: "I see that Russell, who is writing mischievous letters, throws out the idea that a War with England would reunite the States. This is a false line." (30) If Seward were attempting at this time to make up his mind about Russell, the record is abundantly clear that he would listen to his friend Weed before he would give any weight to anything Ward had to say.

Still itching for action, Russell took off on a trip to Canada, writing Delane that he intended thereafter to "proceed to Kentucky or to the coast if any tempting expedition offers." "I am holding on here as you can see in obedience to your wishes," he wrote, "the I fear my occupation is good." His next opinion probably did not sit too well with his editor. In regard to Britain's possible intervention on the side of the Confederacy, Russell offered,

It never would do really for us all things considered to assist at the death of /this/ republic in too open /a fashion/. These States will be peopled by millions where there are now thousands and we must act with some regard to our future relations nor leave it in the
power of our enemies to say we destroyed the Anglo-Saxon Republic out of jealousy...

On the other hand, he seemed to have little confidence that the North could defeat the South: "...if /the Southerners/ give the North another thrashing or two the latter must cry quits for it really has not got the means of going on." (31)

Morris would have been much happier had Russell stayed home and tended to his accounts. Morris wrote him in January that he had paid some bills for him and (ominously) would keep 50 pounds a month back from his salary (which was being sent to Mrs. Russell.) In his first letter in February, Morris complained that Russell hadn't sent him any accounting since September 1861. Two days later, he wrote again that he had received Russell's suggestion that they skip those months and begin with 1862. Morris was outraged. "You must feel that you are without even the shadow of excuse for not having /sent in your accounts/ at the proper time," he wrote, after reminding Russell that he had chosen to report his expenses this way instead of receiving an allowance. "You have no campaigning," Morris continued, "no difficulties of any kind -- and 5 minutes daily attention would have kept your affairs in perfect order -- I repeat that there is not a word to be said in justification of your neglect..." (32)

He would soon receive another complaining letter from Russell, written from Montreal, in which Russell recited his problems once again. First and foremost was the fact that he was being blamed
for all the sins of The Times.

The tone of the Times has been regarded with anger and indignation; it is considered by the Federals as intensely antagonistic and embittered, and I am looked upon as the main agent in producing that disposition on the part of the paper. Right or wrong, there is no arguing the matter away.

As to his accounts, Russell begged Morris to bear with him, admitting that he was a "huge lump of improvidence," but pointing out that he had only intended to stay in America until September of the preceding year, by which time he had expected to be back in London working on his novel. (33)

Morris minced no words in his reply. "You must either go to the front or come home," Morris stated, continuing:

You were charged with a mission which cannot be adequately discharged in Canada or New York or even at Washington. It is your business to report the military proceedings of the Federal Army -- to chronicle its exploits if any, & in default of these to write whatever could be deemed interesting to English readers. Up to the beginning of this year you did well; but since then you seem to have lost heart & to have thrown us overboard -- This cannot last -- and so I repeat --

Go to the front or come home.

(34)

A month later Morris wrote a long explanatory letter to Russell, complimenting him on his recent letters from Washington (Russell had returned to the Northern capital the first of March), asking him to try to understand the difficult position he, Morris, had been put in when Davis had resigned and Russell
had written that he wanted to come home, and begging him once
to again to "remain with the army." (35) But his letter was too late. Russell was already on his way to England as Morris posted the letter.

Russell's account of his departure, as recollected later, is as follows:

On the 1st of March I returned to Washington. Mr. Cameron had retired and Mr. Stanton had been appointed Secretary of War. He was exceedingly civil to me when I met him at Lord Lyons', and gave me a pass to go to the front.

McClellan was now about to take the field in earnest, and sent a message to me by the Comte de Paris to say he would have great pleasure in allowing me to accompany his headquarters. Colonel Neville and Colonel Fletcher of the Scots Guards, Captain Lamy, and myself were to be provided for by the Quartermaster General, Van Vliet, on board a headquarters' steamer. I was on the point of leaving to join headquarters at Fortress Monroe, when the Secretary of State, who had expressed his indignation that a "Republican General should have foreign Princes and foreign newspaper correspondents on his staff," exercised his authority. Waiting till General McClellan and General March had left Washington, he sent two orders to General Van Vliet from the War Office:

"No. 1. That no person should be permitted to embark on any vessel in the United States service without an order from the War Department.

"No. 2. That Colonel Neville, Colonel Fletcher, and Captain Lamy, of the British Army, having been invited by General McClellan to accompany the expedition, were authorized to embark on board the vessel."

General Van Vliet was very sorry. But he could not disobey. My mission terminated at once. I went on shore. Othello's occupation was gone. The President expressed his regret that he could not overrule the decision of his Secretary, and so in the first week of April, 1862, I returned from New York to England.
This account of Russell’s departure was presented slightly differently by his first biographer Atkins. Atkins placed full blame on Secretary Stanton, not, as Russell had done, on Secretary Seward. Since Stanton was considered by many to be "Seward’s man," the distinction is perhaps irrelevant.

Another chronicler of journalistic history credits Stanton with Russell’s expulsion also, but puts the whole affair in a slightly different context. At the time this event occurred, McClellan was about to embark upon his famous peninsular campaign which it was hoped would result in the capture of Richmond and the defeat of the South. During the first year of the war, the whole problem of keeping military information secret had been enormous, and had prompted the adoption by the Northern government of numerous restrictive measures. At the same time, McClellan’s elaborate preparations for the campaign had tried the patience of the Cabinet and the country, who, like Russell, were impatient for action. Now that it appeared that McClellan was actually going to move, the irritated Cabinet officials wanted to insure that no premature leaks of the expedition might mar its success. Secretary of War Stanton, who had already been given control of the telegraph, directed Postmaster General Blair to bar from the mails any paper that published "facts excluded from the telegraph." As an additional measure, tightening security even further, Stanton issued an order on April 1 forbidding
correspondents to accompany the army.

In fact, according to this historian, this blanket embargo on correspondents with the army

... proved to be aimed at one man. William Howard Russell, more unpopular than ever because it was believed that he had used early news to play the stock market, applied vainly to Stanton for a pass. When he secured one through McClellan that got him aboard a transport, Stanton found out about it, issued his order, and had Russell, horse, carriage, bag and baggage carted down the gangplank.

(38)

Whoever gave that order, this was clearly the last straw as far as Russell was concerned, and the perfect excuse to go home. As Russell wrote in his Recollections, he did try to reach the President, who, he hoped, would overrule his cabinet officer, but his efforts went unrewarded.

While Russell had become convinced that his usefulness in America had come to an end, Morris still urged him to stay, and Delane expressed the view that Russell had no reason to be so upset. Delane wrote to Dament around the middle of April from Ascot, where he was apparently vacationing,

I think Russell is unreasonable in complaining of the strict regulations the American Govt have adopted. I am sure we should have done much stronger things in the second year of a Civil War & should have shown no consideration at all for a correspondent of the New York Herald. To my mind, the most remarkable feature in the War, hitherto, has been the patience of the people and the Govt.
The fairmindedness of this comment is remarkable. Delane, however, in later years, blamed the American government for having sent Russell home.

Morris had less patience with Russell than Delane, as he revealed in this undated letter to Delane, perhaps referring to the stock market charge:

Russell has committed a grave offense which would be quite enough to entail instant dismissal upon any other man...As for his coming home, tho' I should regret it for some reasons, I should welcome it for many...I think the time for parting is not very far off -- if not come already.

This impatience had undoubtedly crept into Morris's letters to Russell, and certainly contributed to Russell's unhappiness in America. While Delane may have agreed with Morris about his star correspondent's pecadillos, Delane went to great pains to give Russell more encouragement in the letters he wrote. Morris, by contrast, seemed bent on scolding Russell at every turn. Now Morris had his reward. He had to look for someone to take Russell's place.

Within two weeks, Morris turned down at least one offer of a correspondent who suggested himself as Russell's replacement. To "H. Ottley, Esq." Morris made the excuse that Russell had made temporary arrangements before his sudden departure which he
wanted to try out. Moreover, he continued, "there is too much reason to fear that no gentleman ostensibly representing this journal will be allowed to attend the army in the field. A special correspondent of the Times is for the present an impossibility in the Northern States." (41)

That there was no "temporary arrangement" which pleased Morris is clear, for the next day he wrote to Mackay in New York that he had no satisfactory replacement for Russell. "Russell is come and we are in a bad way for news of the war -- I have made an unsatisfactory arrangement with a Count de Corwin who is with General Blenkorn, but it is to you that we must trust, for some time at least, for a full account of all proceedings, military as well as civil." (42) To Count de Corwin Morris wrote, "...I cannot at present moment invest you with the character of special correspondent of the Times in place of Mr. Russell." He gave as his reason the fact that de Corwin was already a correspondent for another newspaper. (43)

Although Morris had written Ottley that the times did not appear to be propitious for The Times to send a "special" with the Northern armies, on the 29th of April he wrote to Mackay asking him to sound out "your friend" Seward, or, in some way contact Stanton and/or the President to see if they might accept Russell once again. (44) Probably Delane and Morris hoped that a month or two at home would cure Russell of his "blues" and he would be willing to return to America.
Mackay did as he was told, writing to Seward towards the end of May. "They want very much to send Mr. Russell back again," he wrote to Seward, "or if that would be useless on account of any personal feeling towards him individually - they would like to send some one else, provided he could have the facilities from your Government necessary to his following either the army of General McClellan or of General Halleck." (45) Mackay added, in a patently ingratiating manner, that since "there were only victories to be recorded," in his opinion it was a pity Russell had not been allowed to remain.

Sam Ward wrote to Seward also, advising him that he had had a long letter from Russell in which Russell had asked if the restrictions might now have been removed, and declaring that The Times wanted him to return. Ward said, "I have advised him not to come back and be subjected to the outrage and indignity which drove him away." Still, he asked Seward if Russell could return. Attempting once again to prove Russell's northern credentials, he quoted "the secessionist Dillon" (referred to earlier in this study) as having described Russell upon his return as "all Northern." Ward concluded his letter with the line, "Weed says the same and you know it." (46)

He was right about Weed, who wrote to Seward from London that "Russell says everywhere, that the North is ennobled by its devotion and that its Army is the best in the world." (47)
Russell's good friend John Bigelow sent an interesting report back to Seward about Russell's state of mind and health at the end of May. "During a brief visit to London," he wrote,

I found Russell of the Times in bad health...He says Delane was very much put out with him for leaving America. Mrs. Russell said he dared not stay with the Army, that he was afraid of being assassinated. He made no remark of that kind to me...He has been repeatedly heard to say in London, that ours is now the finest army in the world. He is under the impression that he was hit by a weapon levelled by the Secretary of War at General McClellan. I think he feels deeply mortified at the position in which the order of the Secretary has placed him in England and that it is to that, more than to anything else, that his impaired health is attributable. He seemed anxious to convince me, that he had always spoken kindly of you and I of course took no pains to discourage his efforts.

{48}

If Seward agreed with these favourable assessments of Russell, he gave no inclination of it when he replied with these bitter words about The Times and its correspondent to Bigelow towards the end of June.

The London Times has succeeded in procuring itself to be universally regarded as an enemy to the United States, engaged in urging upon them the calamities of foreign war in the crisis of a domestic insurrection sufficiently dangerous. The Secretary of War supposes that it is his duty not to give the London Times the weight which it would derive from protecting, supporting and cherishing its agent. The American people do not dissent from the Secretary's opinion. They are being wrought up by the European Press to the point of meeting a European invasion. It seems to them as if such an invasion gains favor in Europe just in proportion that excuses for it are removed.

This explanation is for yourself alone. The Secretary of War does not propose to have any discussion about it, and certainly I can afford to
These words made quite clear the state of Seward's mind in regard to The Times. As long as The Times was a power which could be courted for his own purposes, he had shown its representative every courtesy. Now that The Times had taken such a decidedly anti-North stand, and was viewed by "the people" as an "enemy," he would do nothing to accommodate its needs. Russell was gone and would not return. Seward's "friend," Charles Mackay, would stay in New York where he would be relatively harmless, reporting commercial news. From April of 1862 until the end of the war in April of 1865, The Times would have no leverage in Washington, and its editorial pronouncements would carry little weight against the heavy burden of animosity with which it was regarded by the Unionists of the North.

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1. Seward Papers, 2653, Weed to Seward, 28 January 1862.
2. Sanford Papers, Box 130, Folder 4, Seward to Sanford, 18 July 1863.
3. Bigelow Papers, Seward to Bigelow, 14 February 1862.
4. Seward Papers, 2625, Seward to Weed, 30 December 1861.
5. Sanford Papers, Box 130, F/4, 18 July 1863; also Seward Papers, hand-copied (not in Seward's writing).
6. Bigelow Papers, Seward to Bigelow, 9 September 1862.

8. TA, Morris, 11/373, 23 December 1861. The Mexican excursion was apparently a passing fancy, for Russell did not go. He did travel to Boston to cover the release of Mason and Slidell, in spite of the fact that Lord Lyons had told him he did not think it would be worthwhile. Russell Diary, 28 December 1861.


10. Sanford Papers, Box 105, F/11, Sanford to Davis, 8 October 1861.

11. Sanford Papers, Box 118, F/8, Davis to Sanford, 25 November 1861. Italics mine.


13. Seward Papers, 2657, Weed to Seward, 31 January 1862. Davis received a handsome reimbursement, most of which he returned.

14. Sanford Papers, Box 118, F/8, Davis to Sanford, 2 February 1862.

15. Seward Papers, Davis to Seward, 4 February 1861.

16. Sanford Papers, Box 118, F/8, Davis to Sanford, 2, 25 February 1862.

17. Seward Papers, Davis to Seward, 24 February 1862. The breakfast was given by Lord Granville.

18. Davis Papers, II/324-325, 20 December 1861.


20. Seward Papers, Tuckerman to Seward, 30 January, 6 February 1862.


22. TA, Morris, 11/389, 9 January 1862. Note that this was within two weeks of the date of the letter indicating that Tuckerman had been hired on a provisional basis.


25. Seward Papers, 2694, enclosure to letter from Tuckerman to Seward, 31 March 1862.

26. Seward Papers, 2694, 31 March 1862, and 2698, 5 April 1862.

27. "Russell's Diary," which has been quoted extensively in this study, refers to those annual diaries of Russell's which are a part of The Times's archives. Russell's first biographer, John Black Atkins, quoted also from a diary for 1862 which must have been a different one than the one consulted for this study, for it seems to have contained entries during the first six months of the year. The Times's diary is completely blank for this period. John Black Atkins, The Life of Sir William Howard Russell, (London: John Murray, 1911), 2 Vols. See, for example, II, 105, diary quotations for March 24 and 25. I have not been able to find any trace of the diary Atkins seems to have used.


29. Seward Papers, 2635, 8 January 1862, Sam Ward to FWSeward.


31. TA, Delane, 11/18, 11 February 1862 from Quebec. Italics mine.


33. Atkins, gil., 93-95.

34. TA, Morris, 11/449, 6 March 1862.


1905), 208, 209. This may be taken as just one more indication of
the nature of the abuse which was routinely heaped upon Russell
at this time. It should be noted, however, that Russell and
The Times had received the same criticism during the Crimean
War.

39. TA, Delane, 11/25, 15 April 1862(?), from Ascot.
40. TA, Delane, 10/122.
41. TA, Morris, 11/530, 24 April 1862. Italics mine.
42. TA, Morris, 11/531, 25 April 1862.
43. TA, Morris, 11/531, 25 April 1862. In earlier correspondence
with de Corwin, Morris had said that de Corwin's articles were
better fitted for a weekly than a daily. TA, Morris, 11/315, 25
November 1861. See also 11/253, 27 September 1861 in which he
describes de Corwin as having a "quasi" engagement with The
Times.
44. TA, Morris, 11/536, 29 (?) April 1862.
45. Seward Papers, 2726, Charles Mackay to Seward, 28 May 1862.
46. Seward Papers, 2732, Ward to Seward, 7 June 1862.
47. Seward Papers, 2720, Weed to Seward, 13 May 1862.
48. Bigelow Papers, Confidential letters to Seward, 29 May 1862.
49. Bigelow Papers, Seward to Bigelow, 25 June 1862. Also in
Bigelow, Retrospections, i, 498. Italics mine.
Chapter Fifteen

Lawley Heads for Richmond

At the height of the Trent crisis, William Howard Russell made a significant comment in his diary about the trend of opinion in Britain in regard to the American Civil War. He wrote that his journalist/artist friend Frank Vizetelly who was employed by the Illustrated London News had been ordered by his employers to go South "on the ground that no one cares for the North at all in England & that sympathies are with the South." Russell thought this policy "morally and politically wrong" for "assuredly," he wrote, "the South can never be anything but a source of trouble & hostility if independent & the true policy is to let the quarrel run its course in neutrality..." (1)

By the time Russell had returned to England in May of 1862, he must have been fairly well convinced that his own newspaper, the London Times, was in substantial agreement with the assessment of the mood of the British reading public by the Illustrated London News. While The Times, claiming neutrality in the most self-righteous tones, was not openly pro-South, it had become stridently antagonistic to the North. In spite of this, and
rather strangely, in fact, it had not engaged a correspondent whose mission was to go to the South, nor had it directed Russell to do so. Instead, it had gotten its information about the South from infrequent reports from American newspapers, Northern and Southern, which it reprinted for its readers. At the same time it had continued to brand these American newspapers as hopelessly unreliable.

The Times had depended most heavily throughout the first year of the war on the lengthy and graphic reports written by its seasoned correspondent Russell whose judgment Delane had valued since the Crimean War. Russell had begun his stay in America by making an extended swing through the South, but from the summer of 1861 on, he had operated mostly from Washington with occasional forays to the hinterland. Russell's mission was to follow the armies, a task he had interpreted as meaning the Northern armies. For those Times readers who looked upon the paper as a source of information upon which to base their commercial decisions, The Times had also continued to publish letters from its regular New York correspondent, Bancroft Davis, until his resignation and replacement by Charles Mackay in early 1862.

With Russell's departure from America in April 1862, The Times no longer had a military correspondent, North or South. After some unsuccessful attempts to convince Secretary Seward that Russell should be allowed to return, The Times turned to Francis
Lawley to fill the vacant post. The choice was apparently Russell's. While still in America, Russell had begun referring to "Lawley" as a dinner and/or card companion in December of 1861. When Russell returned to London, Lawley seems to have accompanied him. And when Lawley's first letter appeared in The Times in September 1862, Russell wrote,

Lawley's first letter is in The Times & is really most masterly to my mind. I think I am to be congratulated on the selection.

Francis Charles Lawley was the fourth and youngest son of the first Baron Wenlock. A former M.P and private secretary to William Gladstone, Lawley had been on the verge of being appointed as Governor of South Australia when persistent reports of his heavy indebtedness had caused his future superior, the new colonial secretary, to withdraw his support of Lawley's nomination. Within two years, Lawley had been forced to flee Britain to avoid his creditors. He went to the United States in 1856, hoping to recoup his fortunes. First he tried land speculation, then "matrimonial speculation," and finally, "journalistic speculation," as he turned his hand to writing for magazines and newspapers. It was this background which had prepared him for the job of the new "special" Times correspondent in America, a position which he, like Mackay, occupied for the remainder of the war. (3)
Lawley's views about America had changed significantly during the time of his residence there. He had come to America convinced that the United States was the land of the future, and he had urged his former colleague in the House of Commons, William Gregory, to become the Commons expert on American affairs. But Lawley's confidence in America was shaken by the Civil War, and he soon came to accept the view championed by The Times that the independence of the South was as desirable as it was inevitable. He wrote to Gregory, "I am so much of an American that at times it makes me sigh to think what might have been and what will be now; but as an Englishman it is impossible to do otherwise than rejoice." (4)

Lawley's "Englishness" was further underscored during the Trent crisis when anti-British feeling became so intense in the North. Lawley wrote in a letter to Gregory that the hatred of Britain in the North was of such a degree that if the Union were to succeed in subduing the South it would be ready and anxious for a war with Britain. He wrote Gregory that the only way to avoid a bitter Anglo-American conflict in the future was to weaken the Union by the establishment of an independent Confederacy. He urged that the policy of Britain should be to put the United States in such a fix that for a century to come "she should be of no more account in European affairs than the Sandwich Islands." (5)

From the evidence of these letters to Gregory, there is little
question that Lawley had become, by the time of his appointment to Russell's post, every bit as committed to support of the South as the Confederacy's foremost propagandist in Britain, James Spence, to whom The Times had first offered the New York post when it was vacated by Bancroft Davis. Little wonder then that The Times was agreeable to the appointment of Lawley as Russell's successor, particularly if he had Russell's endorsement.

In fact, Lawley had many advantages Russell did not have. He was an aristocrat, and he had important friends in England. He had established himself as a journalist in America, he knew America from direct experience, and his views were even more in line with those of The Times than the man he replaced. (6) Of equal importance was the fact that he was available at a time when The Thunderer was desperate. "...In the interest of the Times," Norris wrote him in July, "your correspondence cannot begin too soon. We are all lamentably in the dark about these battles where victory or at least success is claimed on both sides..." Lawley was hired provisionally for six months, with three months notice to be given by either side in case of termination.

In these original terms of agreement with The Times, Lawley was charged with "attend/ing/ the army in the field" with no mention of location. He returned to the United States just in time for the second Battle of Bull Run in the late summer of 1862, at which the Federal Army suffered another decisive defeat. His
first letters, sent from Baltimore and Washington, were second-hand reports of this military action, and of the hospital conditions he had found there. Morris was not totally pleased at the news being a bit late, but he tried, rather lamely, to put a good face on it by starting his first letter to Lawley with the words, "No doubt it is better to have a correspondence a little stale than no correspondence at all." (7)

He clearly implied in this letter that Lawley's objective should be to go South, when he wrote, "...events will...facilitate your business. You will have less difficulty in getting within the Confederate lines..." The "events" he referred to were the hoped-for successful invasion of the North by Confederate troops. The news that these troops, as a result of the second battle of Bull Run, were again within reach of Washington, and the possibility that the Northern capital and perhaps even Baltimore had already been overrun by the Southern army had put Morris and Delane in a very happy frame of mind. Morris wrote Mackay, "This last news has been received with the utmost satisfaction. We desire nothing better than the complete humiliation of the Federals, & it is only in the interest of humanity that we desire to see the end of bloodshed." He thought another campaign would have a good effect on the American people, just as a "phlebotomy does good to a plethoric frame." (8)

Delane, on holiday at the time, sent a note to Dasent, expressing his pleasure at seeing Lawley's first letter, adding,
"I hope he went on at once to Washington which I also hope he found in the hands of the Confederates." (9) Both Delane and Morris now expected a quick defeat of the North, which Lawley predicted. To The Times's correspondent in Constantinople, Morris exulted, "...We are all hoping to see the end of the American war very shortly." (10)

Although Morris complimented Lawley on his second letter from America, he was not so pleased with subsequent ones, and he was particularly annoyed that Lawley had not immediately joined the Southern army. He wrote in October to say,

I am greatly disappointed to find you still at Washington, & still more disappointed by the letters you have sent thence!...we do not want "fine writing"...what we require is information concerning military movements & especially information concerning the South.

(11)

Delane, on his fall holiday by now, and enroute to Dunrobin in Scotland, wrote, "It is a pity Lawley is so slow. He ought to have joined the Confederates." Eleven days later his message was the same. "The American letters & leaders are excellent, but I wish Lawley would go over to the Confederate side. He might, one would think, have managed it while they were in Maryland." (12)

Delane was referring to Lee's invasion of Maryland in the month of September after his success at the second battle of Bull Run in August. Fortunately for the North, General McClellan had been
able to rally the Northern troops to repulse Lee's invasion at
the battle of Antietam, near Sharpsburg, Maryland. Sometime
towards the end of September, Lawley did, in fact, cross over
into Confederate territory in company with a British officer on
leave from Canada, Colonel Garnet Wolseley. The two Englishmen
did not travel with Lee, however. They made a clandestine
crossing of the Potomac on their own and headed for Richmond,
where they met Southern political leaders and obtained the
necessary passes before they joined the Southern army.

In London Russell continued to write occasionally for The Times
and to adhere to his distaste for the Southern position. He
wrote to Delane in August, complaining of "S"'s argument for
recognition of the Southern Confederacy which The Times had
published. ("S" was James Spence.) "I never heard of any power
recognizing one which had no limits or defined boundaries,"
Russell wrote, describing in detail how difficult it would be to
draw boundaries at the present state of the war. He also wrote
Delane that Lawley's going south would be of benefit for the
North. "If /Lawley/ is let tell the truth you will find that the
curtain of darkness which has been let fall before the South has
rendered it no small service here." (13) Russell was apparently
unaware at this time of the degree to which he and Lawley
disagreed on the merits of the Southern case. (14)

The hospitable Southerners were too clever propagandists to
allow Lawley's enthusiasm for the South to be diminished by
subjecting him to the type of ill-treatment Russell had received in the North. Lawley was cordially welcomed by the Southern leaders, and from that time until the end of the war, he enjoyed their full cooperation in his journalistic endeavours. He was openly partisan to their cause, of course, arguing from the beginning a course of British intervention which Morris continually told him Palmerston's government would not adopt. In spite of his uniquely favourable position, however, he seems to have been as unhappy with his assignment as Russell had been with his, but for different reasons. He suffered from some undefined illness, complained frequently to Morris, and threatened resignation as early as the end of 1862 when he had been on the job less than six months.

Morris was no more sympathetic to Lawley's complaints than he had been to Russell's. With Russell, Morris had quarrelled over the expense account. With Lawley, Morris (and, one presumes, Delane) expressed frequent criticism of the content of the letters, asking Lawley again and again for more fact and less opinion. In February 1863, for example, Morris, after directing Lawley to send news of a naval engagement at Charleston, and after complimenting him that "your correspondence is very highly appreciated by the public," added that in his own opinion "...it is still too much devoted to generalities, & to the eternal question of secession."(15)

A month later, when Lawley seems to have written another
grumbling letter, Morris wrote to downplay his complaints, arguing that things were bound to get better. "As for discomfort, the worst is over, & before another winter sets in, some change must take place attended probably by improvement of southern affairs...I think that the financial difficulties of the Northern States & the internal dissensions that enfeeble their action must bear bitter fruit ere long." He told Lawley of a rumour of a serious Federal defeat before Vicksburg, and concluded,

I have seen your friends Colonels Fletcher and Leslie -- they both assure me that you get on well with the Confederate people, & they seem to think that you will not turn a deaf ear to my request that you will not abandon your post. (16)

Lawley did not "abandon his post," even as Morris continued to instruct him in ways in which he could improve his letters. In May he told Lawley in no uncertain terms that he "must abstain from praise of slavery & indeed from all general reflections upon that or any other institution." (17) In June, he again asked for more specific information, complaining that "you do not give us enough detail, either about the army or the civil government," and pointing out that Lawley had sent no information of the number of men under arms, how many guns, horses, and ships the Confederates had, what their financial status was, what they were doing to obtain supplies which had formerly come from Europe and the North, and so on. (18) Later that month, Morris, always anxious to keep Lawley in the South and on the job, assured him
that the war would not last much longer, "for the Emperor of the French is resolved upon a recognition of the Southern Confederacy," a step which would make his position relatively easy and his work pleasant. (19)

In August, however, Morris was still not sure about his Southern correspondent's staying power. He wrote Charles Mackay in New York, "We are greatly disappointed at not hearing from Mr. Lawley. A friend of his lately returned from the South says his health has quite broken down -- and I am afraid he has quitted his post." (20) Lawley had indeed been ill, but he had accompanied Lee's army throughout the whole campaign that had culminated in the pivotal battle of Gettysburg, July 1-3, 1863, in spite of his wretched state.

Morris complained later that Lawley did not write often enough, making little allowance for the difficulty Lawley faced in getting his letters despatched to England. Throughout his term in the South, Lawley was continually plagued with the problem not only of sending mail but also of receiving it. To illustrate the time lag often involved, Lawley's account of the battle of Gettysburg, which he wrote on the 8th of July, did not appear in The Times until six weeks after the event -- the 18th of August. As mentioned above, Lawley had been ill during the whole of the Gettysburg campaign, and it is quite possible that although the battle per se ended on the 3rd with Lawley dating his account of the battle "July 8," he had been too sick to write and/or
despatch it sooner. Lee, after all, was on the north side of the Potomac at that time, in a perilous retreat, and miles from Richmond, which itself was miles from a major port. If Lawley's letter took some time to get to London, Morris shouldn't have been too surprised.

On the other hand, Morris can hardly be blamed for comparing the intermittent output of Lawley, the replacement, to that of Russell, the trusted and seasoned professional. Whatever his faults at recordkeeping, Russell was a prodigious worker, and always made a point of writing fully and frequently. Lawley suffered in this regard in comparison to the other Times correspondents in America also -- Charles Mackay in New York, and Antonio Gallenga, who arrived in New York in mid July of 1863 in hopes of covering Northern military activities for The Times. To take just one period for comparison, July, August, and September 1863, months during which the war was in a most active and crucial phase, and when all three correspondents were in the United States, The Times was able to publish only five letters from Lawley, who wrote at the wide intervals of June 15, 22, 19, July 8 and August 29. During those same months, The Times carried fifteen letters from Mackay and thirteen letters from Gallenga.

Undeniably Lawley's communication problems were much greater than Russell's, or Mackay's or Gallenga's, all of whom operated only in the North, or, as in Russell's case, in the South early in the war when conditions were still good. For the greater part
of his year-long stay in America, Russell had only to hand his letter over to the appropriate aide at the British Legation in Washington (or the British consulate in Charleston, Savannah, etc.) who could then be counted on to send it along with the official mail to whatever steamer was leaving the nearest port. Lawley's despatches, by contrast, were frequently sent from the field, in a beleaguered, sparsely inhabited and largely agricultural South served by an inferior transportation and communication network which only became progressively worse as the war went on. Moreover, once Lawley's letters had reached a port from which they could be despatched, the ship by which they were transported still had to get through the increasingly effective Northern blockade.

To illustrate the magnitude of the problem, Lawley's journalistic colleague and companion with the Southern armies, Frank Vizetelly of the Illustrated London News, frequently found his sketches appearing in the Northern Harper's Weekly instead of the London journal to which they had been directed. When Southern ships were captured as they attempted to run the blockade, they were often brought as prizes into New York. At such times, Vizetelly's drawings and letters were seized and offered to Northern publications. Lawley is reported to have had to pay as much as a hundred dollars in gold to each messenger whom he despatched with copy to Savannah, whence it was to be sent by ship to the Bahamas and then to England. (21)
The one problem Lawley did not have, as noted earlier, was that of gaining the support and cooperation of the Southern leaders, political and military. It is worth contrasting the treatment Lawley received at the hands of the Southern command on the Gettysburg campaign, for example, with the difficulties Russell had experienced when he tried to follow the Northern armies after the Trent crisis. On the march to Gettysburg, Lawley had become so ill that he could not ride his horse. His friend Colonel Freemantle, (later "Sir Arthur"), with whom he was travelling, sought help from General Longstreet, one of Lee's principle generals. Longstreet made arrangements for Lawley to travel thenceforth in an ambulance, while Freemantle was invited by the General to join his mess. (22)

Notwithstanding Lawley's heroic efforts to "attend" the Gettysburg battle in spite of his being sick, the nearest Morris could come to complimenting him was in this brief comment he made in a letter he wrote Lawley towards the end of August: "Yours of the 24th July came to hand...It was very acceptable the more because it was quite unexpected." (The Gettysburg account, plus a later letter dated July 28, had apparently all arrived at the same time.) (23)

In Morris's defense it must be added that when Morris wrote this letter, he was annoyed at Lawley yet again because he had become convinced anew that Lawley was about to resign. Colonel Freemantle, who had by then returned to England, had told him,
Morris wrote Lawley that Lawley was definitely "making preparations to leave the South." After the rather stiff remark that "I regret that your health compels you to quit your post," Morris concluded, "I have made the best provision in my power to fill your place."

Morris's "best provision" was a reference to the veteran Times correspondent, Antonio Gallenga, who, as noted above, had been sent to the States in July. Morris first hoped that he could convince Gallenga to stay on in Lawley's place. Poor Morris would receive another disappointment, however, for an illness of Mackay's forced him to send Gallenga to New York. Gallenga stayed there only until November, at which time he returned to England. His brief tour in America will be discussed later.

Meanwhile Lawley seems to have written Morris that he was not quitting just yet. Morris was pleased, but took the opportunity to take Lawley to task, this time for his intense partisanship for the South.

If there is one thing that may fairly be objected to in your correspondence, it is an extravagant partiality to the Southern cause. Certainly you cannot accuse the paper of Northern proclivities; so when I complain of your Southern ones, it is not as an enemy but as a friend that I speak. We will believe, since you say so, that the Confederate Generals from Lee downwards are possessed of all the virtues that should adorn a soldier; but we cannot believe that all Southerners are faultless, & that they can be truly described only in terms of unqualified praise. My own impression is that the strength of your advocacy weakens its effect, & that cool-headed readers say to themselves -- "This writer is not be be implicitly trusted."
I make every allowance for your position & think it is quite probable that you would be treated in the South, as our other correspondents are & have been in the North — i.e., refused admission within military lines, if you opposed the cause or criticised the measures of its leaders, civil or military... But there is a wide interval between hostility & undiscriminant advocacy, & I should be glad to see you occupying that interval.

In a letter of advice to Gallenga, a month earlier, Morris had made some comments about the Southern people and Lawley which are pertinent here.

These Southern people are, by Mr. Lawley's account, somewhat difficult to deal with. They hold themselves high, & desire to keep the highest European level of manners & conduct. They are also very sensitive & will not brook any doubt of their superiority to the Yankees & their ultimate triumph over them. I hope it is not unjust to them to believe that our correspondent's popularity is due in some degree to the fact that his brother is an English Baron & that he is himself an Honorable by courtesy."(25

In November 1863, Morris wrote another long letter to Lawley which is quoted here almost in entirety, since it revealed so much of Lawley's situation, Morris's opinion of that situation, the position Lawley had assumed as Southern advocate, and the attitude of The Times towards North and South.

If I have not written to you so frequently as you might have expected, the cause has been solely the uncertainty of your movements. Almost every letter I have received from you for nearly a year has announced your then impending departure...

If your health positively requires your return home, there is no use in discussing the matter. It is true, as you have frequently remarked, that the uncertainty & infrequency of your communications render the cost of
your mission somewhat burdensome; but that is a point for our consideration alone, & if we are content to bear the cost your conscience need not trouble you. If has indeed occurred to me more than once that one cause at least of your dissatisfaction might be removed by yourself. I allude to the infrequency of your letters. Would it not be possible for you to write regularly -- say once a week --...The Confederate Government, I am informed, finds little difficulty in communicating with its agents in Europe -- Will it not help you in your difficulty, in return for the very great help you have given to the Southern cause by your able advocacy?...

...The strategy of the Southern Government continues to excite admiration here, as that of the Northern Generals & their Masters excites contempt...it is certain that such gigantic resources have never before been yielded with such poor results. No one in England pretends to see the end of this civil war but many still believe that the North must prevail in the end. There are some few who think that the Union will be restored by the victory of the South, under the Presidency of Jefferson Davis.

(26)

Lawley did finally make a trip back to England in the winter of 1863-1864. In a letter to Mackay, Morris wrote that Lawley had "made his appearance yesterday," but said he had not had time to get much out of him "beyond the opinion, which he has persistently expressed in all his letters, that the South must conquer in the end.(27)

On the 18th of February, Morris sent a letter to the banker Coutts, directing that the credit of Hon. F. Lawley be withdrawn. Perhaps there was just a budget pinch, or perhaps the careful Morris was not going to let Lawley, of the doubtful gambling inclination, run up debts on The Times while in England.
At about the same time, Morris criticized Mackay in New York for spending too much on telegrams. American news had become too costly, he wrote, "out of proportion to its importance." Morris's foreign news budget was probably suffering at that time from the added burden of covering the Schleswig-Holstein War. He resented, in any case, having to spend so much on the Americans.

Russell and Lawley had a chance to compare experiences at a dinner given by Lawley's friend "Neddy Neville" in the returning correspondent's honour. "Frank Lawley looks hard as nails," Russell wrote in his diary, "splendid fettle grey but as clear & handsome as paint." Lawley was quite confident the South would last "as long as Lee," Russell wrote. If something were to happen to Lee, Lawley was doubtful. He told Russell that Delane had told him he was very good "but that 'I' was still King of the special Kingdom of Correspondedom -- an odd speech to make."

Significantly, Russell wrote that Lawley "complained as everyone else did of Morris' letters, so cold churlish & disgustingly stiff & unsympathetic..."

By the end of April, though, Lawley had decided to go back.

Morris wrote Lawley that he had booked passage for him with Alexander Collie who would put him on a new fast steamer to Nassau. By this time, Morris was not so sure that there would be a swift termination of the war. "All the prophets have been belied by events," he wrote. "According to our financiers, that
department of the North should have collapsed 18 months ago -- and according to Mackay the supply of men for the Northern army should have failed altogether long ere this. Yet there is plenty of money or its substitute & sufficient men." (32)

Two months later Morris received news from Lawley that he had arrived safely in Bermuda, and a few days later, he learned that Lawley had proceeded to Wilmington, South Carolina. Morris noted in a letter he sent Lawley later in July that a Mr. Alexander had scooped him in a letter which had been published in The Times that morning, "too good to be suppressed." From their correspondence, it would appear that Lawley had hired Alexander as a temporary replacement for himself while he was in England. (33) Morris also continued to impress upon Lawley that the British government would not depart from its steadfast policy of non-intervention in American affairs. Its recent "Danish experiences" (the Schleswig-Holstein War) would make it even less likely that Earl Russell would have "a taste for further meddling," he thought.

A week later Morris wrote Lawley again about Mr. Alexander. "I cannot say how many of his letters have been received -- probably 7 or 8 -- Four have been published including the one mentioned in my last. I think you had better settle with him speedily & stop his writing." He urged Lawley to "write often & contrive to send your despatches by a safe & speedy conveyance," something that was becoming increasingly difficult to do. (34)
Lawley seems to have been successful in making these new
arrangements for Morris wrote on the 11 of August that his
letters had come through speedily. Morris then revealed the
depth of his feeling about the war.

Great disappointment was felt here at the retirement
of the Confederates without taking
Washington... We hate the Yankees so bitterly
that the sight of so great a disgrace as the capture of
their capital would have been very pleasant to our
feelings.

Morris could still see no end to the war, writing that he had
discovered "no symptoms of reason in the North, or of weakness in
the South." (36)

By the end of August Morris was talking about keeping Lawley in
the South even after the war ended. ".../We/ have no intention
of recalling you whilst the war lasts -- nor even then, for the
subsequent events will be even more lively than the war itself." (37)
Lawley, meanwhile, continued to prophecy that the South
would fight on, even as Grant besieged Petersburg and Sherman
destroyed the South.

Sometime, probably in January 1865, Morris sent Lawley a copy
of a letter he had written on November 25, explaining that he was
forwarding a duplicate because communication between the two of
them had been interrupted. He told Lawley he had received his
letters dated 27 October, 27 November, and 5 December which had
been published in The Times on the 13th of December and the 6th
of January. "The prevailing feeling here is that the South must succumb," he wrote, and he opined further, "Our Government, I believe, will remain steadfast in its policy of non-intervention." He noted that the worst feature of current Southern affairs was the "growing discontent." Yet, complaining again that Lawley neglected to supply details, Morris wondered that "...you never notice the opposition & always represent the Southern people as being unanimous. Are you sure that you are right in this?" (38)

In March, Morris again assured Lawley that the British government would not breach its neutrality in the American conflict "in Palmerston's time." (39) A month later he wrote a letter to Lawley which would prove to be his last letter to his southern correspondent, though he could have no idea then that this was to be the case:

"Let me express my very great satisfaction that you are resolved to remain at your post in Secessia. It would have been a serious loss to the paper if its correspondences from that quarter had come to an end just at the very moment when its importance was at its height."

(40)

Lawley actually remained in Richmond until that city was evacuated by the Southern army and government on the 2nd of April, 1865. He did not choose to follow Jefferson Davis, however, when the Confederate President fled west with the remnants of his government, hoping to establish a new seat of
resistance to the Northern invasion.

As Lawley described his movements in a letter datelined "New York, April 11," he caught the early train to Fredericksburg (heading North) on the morning of the 3rd, parting with "Connolly, member for Donegal, who had passed a month in Richmond /and who was/ still undecided whether to follow Lee's army or to strike northwards like myself." One of the few students of Lawley's career in the South, Professor Hoole, then claims, (without citing any evidence), that Lawley "returned to Richmond, bought a horse, and rode as fast as possible toward Lee's headquarters in the vicinity of Amelia Courthouse." Hoole quoted some words which he claims Lee spoke to Lawley, described what Lawley observed of the last days of the Southern military effort, and wrote that Lawley was an eyewitness to the parting Lee took from General Longstreet. (41)

In fact, since the Lee/Longstreet parting supposedly took place on April 12 in Virginia, and since Lawley was already in New York on the 11th, it is doubtful that Lawley was an eyewitness. Lee's biographer, Douglas Southall Freeman, has also cast doubt on the fact that this supposed last meeting between Lee and Longstreet ever took place. (42)

Hoole seems to have based his account of these movements of Lawley's on an article written by Lawley, and published four months later in the Fortnightly Review, titled, "The Last Six
Days of Secession." (43) In that article Lawley did not state that he actually participated in the events he described, although his words are so vivid that they read like an eyewitness account.

In the final letter Morris had written to Lawley, Morris had bestowed upon him the best compliment of the entire period of Lawley's service.

Uncertain as your communications have been, they have not the less presented the public here with a continuous narrative which has served to correct the error & exaggerations of the Federal Press, & have indeed been the only authentic record of the Southern side of the civil war.

(44)

Morris's description of the body of Lawley's work as "the only authentic record of the Southern side" is a bit overdrawn when seen against the background of the enormous amount of news of the American war that flooded into London in the imported American newspapers, the admittedly sporadic accounts that came from the occasional British visitors who spent relatively short periods of time in America, and the uneven efforts made by two rival American newspapers in London to propagate the Northern and Southern positions. Nevertheless, given the view Delano and Morris had of the unreliability of the American press, the difficulty any news editor has of sorting the spurious from the true whatever the source may be, and the highly exaggerated and partisan nature of most of the news reports from America, The Times's editors may be forgiven if they trusted their own
correspondent the most.

The fact is, however, Lawley's was not the only voice from the South. It was merely the only voice that appeared regularly in The Times. Further, to describe it as Morris did, as the only "authentic" record is certainly a perversion of the meaning of "authenticity," for no one, least of all Morris and Delane, denied Lawley's partisanship for the South.

As the Saturday Review had noted, however, special correspondents had a tendency to take on the trappings of the place or country from which they reported. There is no question that Lawley did this. He was an enthusiastic supporter of the South from the moment he crossed the Potomac. This fact certainly diminished his objectivity and led him into errors of judgment, but it also ensured his continued acceptability to Southern leaders whose cooperation he needed to do his work in the South. Even the Saturday Review, always so anxious to find fault with anything connected with The Times, expressed no objection to Lawley's reporting, referring to him on one occasion as "the able Correspondent of the Times in the Southern States." (45)

Our general conclusion must be that if we allow for partisanship, illness, difficulties of transmission of correspondence, and a less than munificent production rate, Lawley performed outstanding service for The Times. He sent eyewitness accounts of the battles of Fredericksburg,
Chancellorsville and Gettysburg which have since been considered to be classics of their kind. He visited and described the Southern cities of Richmond, Charleston, Augusta, Vicksburg, and Chattanooga under exceedingly trying conditions. He interviewed the famous Southern generals Lee, Longstreet, Bragg and Beauregard who did so much to inspire the supporters of the Southern cause. If he erred on the side of Southern partisanship, so did his masters at The Times. If he misled them, they were equally to blame for having wanted to be misled.

It is a pity Morris could not have been more generous to Lawley in his letters, and more timely in his praise. If Lawley received that last letter of Morris's at all, it must have been as he packed his bags in New York on the eve of his departure from America. Lawley wrote his last despatch from America from New York on the 15th of April, sending the awful news of the assassination of Abraham Lincoln, and expressing in his last paragraphs for The Times the mixture of hope and despair he felt for America.

Last night the people of this great city went to bed...reckoning of the rebellion as already a thing of the past...This morning they woke to the stunning consciousness that in the night the shadow of a great and ghastly crime had passed over the land...

It has always seemed to me that the surrender of General Lee and the opportunity for generosity so admirably seized by General Grant bridged over the gulf which divides the two sections to a degree which none could have hoped two months ago. But the bullet of a dastardly assassin has in one instant neutralized the effect of the great stride towards conciliation so happily taken by General Grant.
Shortly after his return to London, Lawley changed his allegiance to The Daily Telegraph. When he died in 1902, The Times had only this to say about the services of its former correspondent: "As special correspondent of The Times he went through the American Civil War." (47)

1. TA, Russell Diary, 29 November 1861.
2. For example, TA, Russell Diary, 12, 15, 22 December 1861. Russell took credit for the selection in a diary note of 21 September 1861.
5. Ibid., 148, 149.
6. He was also cheaper. Russell had been paid twelve hundred pounds per annum, plus expenses, while in America. Lawley's salary, plus expenses, was one thousand. Later, in January 1863, his salary was raised to Russell's level. TA, Morris, 11/610-612, 24 July 1862, and 12/60, 9 January 1863.
11. TA, Morris, 11/709, 3 October 1862.
12. TA, Delane, 11/55, 3 October 1862, and 11/57, 14 October 1862.


14. In 1862, for example, Russell was paid for fourteen columns of material. This consisted largely of comments titled "American News" or "American War," and lasted from April until August. Once Lawley was installed, Russell seems not to have been used. TA, General Reviews and Reports, 1861-1862.

15. TA, Morris, 12/139, 21 February 1863.

16. TA, Morris, 12/171, 19 March 1863. Fletcher and Leslie were British officers who visited the South. For information on these men, see Jay Luvaas, The Military Legacy of the Civil War, The European Inheritance, (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1959.) Fletcher accompanied the Union army in McClellan's peninsular campaign, and later visited both armies in the West.

17. TA, Morris, 12/245-246, 5 May 1863.

18. TA, Morris, 12/304, 12 June 1863.


20. TA, Morris 12/359, 10 August 1863.


22. Sir Arthur J. L Fremantle and Frank A. Haskell, Two Views of Gettysburg, Richard Jarrell, ed., (Chicago: Lakeside Press, R. R. Donnelley, 1964), 21. Jay Luvaas, in his study of the military legacy of the war, also makes the point that while foreign observers were generally well received by both belligerents, the Confederates were particularly cooperative, hoping as they did "to win friends and, if possible, recognition in Europe." Luvaas, op.cit., 11.

23. TA, Morris, 12/390, 26 August 1863.


27. TA, Morris, 12/633-634, 9 February 1864.


30. TA, Russell Diary, 10 February 1864.

31. Russell noted dining with Lavley at Delane’s on the 18th. TA, Russell Diary, 18 April 1864.

32. TA, Morris, 13/3-4, 2 April 1864.

33. TA, Morris, 13/131-132, 18 July 1864. One of the few full accounts of Lavley’s activities in the South is contained in William Stanley Hoole, “Lavley Covers the Confederacy,” Confederate Centennial Studies, No. 26, (Tuscaloosa: Confederate Publishing Company, 1964.) Professor Hoole credits Lavley with “about one hundred” letters, listing the dates in the Appendix. Since one of those listed is July 18, 1864, it is possible that Hoole credited Lavley with one or more of Alexander’s letters.

34. TA, Morris, 13/149-150, 29 July 1864.

35. Morris was referring to a raid on Washington in July 1864 by southern General Jubal Early, during which Early’s troops were able to advance to Silver Spring, just outside the ring of forts which McClellan had had erected around Washington.


37. TA, Morris, 13/165-166, 31 August 1864.

38. TA, Morris, 13/316-317, no date.

39. TA, Morris, 13/358-359, 1 March 1865.

40. TA, Morris, 13/388-389, 7 April 1865.

41. The Times, 25 April 1865, 11; and Hoole, op. cit., 118-122.


44. TA, Morris, 13/388-389, 7 April 1865.

45. Saturday Review, 16, #424, 26 December 1863, 815.

46. The Times, 29 April 1865, 9.

47. The Times, 21 September 1901, 6.

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In January 1862, when The Times's former New York correspondent, Bancroft Davis, passed through London on his way to an extended rest cure in southern France, he told Novbray Morris that he thought the Union would be reconstituted in three months. With the war scare over the Trent behind them, and "Little Mac" McClellan hard at work whipping the raw recruits of the North into shape, Union supporters were sure that their next military offensive would result in the capture of Richmond and a quick defeat of the South.

As has been the case so often in the history of warfare, this bold prediction of a quick and easy victory would prove to be quite wrong. Fortunately for The Times, after a temporary and unsuccessful trial of a replacement recommended by Davis, a new man for the New York post had been found whose views of the American conflict agreed with The Times. This man was Charles Mackay, a former journalist and poet. He would prove to be a stable, long-term choice, and would remain in New York for almost
three years.

Mackay was engaged in February 1862 to go to the States to write the New York letter presumably on the basis of his extensive journalistic experience (his last post was as editor of the Illustrated London News, his "Englishness" (though he was of Scottish descent), and his familiarity with America and acquaintance with some of its principle leaders. Most importantly, as noted above, (and this had become a sine qua non by now for The Times), he agreed with The Times's position on the American conflict. Mackay made no effort to hide his views, in America or elsewhere, as he wrote fifteen years later:

My opinions on the subject of the war... were well known... I was an enemy of slavery, but with Mr. Seward, Mr. Greeley, and all the more prominent abolitionists of the time, I recognized the right of the South to secede from the North... [1]

However reasonable these views may have seemed to Mr. Mackay when he formulated them in the late 1850's, and however convinced of their rectitude he and The Times may have been at the time of his appointment to the New York job, the situation in the North was so altered by early 1862, that his supposed agreement with "abolitionists" such as Mr. Seward was hopelessly out of date. That "enemy of slavery," Mr. Seward, was now Secretary of State of a truncated country that was fighting, not for abolition, but to deny the right of the southern states to secede the federal
union. By the spring of 1862 when Mackay arrived in America, the earlier serious divisions in the North over how to handle the slavery question were being superseded by the more practical divisions over how to fight a war of national survival. Mackay's views had become distinctly out of step with most of the men in ascendency in Washington. Mackay was not sent to Washington, however, and perhaps was not aware of the degree to which he was removed from the thinking of Lincoln's government since there were so many who agreed with him in the commercial center of New York City.

_Times_ managing editor Mowbray Morris instructed Mackay to preserve a strict "incog" in America, if he could, but Mackay soon found this to be impossible. He wrote later that he was "'interviewed' by a reporter for a Boston newspaper within three hours of /his/ landing in that city, and that he was subjected to an apparently amicable but in reality hostile cross-examination." (2) Mackay explained in his memoir that he had not been aware at the time that the Union had become even more sacred than freedom in that "zealously bitter corner of the Union, sometimes called New England, and as often more vulgarly called Yankeedom..." and that he had, therefore, expressed his views during his first interview freely and fully. The result, he wrote, had been "a violent attack upon me on the following morning in the columns of the newspaper." His forthrightness had been a serious mistake.
By the time he had moved on to New York, his association with The Times had already become known. Horace Greeley, the prominent abolitionist editor of The Tribune, and an acquaintance of Mackay's from an earlier visit to America, called on Mackay on the 28th of March. In a note written the next day, Greeley implied that he had perhaps made a mistake in calling on Mackay, for he had read in his own paper that Mackay had become an advocate of the rebels, and had chaired a meeting in London to listen to a "northern traitor."

Gordon Bennett, editor of the New York Herald, that newspaper so despised by Russell and Delane, soon joined the attack on Mackay in what Mackay considered to be libelous fashion. The new Times correspondent wrote later that he quickly learned, however, that such "libelous" attacks were so common in the American press that they were largely ignored. ".../Nobody/, who is not a fool or an Englishman, ever takes the least notice of them," he was told. Nevertheless, the reputation of the new Times correspondent seems to have been fatally flawed from the start.

Morris, not aware that Mackay's "incog" was no more, was pleased with his New York correspondent's first letter. He complained a little about the use of "slang," (the word "rowdy" and the phrase "licking into shape" were two examples Morris objected to), but on the whole he thought Mackay was off to a good start. He instructed Mackay that in addition to his fuller
letters, he should send short summaries of American news (100 to 120 words) by every steamer to The Times's agent in Queenstown in Ireland. Morris told Mackay that he was anxious to avoid having to rely on Reuters if possible. Especially, Morris wrote, Mackay was not to forget the commercial news. (5) Mackay’s responsibilities were also to include that of sending files of American newspapers to The Times in London.

A week later Morris complimented Mackay on the “manner” of his correspondence but implied that the “matter” could be improved. “My test of a foreign letter is this -- ‘could it have been written anywhere else than in the place of its date?’ If this question cannot be answered negatively, I condemn the letter to the second rank.” The correspondent was first to supply information, then to amuse. Above all, Morris warned Mackay, “...avoid personal controversies with the American press.” Morris’s advice must have amused Mackay who had already had his baptism of fire with the American press. (6)

By the middle of April, Morris went so far as to write Mackay that his latest letter was “excellent,” though he now wanted more of the commercial element “which ought to form a leading feature in a correspondence from New York.” Morris wrote in this letter that his main concern was to gain enlightenment on the financial condition of the Northern government. (7)

Russell’s return from America at the end of that month forced
Morris asked Mackay to do double duty as both "regular" and "special" correspondent, adding the military and political news to his despatches which Russell had been responsible for before. Write us practical letters, Morris asked, with sound information. "The public is tired of generalities about the quarrel between North & South, and its probable issue. Besides these matters can be better treated here than in New York. We cannot rely upon the American newspapers, and are overwhelmed by the mass of ridiculous exaggeration that is brought to us almost daily." (8)

It was at this time that Morris asked Mackay to sound out Seward on the idea of Russell's return or replacement. The Times had no intention of sending another correspondent unless it could be assured that such a person would be permitted to go with the armies. When Seward refused to cooperate, and The Times's experiment of using Count de Corvin as an adjunct military correspondent failed, The Times turned to Lawley. Until this question of Russell's replacement was settled, however, the responsibility of reporting all news from America still fell to Mackay.

By May, Morris wrote Mackay that the editors were entirely satisfied with his letters. Rather strangely, Morris added that Mackay had plenty of rivals competing for his post, a fact attested to by numerous letters of sometimes polite, sometimes curt rejection of such offers in Morris's letterbooks. Whether
this was to assure Mackay that he was being kept because of the good job he was doing, or to warn him that he must continue to turn in a first-rate job or be sacked is not clear. Morris did instruct Mackay to be sure to be friendly with Dillon in New York, if they should meet. "He is all for the South and believes that the war is carried on solely for the benefit of the Yankees..." It may be assumed that Morris wanted to be sure that Mackay would be receptive to any information that Dillon might feed him that would support these views. (9)

A month later, with the possibility of joint mediation by the English and the French beginning to be talked about seriously in government circles in Britain and France, Morris wrote that he was uncertain as to the choice of a new "special" correspondent. (Lawley had not yet been hired.) It was unsatisfactory to have no direct news from the South, he mused, but since the war might soon be "stopt by foreign intervention," he couldn't decide whether to choose a civilian or a military man to go there. He even asked Mackay if he might be willing to go South, "in the event of a settlement and a Southern confederacy..." (10)

Just three days later, however, Morris wrote Mackay that "Our Government...will not intervene. I think they are wise. If Napoleon will do the work, so much the better; but we must not lay ourselves open to a rebuff." (11) A new move in the Commons to force the government to intervene had failed, and the Palmerston's government would again await events, at least until
the "ten thousand" had returned from their summer holidays.

The Times's editors, as usual, staggered their holidays with Delane remaining in London during July and August. In July he had the opportunity to talk with American envoy William S. Thayer, the former American journalist who had supplied news to Bancroft Davis. Thayer called on Delane during a visit to London in the company of His Highness, the Vice Roy of Egypt, to whom he had been accredited by the United States. He sent a full report of his conversation with Delane to his chief, Secretary of State Seward, the next day.

The week of Thayer's visit there had been a "spurious despatch of 'McLellan's [sic] Unconditional Surrender'" which had been published in The Times on the evening of July 18. Thayer had called on Delane before the false report was published, arriving in Delane's office just as the editor received the despatch. Handing the despatch to Thayer, Delane said "he was glad of the news, because it would tend to end the war." "He had no doubt of the truth of the report," Thayer wrote.

When I pointed out the improbability of the news, arising from the fact that four days later advices from New York failed to confirm it, he referred to its intrinsic probability from the hazardous position of McLellan [sic], and suggested that Stanton might have suppressed /the news of McClellan's surrender/.

He had no doubt if the news proved true that the subject would the next morning be taken up in Cabinet, and within a month the southern confederacy would be recognized.
In fact, McClellan's army had not been destroyed, and, as noted above, the push to recognize the Confederacy failed for the moment. Delane's confident predictions in July were as wrong as Bancroft Davis's had been in January.

The conversation had then moved on to the question of the cotton famine. "As for my impression that the condition of the laboring classes impelled towards recognizing the Southern Confederacy, I was much mistaken," Thayer wrote. Delane told him that the government could, if necessary, support the operatives indefinitely at much less cost than that of a war with the United States. The need for cotton would have no decisive influence upon British policy. Should the British government desire, for policy reasons, to intervene in the American conflict, there was ample precedent for such a move from such cases as Greece, Belgium and South America. Delane implied that in deciding on British policy, the larger question of the total trade between Great Britain and America was far more important than the temporary shortage of cotton occasioned by the war. When Thayer suggested that if England intervened by raising the blockade she would commit "an act...of great national impertinence," Delane replied that he was "inclined to think...mediation would be impertinent, but authoritative intervention would not..." Intervention, he said, would be an act of deliberate public policy justified by sound precedent. He went on to say "that the Americans (Northerners) had made themselves exceedingly unamiable to England; a tariff
had been enacted to insult Europe; our press and orators were united to vilify England etc."

Thayer replied that so far as he knew the tariff had been enacted only as a revenue measure, and that a great government could not be insulted by this or that irresponsible speaker but only by its peers. Delane then admitted that "so far as this Administration...was concerned, Mr. Lincoln and Mr. Seward had acted with courtesy and discretion to an unusual degree."

Delane told Thayer, however, that "the Govt was most urgently pressed on all sides to recognize the South. Not to speak of France which needed but a hint to join in the recognition, even the friends of the North in England (among whom he mentioned two noblemen whom he had lately heard speak in private on the subject) were abusing Lord P. for [not?] stopping the civil war."

I told Mr. D. that the two anti-slavery noblemen (not named -- perhaps Argyll and Stanley) derived all their knowledge from the Times, which had cast all its facts about our war into the mould of an adverse theory. I did not speak of its editorial arguments; but its allocation and selection of news were adroitly arranged so as to point the moral with which it had started more than a year ago. That moral was that the division of the American Union was a desirable object. To this, Mr. D. replied that he would freely confess that in his opinion, the separation of our union into two nations was for the interests of Europe.

At the beginning of his letter to Seward, Thayer had referred
to Delane as "the alter ego of Lord Palmerston." He wrote later in the letter that it was believed that Palmerston was "indirectly encouraging the outside pressure of Parliamentary and newspaper clamor to which, with affected reluctance he may one day yield." Delane, he said, was "as perfect an unofficial exponent of Lord P. as can be found." Still, Palmerston had not gotten a majority of the Cabinet "up to the sticking point" yet. "We need the logic of military success to check /Palmerston/" and, by implication, The Times, Thayer concluded. (12)

When Morris had written his New York correspondent in June that Britain would not intervene, he had undoubtedly gotten his guidance from Delane. Yet Thayer's conversation with Delane in July indicated that the possibility of intervention was far from dead. This, indeed, would prove to be the case. For the time being, however, Morris continued to instruct his correspondents that the government would not intervene. To Mackay he declared, towards the end of August,

I cannot think you are right in advocating intervention. Admitting for the sake of argument that intervention is our proper policy, how is it to be carried out? Have the Northern Federation given the least sign, either by their Government or their press, that they will tolerate foreign interference? In the absence of any such encouragement, shall we volunteer our good offices with every chance of being snubbed; or shall we say boldly that Europe must interfere for the sake of its starving population and in the cause of humanity...? What would be the effect of such a manifesto? Clearly to my mind the effect would be to arouse the flagging patriotism of the North to revive; increase and concentrate all the hate against England and in the end probably to prolong instead of stopping the civil war. This is the view our Government takes
of the present question, and it is this which confirms
them in their policy of inaction. But only give them
the slightest encouragement, and they will be found
ready to take advantage of it, and to exert their
utmost power to restore peace upon any basis.

The next paragraph of Morris's letter is particularly
significant.

There is however another view of the question which
few care to proclaim but which is very generally
entertained. It may be called the Machiavellian view,
and inspires its disciples with perfect satisfaction at
the spectacle of a strong but dangerous neighbour
consuming his own strength by internal combustion. The
longer this contest is prolonged the more complete will
be the prostration of the American people and the more
distant will be the time when they can resume their old
position of insolence and aggression. It is true that
our own people will have to undergo a period of
suffering, but it need not last long and the result
cannot fail to be beneficial.

(13)

It is interesting to note that, at almost the same time, Earl
Russell wrote to Lord Palmerston, "I do not at all agree that
this is a good time for recognition. I think we must allow the
President [Lincoln] to spend his second batch of 600,000 men
before we can hope that he and his democracy will listen to
reason." (14) As Morris had written, a little more blood-letting
might bring the Northerners to their senses.

Meanwhile, Mackay, who had only been in New York for six
months, was finding much to criticize about his host country.
Morris wrote to say that he continued to admire his letters, and
even more, his courage for being so frank. But even he had some
misgivings.
I ask myself whether any government or set of men can be as wholly bad that not a single good word can be said for them by an impartial observer. Perhaps, if you inquire with a friendly spirit, you may discover a good deal here & there, a measure wiser than those you have justly condemned. If any such there be, let them be made known, if only to justify you in the eyes of the world & redeem your correspondence from the charge of systematic vituperation.

I assure you that it goes very much against my grain to write this. The Northern Government & its policy are an abomination to me, and I greatly enjoy to hear them abused.

It was at about this time that Lawley's letters began to arrive. Mackay seems to have been somewhat concerned as to the division of their responsibilities. Morris wrote to Mackay to assure him that all was well. "You must fall very far below your present mark before you cease to occupy the first place among our correspondents," he stated, noting that everyone hoped to hear soon that Baltimore was in the hands of the Confederates. He concluded his letter to Mackay with the remark that "all the sympathy that once existed for the North has disappeared." (16)

During the months of September and October 1862, when Earl Russell and Lord Palmerston became actively engaged in pushing for mediation of the war, a move which most certainly would have led to recognition of the Confederacy, Morris wrote not a word about the negotiations to either of his American correspondents. His focus was all on the military news which, until the battle of Antietam in late September, was so favourable to the South. To
the key British officials involved in deciding for or against recognition, the success or failure of the Southern military offensive was crucial. During these months, perhaps more than at any other period in the war, the timeliness and accuracy of the news reports carried by The Times were of paramount importance.

In this regard, The Times in London continued to be absorbed with its rivalry with Reuters in getting flash news summaries to its readers. Mackay was the man on the spot in New York. "I don't expect you to beat Reuter, nor shall I grumble if he beats you in the outset. Eventually however we must be at least equal to him in point of time & much superior in quality," Morris wrote late in October. (17) Two weeks later, when Mackay stumbled, Morris wrote, "Pray don't miss the boat again. Reuter's despatches were not left behind, tho' yours were," while to Reuter he complained, "I beg to call your attention to the telegrams of American news that are supplied to the Times by you, & to express the great dissatisfaction which is justly felt by the Editor at their frivolous & desultory character." (18)

As always, Morris continued to direct Mackay to send the latest commercial figures. "The mercantile world, tho' not depreciating your letters, persist not the less in reading the history of the Federal States in these significant figures," he wrote in January 1863, referring to gold prices and railroad quotations. (19) That this vital information was important to the circulation of The Times was underscored by a second letter Morris wrote only
three weeks later on the same subject. "This information is of the greatest importance, & if you fail to give it, the omission will go far to neutralize the advantage we have gained recently by priority & superiority of intelligence," Morris stated. (20)

A month later, Morris balanced this complaint (which he referred to as a "growl") with some very high praise for Mackay’s work. "I don’t recollect that the paper has ever received a series of letters so uniformly good as yours have been," Morris wrote, (a judgment he would conveniently forget in 1865). When Mackay made a brief trip to Washington, Morris was again full of admiration for his letters. "Your views are entirely in accordance with those of the paper & I believe of the majority of this country, & you have the art of expressing them so that everybody must read," Morris gushed. (21)

At the same time, he told Mackay he thought it would be a "very good thing" if he could get a little "behind the scenes so as to form some conjecture as to the motives & reasons that influence the Lincoln cabinet. Their actions are so unwise & often unaccountable that one feels a curiosity to know the secret springs that move them," he wrote. Morris seems to have thought of Lincoln’s cabinet as a strange and exotic breed of men whose mores and habits should be observed, perhaps in the manner of the great naturalist, Charles Darwin.

When Russell had been in Washington, he had been privy to the
kind of political commentary Morris wanted. Russell not only had a wide circle of personal acquaintances among American politicians, but he frequently benefited from the political sagacity of members of the British Legation. Mackay's isolation in New York, however, coupled with the fixed animosity which had developed between the Lincoln government and The Times, had effectively shut him off from any such inside intelligence, except from those who opposed the government. One wonders how Morris expected Mackay to supply objective information when, as he wrote to Mackay in April, "Mr. Seward can hardly hate you more than he does."

Morris made clear, however, that he was completely on Mackay's side. What could one expect from such men? he wrote, when no one in the Federal Government is "above the average." Had there been some capable men in Washington, "this wretched contest would have ended at once...There is an utter absence of originality & resource in the public men of the North," Morris concluded in complete disgust. (22)

Nevertheless, Morris soon had to warn Mackay not to get too involved in American politics. "I do not think it would be prudent for any one correspondent with the Times to play the partisan in America," he wrote towards the end of April 1863. Mackay seems to have queried Morris on the wisdom of furnishing evidence to Fernando Wood, a leading New York "Peace Democrat", or "Copperhead," as this political group had been dubbed. Wood
at this time was attempting to institute impeachment proceedings against Lincoln, and apparently thought the sympathetic Mackay could be of help to him.

Morris told Mackay in this same letter that he was not worried any longer about a war between Britain and the North, as Mackay seems to have been. England was just being used as a safety valve, he wrote philosophically, providing the Northern government with a scapegoat for the "general public indignation" against its own shortcomings." "Lord Russell...I hear, expresses himself as being perfectly satisfied with the American Government," Morris added. (23)

It was at about this time that Morris began to show signs of disenchantment with his New York correspondent. In early May he suggested that Mackay spend less time harping on the themes of Lincoln's misgovernment, the intemperance of the Abolitionists, and the failures of the military, and send more facts.

.../What/ is the actual state of the public finances? What is the amount of the revenue & of the deposits? Have any new taxes been imposed & are they paid? To these questions the commercial public, who form a large & influential portion of our readers, look in vain for answers in your correspondence; & even politicians, whose private affairs are not affected by American disturbances, would gladly receive information to guide them in estimating the future course of events.

(24)

A month later Morris was still waiting for "statistics...
concerning finance & trade" from Mackay, and again in July, he asked for information "concerning the taxes of the country & its internal economy, complaining that "the sound of the same string is becoming monotonous." (25)

With this kind of criticism beginning to come from London, it is little wonder that Mackay was disturbed when a new Times correspondent, Antonio Gallenga, turned up in New York as a Times "special." Mackay probably knew of Gallenga, for the latter had been associated with The Times for some time. Gallenga had, however, served the paper primarily as a European correspondent, most recently in Italy. Morris apparently didn't bother to warn Mackay of Gallenga's coming at all, and Mackay wrote to register some complaint. To this Morris replied rather testily on the 30th of July, "I must leave you & Gallenga to your own unaided resources. If two clever men cannot understand each other with unlimited means of explanation, it is not likely that I can help you in a small scrap of paper." To Gallenga, he had written rather obscurely on the same day, apparently alluding to Mackay, "Your difficulty with the manifold writer I accept as one of the singular anomalies of human character..." (26)

Gallenga stated in his memoirs that he had been sent to America by The Times "not to discuss politics, but to describe battles." He also wrote that "Delane, through diplomatic friends," had pleaded with the Americans that they not make The Times "bear the penalty of the petty harmless jokes of Bull Run Russell," and
accept this new correspondent in his place. According to Gallenga, both Lord Lyons and Bertinatti, the Italian Minister, spoke on his behalf to Secretary of War Stanton with a view to procuring for him a pass to the "head-quarters of the Federal army." (27)

But once again The Times was met with a cold rebuff. Gallenga wrote later that he called on Lincoln, who passed him on to Stanton, "a portly and rather flabby man, but with a fine English countenance, /who/ received me with scant ceremony and met my request with an inexorable refusal." (28)

Gallenga went also to Secretary Seward, carrying with him an introduction from the same George Putnam who was later to assail The Times for its negative treatment of the North during the war. (29) In his letter to Seward, Putnam wrote that Gallenga had been induced by The Times to come to America as their correspondent because "their recent agents here, Mssrs. Russell and Mackay, /had/ made themselves obnoxious to the American people" to such a degree that it was difficult for them "to reach the right sources of correct information on American affairs."

The Times professed, Putnam continued...

...to be now really desirous to present a truthful, impartial and even liberal view of American affairs: and admitting that Englishmen had failed to divest themselves of their national prejudices in describing our progress, they desire Mr. Gallenga, as a cosmopolitan, free from local bias, to write independently, guaranteeing to his entire freedom to express his own candid views, which they know to be naturally liberal (not radical) and favorable to our
Putnam told Seward that Gallenga was "desirous to obtain a free, pleasant, and confidential access to the Army in its present movements." Putnam felt he could recommend Gallenga to Seward on the basis of twenty years knowledge of his character. He added that Edward Everett, and "other gentlemen of standing in Boston" could attest to his character also. (Gallenga had spent three years at Harvard in the late 1830's. He said he had given Italian lessons to Bancroft Davis at that time.) (30)

Seward saw Gallenga on the 31st of July but was either unable or unwilling to override the decision of his colleague, Secretary of War Stanton, whose authority it was to grant the pass to Gallenga. (31)

On the 3rd of August, Gallenga wrote again to Seward, acknowledging the refusal to grant his permission to follow the armies, but asking if he might accompany the Navy in its attack on Charleston. Some naval officers had proposed this to him, Gallenga wrote, but were afraid to take him along without official permission. (32) Gallenga told Seward, as had Putnam, that the fact that The Times had asked him to come to America as their correspondent must convince Seward

...that the Times cannot be as hostile to your Government as the style of some of its writers has led you to suppose, or that if truly the Journal harboured such hostility, it has seen cause to alter its views on the subject, and will in all probability alter its language accordingly...
Gallenga promised Seward he would "never renew my application," if Seward's response were a denial. (33)

Sadly for Gallenga, sadly for The Times, and perhaps even sadly for the North, the refusal was irrevocable. Apart from the disdain he had developed for The Times, perhaps Seward had been influenced by news of another contact by a Northerner with The Times a few months earlier. In May, Seward had received a letter from John Bigelow, his consul in Paris, who had written of a meeting he had had in London with "Russell of the Times." (34)

Bigelow had "begged" Russell, at that meeting, to explain why The Times seemed bent on provoking war with the United States. Russell had replied "most solemnly" that The Times wanted peace.

After some discussion of current items of controversy, (which Bigelow passed on to Seward, of course), Russell had suggested that Bigelow talk with Delane. Bigelow had refused to even see Delane (in direct contrast with Thayer the year before), for, as he explained to Russell, while he could discuss things with Russell without fear of being misunderstood, with Delane he would be in the "false position" of those "around an Editor's office who wanted axes ground." If there were to be a conversation, Delane must take the initiative, Bigelow told Russell, adding however that it was too late, for he intended returning to Paris the next day. At the end of his letter, he noted that he was "surprised to see how entirely ignorant /Russell/ was of the
merits of many of the points in immediate dispute."

The tone of Bigelow's letter indicated a definite shift in his attitude towards The Times. Earlier in the war, Bigelow had done his best to influence The Times, "propagandizing" his country's case in the letter he wrote for General Scott which was sent to The Times at the time of the Trent crisis. Since that time, he had done very effective work in meeting editors and hiring journalists in France. By the summer of 1863, however, it was clear from this letter to Seward that he considered The Times to be so committed to an anti-North position that any further efforts to woo the paper were useless. He would continue to maintain his friendship with Russell. But to Delane, he would not give an inch.

Stanton, as noted earlier, was a well-known foe of the press. Seward, on the other hand, was not. He was canny enough to be aware of the value of a favourable press to his own aims. By the time of these renewed attempts by The Times to place a correspondent with the Northern armies, however, it is clear that, like Bigelow, Seward had decided there was nothing to be gained by courting The Times.

Perhaps of equal importance, he was able at last to act from the position of strength provided by two recent and very significant Northern military victories. Meade's repulsion of Lee at Gettysburg in the first days of July 1863, and Grant's
successful termination of the siege of Vicksburg (July 4, 1863), appeared at last to be turning the tide of military affairs to the North's favour. As Seward wrote to Sanford shortly after these victories, "You will now find friends in the Press..." (35)

Gallenga did his best under the circumstances. He visited Boston, Baltimore, New York, Rhode Island, Albany, Saratoga, Niagara Falls, Chicago and St. Louis. His first impression, in Boston, was that the North, while "strongly, heroically bent upon the restoration of the Union" was nevertheless, "a house divided against itself." Even excluding Lincoln's avowed opponents, the Copperheads, Gallenga felt that the North had "no faith in itself, no faith in its rulers, civil or military." (36)

From Albany, however, he reported a change of mood, occasioned by Gettysburg and Vicksburg. "99 out of 100 have full confidence in the Union," he felt, so much so that it was hard to believe that anyone had ever felt any other way. He found no trace of a defeatist attitude. He said that not many blamed England for the position it had taken in the conflict, and that Palmerston's recent speech on Roebuck's motion to recognize the South had gone a long way towards soothing ruffled feathers. 

"But/ England as a nation has inflicted on America wounds which time can only heal," he prophesied. (37)

Travelling back and forth to Washington as he attempted to storm the Federal stronghold to get his pass, Gallenga visited
the nearby city of Baltimore where he found strong Southern sympathies, and which he described as "one vast prison." He had come armed with numerous letters of introduction to America's mighty, but found, to his distress, that his contacts had fled the heat of the eastern seaboard and gone to their favorite watering places -- Canada, Saratoga, and Newport. So he followed them there. He found an abundance of wealth, a total lack of deprivation, and a people so confident of victory that they were now looking to the future and what to do with their armies after the war. Saratoga, he wrote, is only an extension of 5th Avenue. "To the Atlantic cities it is well known the war has been a golden harvest. Its glitter is nowhere more bewildering than here. (38)

In Chicago, also, Gallenga noted the prosperity of the North. There had been a shower of greenbacks, he wrote, which had fertilized the whole country. He noted with some trepidation that the war had produced an enormous dissemination of weapons on the frontier, presaging guerrilla warfare there once the war was over. (39)

By this time, Gallenga was beginning to show signs of boredom, sighing that "In America there is nothing to see; there are no lions to kill. The town you arrive at to-day is nothing but the town you quitted yesterday all over again."

Gallenga, of course, was frustrated at not being able to follow
the Northern army. Morris, however, was beginning to think of Gallenga as a possible substitute for Lawley in the South, for he had just heard that Lawley was ill and on the verge of abandoning his post there.

In August, Morris had written to Gallenga, complimenting him on his Boston letter, and agreeing reluctantly that Gallenga was right in "cultivating a friendly feeling with brother Jonathan." The price of friendliness was cooperation, however, Morris made clear. "If brother Jonathan proves his gratitude by giving you the necessary facilities for close inspection of his condition military as well as civil, the slight sacrifice of truth may perhaps be repaid." But he told Gallenga to be very careful not to generalize and write "political disquisitions," of which "we have had too much...already." As in his instructions to Mackay, Morris wrote that he wanted facts. "We are in complete ignorance of the feelings of the Northern people." (40)

Gallenga did a good job of meeting this request as he travelled throughout the North. He was probably somewhat perplexed as to the future of his mission in America, however, when his primary goal of reporting on military activities in the North was stymied by Stanton's refusal to grant him a pass. On the 20th of August, Morris settled the question of Gallenga's duties. Convinced now that Lawley was on his way back to England, Morris told Gallenga he should make his way to the South to replace Lawley. On the 26th, he added, "...the only remark I can add now is a
recommendation that you should avoid any formal interviews with persons in power. I hope most sincerely that the details of your interview with Mr. Seward has not transpired in America." Since none of Gallenga's letters to The Times contain a description of such an interview, (which this letter and Seward's correspondence indicate did indeed take place), it would appear that The Times suppressed Gallenga's report of this important conversation with Seward. (41)

Now Morris received word from Mackay that he was ill and needed to take a vacation. He had heard from Gallenga's wife just the week before that Gallenga, also, was so "seriously ill" that Mrs. Gallenga proposed starting for America immediately to look after him. To Mackay he wrote impatiently, "You know as well as I do how very inconvenient your absence from your post must be to us at this moment...I must ask you however to communicate, if possible, with Mr. Gallenga before your departure, that he may supply your place during your absence." To Gallenga he now sent new instructions: "Poor Mackay is fairly knocked up by the heat & the continuous hard work & he has asked for leave to take a run home...you are the very man to supply his place...the only change in your route will be New York instead of Richmond..." (42)

At this juncture, Gallenga was in Chicago, planning to go on to St. Louis and New Orleans. Morris tried to communicate with Gallenga through Mackay and by writing directly to Gallenga at his various ports of call, meanwhile fuming in London at the
uncertainty. On the 20th of October he queried Mackay, "What's going on? Are you coming home or waiting for Gallenga? " On the 29th, in a long letter to Gallenga, he tried to clear up some of the confusion.

It is much to be regretted that you started on your mission without a correct understanding of what was required of you. I have not the slightest recollection of anything having been agreed between us as to the duration of your American correspondence...I believe that my wish was very plainly expressed that after visiting the armies of the North, if possible, you should make a tour in the West, & then endeavour to find your way to the South with a view to relieve our correspondent in Richmond.

(43) But Gallenga thought otherwise, and two weeks later Morris heard the worst. Gallenga had decided to come home. By now Morris knew that Lawley was remaining in the South, but Gallenga's decision left the New York post uncovered. In his bitter letter to Gallenga, Morris wrote, "It is unnecessary for me to point out...the great embarrassment that you will cause to me personally, & the great injury you will inflict upon the Times by leaving it without a correspondent in the Federal States at such a time as this..." (44)

But Gallenga was unrepentent. He had gone to New York, as Morris had requested, and he had stayed there during the months of October and November. He had not, however, waited for Mackay to return; he sailed for England early enough in December to be home for Christmas.
Gallenga wrote later that when he had arrived in New York in July, he had found Mackay "almost exclusively surrounded by the New York 'Copperheads' (as Northern men sympathizing with the South were called)...They were all of them only too sure that secession would fight with the courage of despair and prevail in the end. And such was also almost the universal expectation in England." Although Gallenga, too, was an advocate of peace, and to this end, favoured secession, he claimed that during his brief sojourn in New York in the fall, he had "strongly insisted" upon the fact that the Germans and Irish settlers of the West were stronger supporters of the Union than the Yankees of the Eastern cities. Thus, he wrote that he had "counteract/ed/ the contrary opinion with which Mackay, relying perhaps too implicitly on the representations of those whose hopes were based upon their wishes, had managed to inoculate 'The Times,' and with it English public opinion." (45)

It is quite true that Gallenga had reported some crucial information about the Northern "home front" during his travels there which differed dramatically from the impression conveyed by Mackay that the North was so divided and mismanaged that it was bound to collapse at any minute. However accurate Gallenga's reports may have been, and however inaccurate Mackay's assessments, Gallenga's tour was too brief to make anything more than a temporary impact on his editors and the readers of The Times. The most important fact of his brief tour was that he was
unable to accomplish his principal mission to gain accreditation to the Northern army as The Times's "special."

Nevertheless, he caused brief consternation to the Confederate supporters in Britain. James Spence, the Confederate propagandizer to whom The Times had originally offered the New York job and who continued to write for The Times as "S", wrote Southern emissary James Mason,

> Public opinion has quite veered round to the belief that the South will be exhausted. The Times correspondents' 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.

(46)

Bancroft Davis, now restored to good health, and in London, took the opportunity in December of 1863 to renew his acquaintance with The Times with an offer to resume correspondence. He may have done this at Gallenga's suggestion, for Morris wrote him that "Your handwriting did not surprise tho' it gave me pleasure -- Mr. Gallenga had already prepared me for a letter from you." "Whatever may come of your resumed correspondence with the Times," Morris continued, "I shall always regard it as a proof of kind feeling & an assurance that you cherish no animosity against your old friends for having advocated views which you look upon no doubt as injurious to your country." (47)
But nothing did come of that "resumed correspondence", for, as Morris wrote to Gallenga on the same day,

Mr. Bancroft Davis has written two letters for publication, but they are not considered fit for the Times. His views, as you probably know, are diametrically opposed to ours & he is moreover disqualified at the present moment more than ever, by his invariable habit of looking at politics in detail...A squabble in the Cabinet seems always to have more interest for Davis than the shock of armies or the discussion of the highest questions of state.

After having suggested earlier that Mackay try to learn more about the strange doings of the members of the Lincoln cabinet, it is rather inconsistent that Morris should have rejected Davis’s letters because of their political emphasis.

Mackay resumed his duties in New York early in 1864, just as Frank Lawley sailed for England for his well-earned rest. Fortunately for Morris, Britain’s attention was now diverted from America, where The Times found it so hard to keep a correspondent, to the more compatible Denmark, where the Schleswig-Holstein War had erupted. Morris immediately directed Mackay to cut down on his telegrams from America, complaining that the "expense of America under all heads has grown beyond its due proportion." As to Mackay’s letters, Morris wrote again that while "no one can deny their literary merit...great complaints are made that they contain very little information." (49)

In spite of Morris’s and Delane’s growing disenchantment with Mackay, the New York correspondent was granted a rise of salary...
in April 1864, as he had requested. His remuneration now matched Russell’s and Lavley’s twelve hundred pounds per annum. Morris continued to warn him not to make definite prophecies "either as regards finance or general policy" since so many earlier ones had proved to be false. In June he wrote querulously, "We are puzzled at the state of things...and do not...know whether to think that Lee is beaten back, or that he is retreating for the purpose of drawing his enemy away from his supplies..." (50)

By July, the public fancy had shifted back to America, and Morris, writing that "People are tired of the Danish affair," urged both his American correspondents to send more letters. "/We/ hunger for later news," he wrote Lavley at the end of August, after word had reached London of the unsuccessful raid on Washington by the southern general Jubal Early. Mackay’s brief was now to report on the coming presidential contest in which Lincoln would be running for reelection. When he learned that Mackay had made a trip to Canada instead of keeping his attention focussed on Washington, Morris chided him with the admonition "I don’t think you ought to be absent from the scene of such important events" and warned him again and again not to make predictions as to the election or the course of the war.

I cannot bring myself to believe that the nomination of McLellan [sic] will bring the war to a close...You justly remark in your unpublished letter of the 30th August that the enormous power which Mr. Lincoln possesses in the disposal of the whole military & civil force is a hard thing to beat...
Morris added a few days later that a paragraph in one of Mackay's letters had been omitted because "however glad we may be to know your forecast of the future, we cannot commit ourselves to its publication. We are mindful of the saying that none but fools & madmen assume the gifts of prophecy. Is it not time to give the world a few facts concerning the N. Union. We are getting tired of generalities." (52)

In December 1864, Morris wrote Mackay about a letter the latter had written in regard to a "Peace Petition" which had been rejected by Seward. Morris distanced himself and The Times yet again from Mackay, writing his correspondent that "A recent leader in the Times will have shewn you what a different view we take from yours in the matter of the Peace Petition. Mr. Seward was undoubtedly right in refusing to see Mr. Parker & it is a pity you did not avail yourself of so good an opportunity to do him justice." (53)

The war was drawing to a close, as was Morris's patience with Mackay, although he steadfastly rejected offers from other parties to send news to The Times from America. (54) On the 21st of April, with news of Lee's surrender expected daily, Morris abruptly gave Mackay the sack.

The time is come which I have long anticipated when you can no longer retain the office with which we entrusted you three years ago, & it is my painful duty to inform you that a successor will shortly be
Morris's condemnation of Mackay's correspondence was astonishing in its intensity, particularly in view of the long period of Mackay's tenure of the New York post, and his recent salary increase. For The Times, Morris placed complete blame on Mackay for what he described as Mackay's "blind and unreasonable condemnation of all public men & measures on the Federal side & your disregard of the remonstrances which I have frequently addressed to you against such a course."

"It is our opinion," Morris continued,

...that the paper has suffered in reputation through your partial representation of affairs in the Northern States, & that our readers have been misled by your statements to take an erroneous view of the current of events.

It is no slight charge against a public writer that his opinions have been proved to be wrong, but that might be excused to him if he had given evidence of an honest desire to arrive at the truth. I regret to say that no such desire is observable in your case. On the contrary it seems to us that you have persistently & wilfully shut your eyes to all facts & signs which did not tend to the support of your foregone conclusions. By dwelling exclusively upon the absurdities of the demagogues & fanatics who are to be found in every country which is a prey to civil war, by exaggerating the errors of government & condemning its abuses of power without making fair allowance for its difficulties & temptations, you have presented the English public with a distorted picture of the Federal cause, & have, as I believe, contributed very largely to produce the exasperation which you allege to exist in the American mind against the English.

Moreover your letters have been deficient in the qualities of a sound foreign correspondence. They have contained but few facts and a great deal of wild declamation. No one reading only what you have written could have derived sound information, such as could
guide him in the conduct of his own affairs. Every statement was one-sided, & every remark spiteful.

The end of it all is that you have made yourself so unpopular that no government in the United States will tolerate you except under a sort of protest. Your usefulness as a correspondent is consequently much impaired, many sources of information are cut off from you, & your letters are almost unavoidably reduced to a mere empty bag of big words.

Morris unwittingly revealed in the next paragraph of this amazing letter his reasons for having kept Mackay in New York for so long, even as he knew in his heart of hearts that Mackay's correspondence was hopelessly biased.

We cannot commit the character of the paper any longer to one who so misconstrues his duties. Much as I appreciate your literary ability, your steadiness & punctuality, I cannot but think that the qualities are dearly purchased at the price you have made us pay for them...

Morris, after all, was in charge of the finances, and it was he who had the job of filling the overseas posts. Mackay had not only been a steady, responsible correspondent who stayed on the job, producing frequent, fulsome, well-written columns, however biased, he had also just recently been rehired for the next year at an increased salary. As Morris noted, his contract would not expire until February 22, 1866, a situation Morris undoubtedly found infuriating. The only place Morris could think to send Mackay for the moment was to Canada. Meanwhile, Morris told him to remain at his post in New York until he was "formally superseded." (55)

Mackay stayed in North America until ordered home by Morris in...
October. The unfortunate correspondent's final words about the American Civil War were written in his memoirs in 1877.

...when the end of the war came with the suddenness of a thunderclap in a clear sky, even those who had never lost faith in the Union were as much surprised as their neighbours, and could scarcely credit the fact that the Confederacy was, after all, but the mere shell which some Northern enthusiasts had represented it to be, and that the most formidable of modern wars had been taken out of the broad columns of the newspapers and sent back to the unimpassioned page of history. I thought as I recalled to my mind the events of the war, that no one who valued a character for political insight would presume hereafter to speculate on the future of the Union or the turn of American affairs.

(56)

Charles Mackay had been chosen for the important assignment as New York correspondent for The Times not only because of his literary and journalistic background but because he was known to agree with the position on the American conflict taken by his employer, and because it was assumed he would be able to report events in America with an objectively "English" point of view.

Within a year of Mackay's arrival in New York, however, his chief in London, Mowbray Morris, had begun urging him to temper his criticism of Northern leaders, at the same time admitting that he, Morris, enjoyed hearing how incompetent Lincoln's government appeared to be. From that juncture, too, Morris had continually asked Mackay to send more facts and less opinion in his letters. Despite the factual and ideological shortcomings of his correspondence, however, Mackay's devotion to duty, the
literary quality of his letters, and the fact that he stayed on the job without complaint, made him such a valuable employee to The Times that he succeeded in out-writing and outlasting all other Times correspondents sent to the States except Lavley in the South.

Nevertheless, when the war ended, Mackay was summarily dismissed from his New York post. In his long letter of dismissal, Morris blamed poor Mackay for all the sins of The Times. He was taken to task for misrepresenting affairs in the North, for his blind and unreasonable condemnation of all public men and measures on the Federal side, and as a result, for destroying the paper's reputation in the North. The fact that the paper's reputation had been pretty well destroyed before Mackay's arrival was not mentioned. Morris sentenced Mackay to spend the remainder of his tour in North America in Canada, but before the year was up, he was ordered back to England and sent packing. The Times had found its scapegoat.

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2. Ibid., 413.
3. Ibid., 415-416.
4. Ibid., 418.

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6. TA, Morris, 11/502, 8 April 1862.

7. TA, Morris, 11/522, 17 April 1862.

8. TA, Morris, 11/531, 25 April 1862. Italics mine. Morris often had to remind his correspondents that it was the role of the editor, not the correspondent, to determine the paper’s policy.

9. TA, Morris, 11/563, 22 May 1862. Dillon was mentioned in an earlier chapter as being a friend of Morris who was a southern supporter. It was he who had prepared the notebook of pro-South clippings which had been given to Russell to read as he crossed the Atlantic to his American assignment.


11. TA, Morris, 11/594, 16 (18?) June 1862.

12. Seward Papers, 2763, Thayer to Seward, 19 July 1862.


15. TA, Morris, 11/668, 4 September 1862.


17. TA, Morris 11/728, 21 October 1862.


23. TA, Morris, 12/224-225, 27 April 1863.

24. TA, Morris, 12/250-251, 8 May 1863.

25. TA, Morris, 12/306, 12 June 1863, and 12/331, 8 July 1863.


28. Ibid., 443.

29. See Introduction.

30. Seward Papers, 3103, George P. Putnam to Seward, 28 July 1863; also Gallenga, GP^G^L, 460.

31. Or perhaps Seward saw Gallenga first, and, like Lincoln, passed him on to Stanton. The order is not clear.

32. Russell had also reported getting very good treatment from the Navy when he was in America.

33. Seward Papers, 3107, Gallenga to Seward, 3 August 1863.

34. Seward Papers, 3035, Bigelow to Seward, 25 April 1863.

35. Seward Papers, 3097, Seward to Sanford, 18 July 1863.

36. The Times, 4 August 1863, 5. The letter was written on July 21.

37. The Times, 11 August 1863, 7; letter dated 29 July.

38. The Times, 29 July 1863, 7; 8 August 1863, 9; 20 August 1863, 7; 21 August 1863, 6; 4 September 1863, 5.


40. TA, Morris, 12/348-349, 4 August 1863.


43. TA, Morris, 23/461, 20 October 1863, 12/474-475, 29 October 1863.

44. TA, Morris, 12/490-491, 12 November 1863.

45. Gallenga, GP^G^L, 442-444.


47. TA, Morris, 12/539-540, 22 December 1863.

48. TA, Morris, 12/541, 22 December 1863.

49. TA, Morris, 12/627, 6 February 1864, 12/648-649, 17 February 1864.

50. TA, Morris, 13/20-21, 18 April 1864, 13/75, 6 June 1864. It
was at this time that Grant began the final campaign against Richmond.

51. TA, Morris, 13/178-179, 15 September 1864.
52. TA, Morris, 13/186, 19 September 1864.
54. See TA, Morris, 13/166, 13 December 1864, and 13/278, 26 December 1864, for example.
55. TA, Morris, 13/405-410, 21 April 1865.
Chapter Seventeen

Epilogue

When *Times* Managing Editor Mowbray Morris sent a letter of dismissal to his New York correspondent, Charles Mackay, he referred in his letter to an unnamed "successor" who was to be despatched shortly from England to take Mackay's place. *Times* editor Delane thought first of sending his favourite war correspondent, William Howard Russell, just as he had when war had threatened in America in 1860. During the three year interval since Russell had angrily returned to England from America in the spring of 1862, Russell had been primarily occupied with his duties as editor of the *Army and Navy Gazette*, and with preparing the diary of his tour in the United States for publication. Nevertheless, he and Delane had kept in touch, and occasionally Russell had written pieces about the American war for publication in *The Times*.

The first indication that Russell was being considered for the American post was noted in his diary dated May 4. He spoke of seeing his friend John Bigelow in Paris that day and having a conversation "referring to my going to U.S." Bigelow, Russell
wrote, "likes me & hates The Times that is evident & he told me he would find out Adams' feelings & would help me in every way."

Negotiations between The Times and Russell began. Russell reported seeing Morris on the 8th of May, "exposing/ my financial position & my sacrifices which staggered him and I also bowled him over by reminding him that it was he who was responsible for my return from America." Russell, chafing under Morris's exacting rule, had developed a considerable dislike for the managing editor. He wrote in his diary that, in his opinion, "Morris is unfit to deal with men of warmer & quicker natures..." (2)

Russell added up his debts and told Morris he would need fourteen hundred pounds for the next six months. Morris responded with a counter-offer the next day that was two hundred short. "I am willing to pay you a sum of £1200 in full of all demands," Morris wrote,

provided that you will leave England not later than the last Saturday of this month, & will remain in the U.S. as our own correspondent for a period of 6 months, including the time occupied by your journey out & home.

The twelve hundred was to include expenses this time. This had been one of the principle matters over which Morris and Russell had had so many differences during Russell's first American tour.
Russell reluctantly concluded, after perusing his financial situation, that he could not accept The Times's offer. "I am persuaded that I have taken /the/ side of interest, of prudence & honourable feeling towards my own family in refusing The Times offer." It was clear, however, that he really wanted to go. "Will my family ever appreciate /the/ sacrifice I make of my own strong personal feeling to go out to the States & wipe off mud with wh. I have been encrusted there..." he wailed. (4)

Three days later he talked to Lawley who expressed regret that Russell was not going to America "& blaming MM." (5) In fact, a compromise was soon reached which met Russell's financial needs, but did not solve The Times's problem of finding a replacement for Mackay. Russell was engaged by The Times to go to America in July on board the Great Eastern when another attempt was to be made to lay an Atlantic cable. He was not to be "our man in New York," but "our special" on the famous ocean vessel. The job would take him six weeks instead of six months.

With Russell out of the picture, Morris had still to find a suitable correspondent. He sighed to Mr. A. Michie, his correspondent in Melbourne, Australia, "...I would give a good deal if you would transfer yourself to N. York or Washington & write thence such letters as you write from Melbourne. Do you happen to know anyone in the States who would make a good correspondent. The whole press there is in the hands of Irishmen..." (6)
By June, finally, he had found, on his own staff, a new correspondent, Louis J. Jennings. Jennings had been hired by The Times in January of 1864 to go out to Calcutta as a substitute correspondent at the princely wage of 50 pounds per quarter. Now he was given the United States assignment, not as a temporary replacement but as a regular correspondent.

The practical Delane now set about to change his paper's policy towards America, and to rescue its reputation there. Jennings was sent to America with specific instructions to mend fences, to be friendly, to avoid all the pitfalls that Morris had accused Mackay of having fallen prey to. Mincing no words, Morris wrote Jennings, "...You are to avoid all needless hostility to Mr. Johnson's government, & to comment upon its acts in a friendly spirit...you are sent out to change the policy of the paper."

Apparently Jennings found upon his arrival in America that The Times was indeed in bad odour. In Morris's second letter to Jennings, Morris admitted openly that The Times bore some of the responsibility for the bad relations between the paper and the American government. "The Federal Government has a just cause of complaint against the Times, & I am not surprised that you are overwhelmed with reproaches," he wrote. On the other hand, he added, "I do not much like the American character & believe that it is more than commonly impatient of adverse criticism."
Nevertheless, and somewhat reluctantly, he gave the Americans credit for being able to "appreciate fair play," and concluded that "if you show them a desire to do justice you will not at the worst be accused as your predecessor has been." (8)

Jennings did such a good job of reporting favourably on Federal affairs that Morris was soon writing, "I am glad you get on well with the Yankees but I don’t wish to see you getting on too well." (9) Delane had apparently become upset by a letter Jennings had sent describing the poor treatment of Federal prisoners in the South, and had written to Jennings privately, arguing against the validity of his correspondent's findings.

Jennings replied to Delane's criticism in a very long letter in which he defended the accuracy of his report. He pointed out that he had come to America with the same views as Delane, but had been forced to change his mind when he had read a report published by the U.S. Sanitary Commission, and had visited both Federal and Confederate prisons for himself.

> I feel in my own mind that I aim always at being strictly impartial...People here are now saying on all sides, 'The letter in the Times is the only fair representation of our opinions we have had!'...I will only ask you to consider that my letter was not based upon 'stories' or 'rumours' but upon evidence properly taken before a legally appointed commission.

Nevertheless, Jennings was anxious to please Delane. "I should consider that I was doing my work here very badly if I failed to satisfy you...I should not have come out here except in the hope
of serving you...yet I see that I cannot be successful unless you
tell me, as you are now kind enough to do, where you believe me
to be in error."

Jennings contended, in reference to information that was now
becoming public about alleged starvation of Federal prisoners at
the Confederate prison camp, Andersonville, that Sherman had
found "abundance of provisions" when he marched through Georgia,
and that had Jefferson Davis been willing to exchange cotton for
provisions, the South need not have suffered such want. Arguing
that it had been Davis's "obstinacy & futility" which had "ruined
the Southern cause," Jennings warned Delane that The Times would
win no friends for itself, North or South, by espousing the cause
of Jefferson Davis.(10)

As Jennings sent reports back to London which presented a more
favourable picture of the North's conduct of the war, The Times
occasionally supplemented his reports with letters from Joel Cook
in Philadelphia, Frank Shaller in South Carolina, and P.
Alexander in Macon, Georgia. (11) In July, Morris had to assure
Jennings that his position was secure in spite of the publication
of "certain rival productions from Philadelphia which I do not
think it prudent to discontinue at present." He told his regular
correspondent that "/these/ latter are in fact mere summaries of
news...whilst yours are of a higher character, & need never
conflict with the Philadelphia letters." (12)
In the fall of 1865, Morris told Lawley that he wanted him in Washington when the Congress convened, but that meanwhile he should visit Virginia, and travel further South, reporting on the condition of the country and people there. He warned Jennings to tread lightly, "omitting/ from your narrative as much as possible all irritating topics, such as the cruelties of the soldiery & the unnecessary destruction of property..." "Be assured," he concluded, "...that you have not lost one particle of my confidence, & that I fully believe you when you say that you spare no pains to make your correspondence truthful & impartial." (13)

Meanwhile the altered tone of the American correspondent in The Times had been noticed by The Saturday Review. In September, the author of a column on America in that august weekly described pronouncements by "the Correspondent of the Times" in reference to the anticipated trial of Jefferson Davis as "disgraceful." By the end of the month, he was characterized as "ignorant," and a week later chastised as having "become the official organ of the President" of the United States. (14)

Morris, however, showed considerable patience with his new correspondent. In October, he dismissed Alexander in Georgia, and Schaller in South Carolina, telling them both that further correspondence would not be welcomed. (15) At the same time he sent a terse letter to Mackay, who was still under contract to The Times until 22 February 1866, telling him that he was to come
home as soon as he had completed one letter devoted to "each of the smaller colonies..." His New York assignment had "ceased from the time of Mr. Jennings' arrival," Morris wrote, and it had been "quite contrary to my instructions both to you & him that you have continued to be mixed up with /the work in New York/ either financially or in any other way..." Mackay was now told that he was "to consider /his/ American & Canadian missions at an end," and the question of what he might do after he returned to England was to "remain in abeyance." (16) Exeunt Mackay.

By December Morris felt that Jennings had become seasoned enough, and his "ardour in the Federal cause" sufficiently "cooled," that he could renew Jennings's six-months engagement with The Times. Morris had had so many unfortunate experiences with his American correspondents, however, that he left the exact term of the assignment open. "It is better that things should go on so long only as they remain pleasant to both sides," he concluded. (17)

Jennings's lessened enthusiasm for the Federal cause had been occasioned by his travels through the devastated Southland. He had written eloquently to Morris in November of the misery and ruin he found everywhere.

In many towns through which I have passed the people are all but starving, and hundreds of families are obliged to stay in the interior of the country, unable to get back to their houses on the coast. The railroads are torn up & there is no money to mend them with. A few families had a little cotton by them, & this is keeping their heads above water, but when this
is gone they have absolutely nothing left.

...at Columbia [South Carolina] there is nothing to describe but ruin & distress. Sherman, all along his march swept away everything, from the hut of the negro to the mansion of the planter. You cannot imagine the lamentable state...What Yankee warfare is like I have seen wherever I have been on the track of Sherman's march, and even Sepoy brutalities scarcely exceed the work of these men...

Jennings also told Morris that if Britain should get into a war with the Federal Government "100,000 Southern men at least" would "flock to our banners." With Yankees, he said, Southerners hid their feelings, but to him they talked freely. "Some are sore about England not interfering, but the great majority do us justice," he averred. He concluded, in words which are a fitting epitaph to the saga of The Times's coverage of the American Civil War.

I am dealing with changing events & with a various people, & therefore my letters cannot always be of the same hue. As I look upon it, it is not my duty to aim at consistency so much as to tell what I see & hear honestly & faithfully.

Had every Times correspondent been permitted to perform in the same way during the difficult war years, both Britain and the United States, both North and South, would have been better served. (18)

Although Jennings's enthusiasm for the Northern cause had waned, he clearly had been successful in courting the favour of the estranged American government to some degree. In a private letter to Delane, written in November, Jennings spoke of his
contacts with Thurlow Weed and Seward, indicating that he was back in touch with the power centers again. Of course, Seward had never closed his door to The Times completely. It had been Stanton who had denied The Times access to the front lines. Nevertheless, Seward’s disenchantment with The Times had been such that he had not felt while the war continued that he could or should jeopardize his own position to do favours for an organization which was widely viewed as an enemy.

Jennings was probably absolutely correct in his assessment of Seward which he passed on to Delane. Referring to some information he had gotten from “Seward’s own mouth,” he told Delane

...I think it is advisable not to use his name. I doubt whether he will like my repeating his remarks -- & yet he knows that I am here only to represent the Times, & I assume that what he tells me he means the English public to know.

He is an insincere and cunning man, & probably only designs to feel the pulse of the English & French nations on this subject, & therefore talks so freely to me...

(19) Seward fed the press what he wanted and denied the press what he did not, in general attempting to manipulate the press for his own political ends.

In a similar fashion, Delane now had to overcome his distaste for the Americans in order to lend his support to what had become a higher matter of international policy. A controversy had arisen between Spain and Chile, for which Delane (and probably
Clarendon, who was now in the Foreign Office, thought concerted international action essential. Delane instructed Dasent, probably from Ascot, (he had hurried back from a vacation in Ireland when Palmerston died), "I want you to have two articles, one recommending a joint intervention of England, France & the United States to prevent Spain from blockading and bullying Chile." (20) The implication was an interesting one. The United States, for so long The Times's favorite whipping boy, had been readmitted by The Times to the community of nations.

It remained for the brilliant young Leslie Stephen to step aside from the turmoil, and in a penetrating, sardonic, and comprehensive manner, pen a scathing analysis of the job The Times had done in covering and commenting on the American Civil War. His 107 page pamphlet, titled The "Times" on the American War: A Historical Study, was published privately in 1865.

In 1863, Stephen, then a don at Cambridge and "tired of the gibes of the Confederate supporters" there, had taken it upon himself to visit the United States and "see for himself at first hand /the war and/ American democracy at work." (21) By the time he wrote his pamphlet about The Times two years later, he had joined the ranks of contributors to the prestigious Saturday Review. His purpose in writing the pamphlet was, he wrote, to redress some of the wrong he felt The Times had done to the North, "to prove to some Americans that the Times does not express the judgment of thoughtful Englishmen," and to counteract
in this way "the pernicious effect which the Times may produce upon our relations with other countries." (22)

Stephen’s study provides such an excellent summary of his subject, and is so full of quotable material that it is difficult to resist describing it here in toto. To give some idea of the scope of his analysis, the titles of the ten sections into which he divided the work are listed here. He wrote a short essay on each topic, filling the text with numerous quotations from The Times to illustrate his points. The sections were: The Times on American affairs, The Times as a prophet, slavery and the war, the changes in Times policy, The Times on the true cause of the war, on the slavery question, and on emancipation, The Times correspondence, the question of military despotism and the instruments used, military criticism, and finally, the moral of the story.

Stephen began his analysis by posing the question which has been raised in connection with the present study as to whether The Times was the master or slave of the British people. He wrote that there was an apocryphal story about The Times which claimed that The Times employed a shrewd, idle clergyman to hang about public places, waiting for some "common and obvious thought" to be repeated in many places by many ordinary men. When such a thought was identified, the clergyman rushed to the editor of The Times with his gem, and the editor forthwith directed his able writers to enforce this opinion by argument.
When the opinion had to do with domestic questions, because of the "shrewd commonsense" of educated men, it was probably right. But when opinion had to do with foreign politics, the case was different because "English ignorance in such matters is proverbial." In regard to America, Stephen wrote, Englishmen were especially uninformed.

The name of America five years ago called up to the ordinary English mind nothing but a vague cluster of associations, compounded of Mrs. Trollope, Martin Chuzzlewit, and Uncle Tom's Cabin...Most people were as ignorant of American history since the revolution as of the history of the Chinese empire, and of American geography as of the geography of Central Africa.

The Times took the "average" thought, dressed it up in fine language, and presented it to the public as its own. It did this while affecting absolute infallibility and consistency, and its claim to be followed was that it was always right.

The Times, like the figure-head of a ship, always leads public opinion; and, as we have always been following it, it must have been going in the same direction.

Stephen wrote that he wanted, by illustrating by a striking example, "the danger to which this course exposes us."

In our ignorance of the cause of some great foreign convulsion, we judge of it partly by the way in which it affects our interests, and partly in accordance with certain traditional prejudices.
This principle, as applied to the American war, meant that people felt, for example, that "there must be something radically wrong in a war which affects our supplies of cotton; and we cannot credit a race who chew tobacco and wear bowie knives with any heroic virtues."

The next step The Times adopted was "to lay down authoritatively a theory, intended not so much to be accurate, as to serve as some justification for that which has come by a kind of accident to be the popular opinion." This produces the following evil:

The American naturally believes that the Times is, in fact, the authorized mouthpiece of English sentiment...Our American thus assumes very falsely, though very naturally, that the English people hate him, abuse him, refuse to see his merits...He would naturally reply by abuse to an abuse...And so the good feeling, for which all should wish, is hopelessly destroyed for a time.

(26)

In examining The Times as a prophet, Stephen pointed out that The Times had prophesied the success of the South as confidently as it had the success of the North. He illustrated The Times' earliest position by quoting from The Times of November 26, 1860, when it had pronounced confidently: "It is evident, on the smallest reflection, that the South...could never resist for three months the greatly preponderating strength of the North."

But by May 9, 1861, The Times had shifted completely and was
able to state: "The reduction of the seceding States is an almost
inconceivable idea."

A year later, (May 28, 1862), in another about-face, The Times
found that "the Federals have established an ascendance in the
field...beyond all question," although how it accomplished this
was "a mystery as well as a marvel."

On September 11, 1862 it changed its view again, contending
that the talk of "putting down and crushing out rebellion, is
mere verbiage."

Two years later, the Mississippi gone, the blockade tightened,
and Grant massing his troops for the final assault on Richmond,
(May 3, 1864), The Times stated with great assurance: "The
present prospects of the Confederates in this fourth year of the
war are brighter than ever before."

Seven months before the war ended, (September 14, 1864), taking
heart from the anti-war sentiment then being expressed during the
presidential campaign in America, The Times boasted: "The public
will admit that they have not been misguided by our comments.
The great fact which we asserted from the first is now placed
beyond the reach of controversy. We said that the North could
never subdue the South, and the North has now proclaimed the same
conclusion."

Stephen concluded that The Times had no fixed theory whatever,
and compared it to "an ignorant person at a game of whist."

...while the South was sinking in the final struggle, the Times became more confident than ever. Whilst Grant held Lee within the lines of Richmond and Sherman pierced the heart of Georgia, the Times was confidently pronouncing the war hopeless...Like a man in a dark room, it knocked its head straight against the wall without even putting out its hands to save itself.

(27)

When he turned his attention to The Times's consideration of the slavery issue, Stephen reminded his readers that The Times had once described the war as "a mystery and a marvel." This was not surprising, he suggested, for The Times was in the same position as a foreigner viewing a cricket match who started with the "firmly preconceived prejudice that the ball /had/ nothing whatever to do with the game." "The/ root of all the errors of the Times," Stephen said, "may be found in its views about slavery, which lay, as is now evident, at the bottom of the whole quarrel." (28)

Stephen noted that "a simple inspection of the map" showed that the divide between North and South coincided with "the line between slaveholders and non-slaveholders...." Further, "The centres of the slaveholding interest were the centres of secession." And finally, the point upon which Abolitionists, Republicans, and Democrats had disagreed had been "the right of the free section of the Union to attack slavery directly or indirectly." The Times had used this difference of opinion to
"confound an unwillingness to attack slavery by unconstitutional means with an unwillingness to attack it at all, and thus with indifference to it, or even direct approval of it."

Stephen compared this with objections to intoxication. He wrote, "It would be as unfair to accuse the Times of indifference to the evils of drink, because it respected individual liberty too much to legislate against drinking." The Times "made use of this contemptible sophistry to throw doubt upon the sincerity of the great mass of American parties."

Moreover, because the chief motive of the great mass of the people in the Northern states was not the hatred of slavery as much as the love of union, The Times was able to use this fact to cast further doubt on the idea that slavery was the root cause of the war.

Finally, the attempt by The Times to set up the tariff as the real issue in the war was hardly worth considering. The tariff had hurt the West as much as it did the South, yet the West had joined the North against the South. (29)

Stephen next traced the changing direction of The Times's policy. In January and February of 1861, when the secession movement was gathering force, "the Times stopped every logical avenue of escape for Southern advocates. It proved the South to be morally wrong," described the mass of people of the South as "in a state of deplorable ignorance, scarcely better than that of
the Irish peasantry," and branded the South Carolinian manifesto as "utter falsehood." It stated that "the Northern states/ have the strongest reasons for resisting secession," and in fact were bound "not only by morality, but by considerations of expediency, to resist it; and that under the Constitution they had the fullest legal power to resist it." (30)

With the introduction of the tariff issue in March and April, The Times hesitated, oscillating between complete condemnation of the South and the suggestion that protection was "as much a cause of the war as slavery." Stephen compared The Times in this matter to "a rustic looking at a volcano, and wondering whether the explosion is caused by the fire or the smoke."

With the fall of Fort Sumter, The Times changed its position for good, distinctly opposing the Northern claims. After having criticised the North for a deficiency of resolve, likening the rebellion to the secession of Lancashire from England which should be put down in no uncertain terms, The Times now said, "'Pray give in at once; don't fight, whatever you do.'"

When the Northern press complained of this sudden failure of support, the Times replied, You were cool when we were hot; you can't complain of us for being cool now that you are hot. You were willing...to let your erring brethren part in peace. Whilst war was preparing, you were all for conciliation. Now that your enemy has given you a slap in the face, you have actually lost your temper. It is nothing but wounded vanity.

(31)
The Times now claimed that it had changed its mind because it had found that the South was united. Therefore, it said the struggle was hopeless, the North had no chance. It convinced itself, Stephen wrote, that a "war which is a hopeless war is, for that reason alone, a wicked war."

Now The Times departed from its earlier view of the slavery question, Stephen pointed out. The war was not about slavery, The Times claimed, but "merely to keep slavery as one of the social elements of the Union...It was a war to keep Southern debtors and their property from getting beyond the grasp of Northern merchants."

The Times's fullest "confession of faith," Stephen pointed out, was contained in a review in The Times of James Spence's work, a book which Stephen described as "remarkable for its power of varnishing over the ordinary Southern arguments with a thin coating of sham philosophy." (33) (It will be remembered that Spence had been offered Bancroft Davis's post in New York after Davis had resigned for health reasons. Spence later became the Confederate financial adviser in the U.K., and contributed pieces to The Times throughout the war, signing his articles "S".) The Times, referring to Mr. Spence's book as "admirable," adopted his view that the war had been caused by the demoralization of the Northern people. After "the usual talk about democracy,...the burning of slaves, Lynch law, bullying in Congress, and other direct products of the slave power, as part of the Northern
iniquities," The Times had finally reduced the cause of the war to three heads, Stephen wrote. First, there had been a change of political balance due to emigration, second, the "original antipathy" between North and South had been aggravated by the Abolitionists, and finally, the North had adopted a protective policy.

The Times had thus asserted within a year that slavery was the cause of the war; that slavery was one cause and protection another; that slavery was the cause and protection a pretext; that slavery had little to do with the war and protection much; that it could be "all but demonstrated" that slavery had since passed out of sight; that "some people thought" that abolition was at the bottom of the whole business, and that it would very probably be the result; and that slavery was the "reel on which the coil was wound," though "not the material of which the coil was made." In other words, the Times knew nothing about it.

(34)

Stephen’s critique of The Times’s correspondence is of special interest. He had no complaint of Russell who he described as "a gentleman for whose impartiality and powers of description every one must feel a high respect." Relating quite factually that Russell had left America in the spring of 1862, "on not being permitted to accompany M’Clellan’s peninsular expedition," Stephen turned next to Lawley. (35)

"Occasional letters were afterwards published from a Southern correspondent," Stephen wrote, "of whom I shall only say that a little more information, with a few less sentimentalities of Lee and Jackson, would have improved the substance of his-
writing..." Stephen added, however, with considerable perspicacity, that such a change "might have made his presence less acceptable to the Southern authorities." Lawley became, "from the moment at which he commenced his letters, ... a thorough partizan of the Southern cause," Stephen stated.

Of Gallenga, Stephen wrote only that his letters had been unfavourable to the North, but were evidently candid, "and, therefore, such as no Northern sympathiser should condemn."

Mackay was the correspondent Stephen objected to the most.

From the beginning of 1862 until the present year, the Times has maintained at New York another correspondent /whose/ letters are one long effort, lasting for three years, to shut his own eyes and the eyes of his countrymen to the existence of any heroic qualities in the people amongst whom he lived...Every patriotic action is explained to have really originated in corruption or selfishness. Scandal after scandal is raked together, and carefully exhibited as an average specimen of American affairs.

(36)

Stephen admitted he did not know to what extent The Times held itself responsible for the opinion of its correspondent. "It cannot, however," he argued, "evade the responsibility of having given to him leave to vent in its pages some five or six weekly columns of unmixed abuse." (37)

Further sections of Stephen's pamphlet dissected The Times's conduct in regard to emancipation measures taken by the North, to the "military despotism" it had shrilly condemned in the North,
and to military criticism. Since it has been necessary to pass over a consideration of these matters in this study because of space limitations, Stephen's analyses will be treated similarly. Suffice it say that Stephen was as damaging in his criticism of The Times in regard to these topics as to those which have been summarized above.

The "Moral" which Stephen extracted from his study was the following:

The persistent misapprehensions of the Times have, in my opinion, produced a very serious mischief. It is not that it took the Southern side...my complaint against the Times is that its total ignorance of the quarrel, and the presumption with which it pronounced upon its merits, led to its pouring out a ceaseless flood of scurrilous abuse, couched, indeed, in decent language, but as essentially insulting as the brutal vulgarities of the New York Herald. No American -- I will not say with the feelings of a gentleman, for of course there are no gentlemen in America -- but no American with enough of the common feelings of humanity to resent the insult when you spit in his face could fail to be wounded, and, so far as he took the voice of the Times for the voice of England, to be irritated against England.

(38)

Stephen hoped, in writing this pamphlet, that he might "help to prove to some Americans that the Times does not express the judgment of thoughtful Englishmen, but only supplies the stimulating but intrinsically insipid fare that most easily titillates an indolent appetite." (39)

Years later, in a brief memoir, Stephen wrote that at the time
of the American Civil War, he had been among a minority who "sympathised cordially with the Union" and disagreed with the conservative majority who would have rejoiced in the collapse of the Union. This dissident group included Times leader-writer Brodrick, along with other up-and-coming younger men such as John Morley and Goldwin Smith. As the war ended in America in 1865, the old order in Britain was indeed changing. Palmerston would soon be dead, Earl Russell retired (he had already moved up to the Lords), and the Gladstone-Disraeli period began, with all that this implied in terms of reform at home, and foreign policy abroad.

A new view of Britain's role as responsible world leader would soon pave the way for the Alabama Arbitration. In this significant settling of a dispute between America and Britain for which Charles Francis Adams at the American Legation was busily preparing documentation at war's end, Britain took the opportunity to assuage its guilt over at least one part it had played in the American conflict. The British government, under Gladstone, agreed to pay the United States $15,000,00 for damages done by the Confederate cruiser, Alabama, a warship which had been built in British yards in Liverpool and allowed to escape to sea in spite of American protests. The sweet irony of the matter, so far as this study is concerned, was that the chief U.S. negotiator at the Alabama Arbitrations was none other than John Chandler Bancroft Davis, the former New York correspondent
of The Times.

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1. TA, Russell Diary, 4 May 1865.
2. TA, Russell Diary, 8 May 1865.
4. TA, Russell Diary, 10 May 1865.
5. TA, Russell Diary, 13 May 1865.
6. TA, Morris, 13/460-461, 26 May 1865.
7. TA, Morris, 13/506-507, 10 July 1865.
9. TA, Morris, 13/543-545, 17 August 1865.
10. TA, Delane, 14/38, 23 August 1865.
11. TA, Morris, 13/539, 7 August 1865, 13/589, 19 October 1865, 13/600, 23 October 1865.
12. TA, Morris, 13/525, 24 July 1865.
13. TA, Morris, 13/558-559, 6 October 1865.
14. The Saturday Review, 20, #515, 9 September 1865, 317; #518, 30 September 1865, 414; #519, 7 October 1865, 442.
15. TA, Morris, 13/589, 19 October 1865, 13/600, 23 October 1865.
17. TA, Morris, 13/672-674, 7 December 1865.
18. TA, Morris, 14/97 ff., 20 November 1865.
19. TA, Delane, 14/80, 2 November 1865.
20. TA, Delane, 14/93, (pencilled) 17 November 1865.


23. Ibid., 4, 5.

24. Ibid., 5.

25. Ibid., 6.

26. Ibid., 6, 7.

27. Ibid., 18.

28. Ibid., 19, 20.

29. Ibid., 21.

30. Ibid., 24, 25.

31. Ibid., 29.

32. Ibid., 31.


34. "L.S.", op. cit., 32, 33. Stephen referred in this paragraph to many more quotations from The Times that there has been room to quote here.

35. Ibid., 53 ff. Stephen did not refer to any of the correspondents by name.

36. Ibid., 55.

37. Ibid., 56.

38. Ibid., 105-106.

39. Ibid., 106.

At the beginning of this study, we noted that The Times of London had been blamed, along with those two other bastions of opinion in Victorian Britain, the Saturday Review and Punch, for souring relations between the United States and Britain during the last part of the 19th century and into the 20th. John Delane, as editor of The Times, had been specifically designated as the principle bad actor in the drama. According to the American publisher, George Putnam, Delane had wrought "malicious mischief" in his irresponsible handling of the American Civil War. We asked whether this characterization was fair, whether The Times had done what it could to cover the war adequately, whether The Times had represented British opinion in the positions it had taken, to what extent British policy reflected these views, and whether, in fact, The Times's coverage and commenting on the war had made any difference to relations between the two countries.

To answer these questions we looked first at the position and role of The Times and its editor in the 1860's. Our basic premise was that The Times, largely due to the efforts of its great
editor, John Delane, was not something apart from the influential group for which it claimed to speak, and was at the peak of its influence in Britain and the world. Delane was privy to the most closely held secrets of the nation's mighty, and he was positively courted by that group, of whom Prime Minister Lord Palmerston was but one. Delane frequented the Commons when in session and the elegant drawing rooms which were filled with men and women of affairs at the end of each day. He joined in easy camaraderie with influential men in their clubs, and entertained them at dinners in his home. When Parliament was not sitting, he vacationed at the country homes of Britain's mighty. Although not possessed of wealth or public office himself, Delane was one of that select group known as the "ten thousand" by virtue of his position as the editor of the world's most powerful newspaper.

Nor was Delane or his paper tied to one party. He was strong enough to be independent, his minions were everywhere, and he was respected and flattered by politicians of all stripes, save one or two.

One of the secrets of The Times's success was that it gave its readers the information and analysis they needed in their daily lives. Delane did not forget that his daily paper was bought by wealthy men (and women) whose investments throughout the world made knowledge of the world crucial. A war here and a famine there could affect the value of venture capital and the price of gold. Just as Mr. Reuter had started his news service to furnish
wealthy customers with commercial news, so did Delane and The Times send correspondents around the world to keep Times readers informed as to the political and economic environment in the far-off lands where these affluent men and women either had put or hoped to put their capital to work. Generally speaking, The Times did a better job of serving these needs than its competitors, and because of its vastly superior product, it was rewarded by a large and loyal following.

Before the American war The Times devoted just the same measure of attention to America as did Britain’s ten-thousand. Britain’s first concern was with Europe. Therefore, The Times maintained regular correspondents in all of the major European capitals. The countries of Europe being small, relative to North America, and communication in Europe being good, it was possible for The Times to keep a close eye on European affairs in this manner. In the United States, however, The Times had only one correspondent, and he was located in New York, the commercial capital of the country, not in Washington, the rather miserable political capital. The Times’s correspondent in New York, the American John Chandler Bancroft Davis, was a well-connected lawyer, active in commercial circles, and known to his British masters from his service in London at the American legation. He was as English as an American could be, a gentleman, and a first-rate journalist. His coverage of American news for The Times was, necessarily, thin, but that was all the United States warranted at that time.
For a variety of reasons, by 1860 Britain and the United States, having settled a number of long-standing disputes, had decided to become friends again after the century of estrangement that followed the American revolution. As a gesture of goodwill, the Prince of Wales had been despatched to the States that year with a large entourage headed by the Duke of Newcastle. The Times sent a special correspondent along to cover the royal visit.

George Putnam, the man, was probably aware, as a boy, of the excitement and good feeling of the period of the Prince's American tour, and therefore may be forgiven if he considered amity and friendship to be the characteristics of normal relations between Britain and the United States. In fact, although educated Americans continued to look to Britain for their standards of culture, and were almost pathetically anxious for British approval, the diplomatic and trade relations between the two countries were normally strained and frequently hostile.

In the fall of 1860 at the time of the Prince's visit, The Times, in its self-appointed role as spokesman for Britain, showed itself, like Britain's leadership, to be ready to let by-gones be by-gones and welcome the young nation into the fold of respectability. It lauded the new era of good feeling which the tour seemed to demonstrate. The Times, however, did not shrink from the responsibility it thought it had of giving advice to Brother Jonathan, (the Americans), as it thought an older brother should. It continued to give advice when a divided
America edged closer and closer to war.

The Times, never timid in taking upon itself the mantle of the nation's spokesman, showed no hesitation in speaking to America for all of Britain, for on the American question there was little disagreement between Britain's major parties. At this time, above all, both Liberal and Tory alike distrusted the democratic doctrines of the United States, and were extremely wary of the growing wealth and influence of America. Those in Britain who dissented from The Times on an issue such as this were in the distinct minority. They were younger men like Stephen and Stanley who were impatient with the older ruling class, or they were the "radical" fringe, which meant the followers of Bright and Cobden, or "utilitarians" such as John Stuart Mill.

All were agreed that slavery was an abomination, and were hopeful that somehow or other the disagreement between North and South over its extension into the territories could be resolved peaceably. On a more personal level, it must be remembered that Delane and leader-writer Robert Lowe, (and, of less importance perhaps, Thomas Chenery) had visited America in the late 50's, and knew that the situation there was a highly inflammatory one. Delane saw little of the South on his brief trip, but Lowe, who stayed longer, visited a slave-supported plantation in Maryland. He was not comfortable with slavery, and probably thought slave-holders were even more contemptible than the normal run of Americans. To Delane, the worst group in America was the Northern
When the secession movement began in earnest immediately following Lincoln's election in November, (which came hard on the heels of the Prince of Wales's visit), The Times quickly made its position on secession clear to the Americans, and told President Buchanan what he should do. Secession was abominable and unwarranted and should be stamped out forthwith. When "lame-duck" President Buchanan appeared unequal to the task of resolving what was clearly a serious problem, The Times roundly condemned him for not taking decisive action against the secessionists. He was compared unfavourably with President Andrew Jackson who had dealt with an earlier such crisis with despatch. However, by the time Lincoln took office in March, The Times was not so sure the wrong-headed Southerners could be treated as naughty schoolboys any longer, and condemned him for being overly "legalistic" in his approach to the problem. "Let the erring sisters go," was beginning to be the conventional wisdom. And when Lincoln decided to hold Fort Sumter, thus throwing down the gauntlet to the South and making the Southerners "fire the first shot," The Times roundly condemned him for refusing to give in to the Southerners, and thus, for causing the war.

As the war proceeded, The Times and Britain's ruling classes, rather curiously, forgot their hatred of slavery and gradually transferred their distrust of American democratic institutions to
the North alone. There were a number of reasons. In the first place, although Southern leaders adopted a constitution almost identical to the Federal constitution of the North, its leaders seemed to be more united and sensible in their aims as they went directly to the business of forming a new nation. The Times found that admirable. The fact that there was very little news coming from the South, as contrasted with the spate of news that poured from the Northern press, was not particularly noted. Although The Times had accused the Southern leaders of being hot-head extremists at first, and the Southern population of being of a rather dissolute character, it later found the actions and language of Northern leaders so inferior to that of the Southerners that the latter took on an aura of heroism and dignity by contrast.

A second reason for the shift by Britain's rulers, and, by inference, their spokesman The Times, was that the landed gentry of Britain identified most naturally with the landed "gentry" of the South who had justified their secession with the argument that they were doing so to preserve their independence. This was an appealing argument to wealthy, powerful men.

The specific development which triggered the first distinct shift in The Times's policy in the spring of 1861 was, however, the high tariff enacted by the Northern controlled Congress after the Southern states had withdrawn from the Union. This ill-advised move by the Northerners played directly into the
hands of three groups in Britain: those who naturally favoured the South because their businesses were already in competition with the North, (this included the shipping industry); those who looked down upon the "trade" mentality of the Yankees; and the Southern propagandists who touted secession as a way of cutting the North out of trade between the South and Britain.

The action of the Northern dominated Congress seemed to prove the truth of the Southerners' predictions: that if and when the North achieved a predominance in the halls of Congress it would quickly move to pass measures which were inimical to an agricultural (and slave) South. The fact that the Northern industrialists had achieved this dominance because of the voluntary withdrawal of the South was not mentioned. The tariff caused the first cooling of relations between Britain and the North. It gave Delane an excuse to turn an angry face upon the Northerners, just after he had advised Buchanan to be firm with the South. At that juncture, there was no certainty yet that war would break out, but Delane showed which way he thought the future lay by despatching his "war" correspondent, William Howard Russell, to America forthwith.

There was an additional viewpoint of the American conflict which entered informed discussion in Britain early in 1861. This was the rather Machiavellian view of the matter which was expressed quite fully in a long article in The Economist which Delane took care to reprint in his own paper. The author
of the article (probably Walter Bagehot) took a very hard-headed look at the American situation, weighed the various advantages and disadvantages of policies which Britain might adopt vis-à-vis the conflict which was apparently coming, and, inter alia, made a strong case for the advantages which would accrue to Britain if the United States were dismembered.

Most importantly, there was the possibility which the conflict provided that the land in North America between Canada and Mexico might be divided into two, three or even more independent nations. The influence on world politics of the break-up of such a mighty nation was a thing of which men such as Delane and Palmerston dreamed. This being the case, why should they stand in the way of a rival who stubbornly chose to self-destruct? Since there seemed little chance of abolishing slavery in America without war, since the two sections were so different and had such conflicting demands, and since the "natural" progression seemed to argue for the breaking up of such an unwieldy political entity, why not just let it happen, peacefully of course? America would be much less powerful, and therefore much easier to deal with, if she were many nations instead of one.

Contrary to the standard complaint that capitalists favour war, in this case the commercial classes of Britain who read The Times and pressed their views on Delane seemed to fear a war in America. They were fearful not only because such an occurrence would disrupt the cotton and textile trade, but also out of
concern for the damaging effects of such a war on their other enormous investments in America. This included the shipping industry in Britain which had been denied access to the American market by Northern shipping interests. With the peaceful withdrawal of the South from the Union, British ship-owners knew that they would at last be permitted to enter the lucrative American market, dealing directly with the South. A war could wreak havoc on such a trade. The stand of all these commercial interests, therefore, was for peace at any price. They were willing to accept slavery and secession if business could proceed as usual. Eventually they would make a great deal of money out of the war, but for the moment they were concerned primarily with protecting what they already had.

The Times’s role here was not so much to instruct its readers, but rather to sample, sift, evaluate, and publish ideas with which the ‘ten thousand’ were grappling as Britain came face to face with the unpleasant fact that there could indeed be war in America. The changing reactions of The Times to the fluid situation in America merely reflected the political/economic views of Britain’s rulers. The initial rejection of Southern claims for support for secession because of repugnance to slavery slowly but surely gave way to anger at both parties for refusing to compromise, then anger at the North for the enactment of the tariff, and finally anger at Lincoln for refusing to recognize what The Times and the majority of Britain’s rulers thought was
inevitable -- that the South must be allowed to depart in peace.

Soon thereafter, in May of 1861, a natural concern for British commerce and, most particularly, for the effect the civil war might have on British shipping, led the British to declare their neutrality in the conflict. The Times, as did most opinion-leaders in Britain, supported the government completely in this move. They could not actually bring themselves to support a slave South, but neither did they see any chance that the North would be triumphant in reducing the rebellion. It would be better for all concerned if Britain stayed clear of the conflict and let the Americans fight it out -- like two Irishmen, as Palmerston described it.

But the Americans in the North reacted furiously to Britain's neutral stand, and it was over this matter that the two countries first fell out. Northern government officials, Union supporters and the Northern press took the British declaration as a slap in the face, not only because the British government had chosen to make the declaration just before the newly appointed American Minister Charles Francis Adams arrived in Britain, but primarily because the Northerners had counted on British support against a slave South. It mattered not to the Northerners that Lincoln had declared the war to be a war for union, not abolition. Surely, the Northerners thought, the British could see that slavery was at the root of the disruption.
The Northern press attack on Britain reached a new high just as the new Times correspondent, William Howard Russell, returned from the tour of the South upon which he had embarked soon after his arrival in America. Regular Times correspondent Bancroft Davis tried vainly to explain his countrymen's reaction to Britain's Declaration of Neutrality in his letters to The Times. He pointed out that the Northerners looked upon secession as rebellion. He argued that Britain would react similarly if the Irish should decide to secede from Britain and America were to declare neutrality. This was not a war between two nations, he wrote. How could the British not see that by declaring neutrality they were according the same status to the Southern rebels that they would to an authorized government?

The Times printed Davis's letters, but Delane also directed that more and more excerpts were be printed from the offending New York papers to demonstrate just how outrageous the Americans could be. He gave extra space to reprints from the New York Herald whose brand of journalism was particularly sensational and whose language was especially extreme. Davis's letters began to appear increasingly as a lone voice shouting against the multitude.

By summer, both North and South had mobilized. Their armies faced one another in northern Virginia, just across the Potomac from Washington. In July, the first battle of the war occurred, and it was a disaster for the cocky Northerners. The defeat and
panicky retreat of the Northern troops at this first battle of Bull Run brought with it the destruction of the hopes of those Northerners who had confidently called for a quick strike on Richmond to bring the Southerners to their knees. Russell reported what he saw of the battle (which was primarily the retreat) and sent his letter off to London. Unfortunately for The Times, for Russell, and for Northern/British relations, this letter arrived in America a month after the fact, by which time the North had swallowed its defeat and was enlivened with a new spirit of patriotism and resolve. Already angered at Britain and The Times over the neutrality question, and incidentally with The Times’s continual carping at Lincoln’s moves to preserve the Union and supposed hypocrisy over the slavery issue, Union supporters now felt additionally insulted by Russell’s account of the Northern defeat. Little difference that Northern newspapers had been equally critical of the Northern military effort in July. This was an outsider daring to point the finger of ridicule. The Times was now placed firmly in the ranks of the enemy so far as Union supporters were concerned.

Russell pleaded with his editor to give less publicity to the New York Herald’s pronouncements on the conduct of the war, for by this time the Herald had become highly critical of the government. Russell told Delane that he had become a scapegoat for his paper’s perceived hostility to the North war effort, and that he had begun to actually fear for his life. But Delane
would not be deterred. He had stood up to lesser forces, and would certainly not back down because of the abuse of an outrageously inferior press. Nor would he change his mind about the ridiculous, unstatesmanlike policies of the Northern leaders. He complimented Russell on his letters, but did not change his editorial course one whit. Russell found himself increasingly squeezed out and shunned.

A few months later, near the end of 1861, Delane had a chance to express his very real dislike of America and Americans. The forcible removal by the U.S. naval commander Charles Wilkes of Southern emissaries James Mason and John Slidell from the British mail packet Trent outraged the British sufficiently that the United States and Britain came very close to war. Delane, in a rare letter to Russell, expressed his supreme delight at the opportunity which seemed to have presented itself to the British to give the Americans the licking he thought they so richly deserved. According to George Putnam, Palmerston was as pleased as Delane. He recounted a tale told him in later years by a Southerner whose father had stood, with Palmerston, before a map of the United States, "deciding together where the British fleet could strike to best advantage." (1) Whatever the truth of this story and of Palmerston's intentions, it is clear that Delane, at least, was lusting for war.

Nevertheless, Delane directed his paper to pursue an outwardly peaceful tone. The British were to be firm in upholding the
rights of neutrals, even though their own behavior in this matter had been quite different in the past. Delane was privy to the thinking of the important British players in the matter, having seen the first opinion of the Law Lords, and learned from Palmerston the shaky legal ground upon which the British protest was based, the gist of which he sent to Russell in Washington. Presumably he followed Palmerston's lead in the crucial weeks that followed, rallying his readers to continue the support of the British ultimatum even as war fever cooled. He also blocked the attempts of John Bigelow and Thurlow Weed to present the American side of the story by first printing, then ridiculing a letter Bigelow wrote for General Scott's signature, and a similar explanatory letter written by Weed.

When the crisis ended with the decision of Lincoln's cabinet to release the prisoners, The Times took pains to make itself beloved by Americans both North and South by declaring that the victory "was but an escape from being obliged to conquer," (a remark sure to enrage the Northerners), and that the Southern envoys "were the most worthless booty it would be possible to extract from the jaws of the American lion," (an assessment guaranteed to insult the Southerners.) (2)

It was not long thereafter that William Howard Russell, who had become increasingly uncomfortable and unhappy in America, and whose complaints had not met with much sympathy from his manager, Mowbray Morris, found that he had not been given permission to
accompany General McClellan as the latter embarked on the first major campaign of the war. Russell angrily departed from the United States in the spring of 1862. From that moment on, The Times was not able to place anyone of his stature in either the North or the South.

In effect, The Times fell victim to its own hubris. Arrogantly disdainful of the Northern press and of Northern leaders, and of the effect The Times's abuse of the North was producing there, Delane seemed to labour under the illusion that The Times was such a powerful force that it could continue to do the job it claimed to do for its customers so long as it believed itself to be on the side of the angels. Delane seems to have thought that surely, somehow, the wrong-headed Northerners would realize how right The Times was and allow it to continue its good works. In fact, he succeeded in making the job of his star correspondent in America an impossible one. A journalist is only as good as his sources, and by 1862, Russell's sources, apart from the British legation, were largely gone.

To make matters worse, Bancroft Davis, whose letters Delane had continued to print, became so ill in the fall of 1861 that he was forced to resign. Davis's credit had been good enough with Delane and Norris that they had continued his employ even beyond the point where they could accept his advocacy of the Northern position. His voluntary resignation now provided them with a convenient opportunity to replace him with someone whose views
agreed with their own.

Their first choice was James Spence, the Liverpool resident who had written a book defending and arguing the South's case (which The Times had reviewed favourably). When Spence declined their offer, Delane and Morris found a compliant substitute. Charles Mackay had some knowledge of America, a solid background in the editorial side of journalism and an acquaintance with Secretary Seward. Sent to New York with strict instructions to remain inognito, Mackay was quickly identified, as being associated with The Times, and blamed in one of the North for having participated in a meeting before he left England where a Northern "traitor" had been allowed to speak. His credibility virtually destroyed with Northern Unionists, Mackay seems rather quickly to have begun to associate with that dissident New York political and commercial community who were referred to as "copperheads."

Not surprisingly, Mackay's New York letters did nothing to ingratiate The Times with the men in Washington, including his former acquaintance Seward, who looked for support, not criticism, in their attempt to lead their nation in fighting a civil war. But Mackay's manager in London thought his letters were right on target, and sent him frequent and fulsome praise for his correspondence. Quite clearly, Mackay, at first at least, was sending The Times what it wanted to hear.

A little over a year after the war began, The Times managed to
send another correspondent across the Potomac to join the rebellion. This fine reporter, Francis Lawley, quickly gained the confidence of his hosts, and was able to send a good budget of letters back to London over the next three years. His output, however, was not up to that of his predecessor as military correspondent, William Howard Russell, nor did he write as frequently as his Northern counterpart, Charles Mackay. This, plus his frequent reports to Morris that his bad health would force his resignation, caused considerable friction to grow between himself and his manager.

But Lawley did provide something of a continuous narrative of the war from the Southern point of view, a judgment Morris grudgingly admitted at the end of the war. Like Mackay, Lawley made contributed to the pro-South bias of the information The Times provided its readers throughout the war. His letters were filled with glowing appraisals of the South's military leaders and of the South's chances for victory, even as the Southern economy, so necessary to support any war effort, moved relentlessly toward its final collapse. Lawley, like Delane and Morris, was loyal to the Southern cause to the very end.

One other Times correspondent, Antonio Gallenga, was sent to the northern states in the summer of 1863. Morris and Delane were by then cognizant of the fact that Mackay's letters were hopelessly one-sided, and hoped that Gallenga might replace Mackay, or perhaps Lawley, who Morris thought was again planning
to desert his post. Delane and Gallenga pulled every string possible, including those of both the British and Italian ministers in Washington, to get him accredited to the Northern army. Gallenga wrote to Seward, assuring him of his objectivity and sophistication as a political and military reporter. Seward granted him an interview, (which was not published in The Times), but gave a firm refusal to his request, first, that he be permitted to accompany the Federal army, and, when that failed, the navy. The doors to The Times were to remain firmly closed in the North, no matter what entreaties were offered. After four months of desultory travelling to northern and western cities and watering spots, Gallenga, considering his main mission hopeless, decided on his own to return to England. Delane and Morris were frustrated yet again in their attempt to place a correspondent with the Northern military forces.

To the question, then, as to how well The Times acquitted its obligations to its readers by furnishing them with accurate information upon which they might make their decisions in regard to the American war, there can be only one answer. The Times did very poorly indeed. Delane did get off to a good start, building on his excellent correspondence from New York by sending Russell out even before war broke out. Russell made good use of his time, first travelling in the South, then basing himself in Washington, which is where he belonged if he were to be the reporter from the North. His contacts were wide, his letters
descriptive, and his information was as accurate as one could hope.

With Russell's departure, however, the quality and objectivity of the American correspondence became as flawed as it was skewed, and remained that way until the end of the war. Even before Russell left, serious gaps had begun to develop in the reportage, for the antagonism which had developed against The Times had made it increasingly difficult for Russell to gain access to the people he needed to talk to. Furthermore, and surprisingly, Delane seems to have given no thought at that time to engaging a correspondent to be stationed in the South. He only did so when Russell was forced to leave. Did Delane and Morris seriously expect Russell to cover both sides of the war, in every theatre of war, in a nation the size of the United States? The idea seems ludicrous. Admittedly, the conventional wisdom was that the war would be short, but it should have been clear after the first Bull Run that such was not to be the case. Of course, had the Trent affair resulted in war between Britain and the North, Delane would merely have reassigned Russell to the British side. But this would have done nothing to solve the problem of covering the American conflict per se. Delane had some idea of the size of America. He should have done better.

As to the New York assignment, had Delane and Morris not been so anti-North in their views of the conflict by the time Davis resigned, they would not have been able to rationalize themselves
 Into offering the post first to a Southern apologist and then to a correspondent who would be so unwise as to join the anti-government forces. How could they possibly think that such a man could function effectively in the North? They knew that the climate of opinion in the North, (and in the South as well, had they been willing to recognize the fact) did not encourage freedom of expression. This, in fact, was one of the scores on which they, rightly, criticized the North. Did they really think it would be worth spending a thousand pounds to send out a correspondent whose views directly undercut those of a group of men who considered themselves to be in a life-or-death struggle?

Delane and Morris had no one but themselves to blame for the fact that Mackay became the captive of the anti-Lincoln commercial circles in New York. He arrived in New York as the representative of a paper whose reputation was in bad odour, his assignment was first and foremost to cover commercial news, and he had little experience as a political reporter. Anxious to please, he wrote letters to The Times containing the kind of judgment of the North that Delane and Morris wanted to hear. They welcomed and rejoiced in his constant criticism of Northern leaders, until the day when they began to suspect, uncomfortably, that perhaps their guesses as to how it would all turn out were wrong.

At that point, half-way through the war, Delane and Morris did make an effort to get back on course, at least so far as their...
American correspondence from the North was concerned, but it was too late. Seward had earlier made it clear that he would not have Russell back, and Gallenga came to Washington where he blew his trumpet at the gates in vain. Morris complained about the one-sided nature of Mackay's letters but when Gallenga was rebuffed and he had no one else to send, he gave Mackay a salary increase! The Times had backed itself into such a corner that poor Morris had to take what he could get -- and it was certainly not good enough.

Another point is that the paper could have had Davis back in 1863, for he offered to return at that time. But by then Morris and Delane were too convinced of their own righteousness to accept an avowed Union supporter to their midst. In 1864, when Lawley was welcomed home for a brief respite and sent back to Richmond with his editors' blessing, Delane and Morris were probably of the view that they were lucky to have anyone in America at all.

Their choice of Lawley had been a good one, even if Lawley did lose his objectivity by continually being so upbeat about the Southern war effort. At least he managed to reflect the leadership view in the South, and because of this, had access to good information, which, unfortunately, he frequently misinterpreted. Morris's letters to Lawley should have been more supportive when Lawley complained about his health, and he and Delane might have been advised to send Gallenga to the South to
supplement Lawley's assessments, as Gallenga did in the North.

It can also be argued that The Times might have fared better with its correspondents in both the North and South had it been more willing to rotate staff there. Russell left partially because he had been away from home too long, and Lawley continually asked for a break. Apart from the fatigue and lack of judgment these long assignments brought on, they also inevitably produced a partisan, tunnel vision in all correspondents who remained over, say, six months. Lawley and Mackay both became captive of the group with whom they associated. Russell became so bitter he couldn't continue. A system of rotation of correspondents might have produced a more balanced and objective appraisal of events in both North and South.

Nevertheless, despite the thinness and subjectivity of the correspondence The Times received from its own men, Delane was not without news from American sources. Not only was he plied with private letters his contacts received from their representatives in America, he had a veritable deluge of news to choose from the American press. His prejudice against the American press was such, however, that he made poor use of what he got.

The American Civil War was "covered" as no war in history had been up to that time. The size of press corps was
unprecedented. The New York Herald alone had over sixty men in
the field at one time or another during the war. Between 1861
and 1865, it spent more than $500,000 for newsgathering at the
front. (3) The existence of the telegraph made it possible to
get news from the front with unprecedented speed. There were
even photographers present at this war, adding a note of stark
reality to the more evocative sketches of fighting and dying
which came from the talented artists who accompanied the troops.

The men of the armies themselves demanded and received
newspapers as eagerly as the people at home. George Sala, who
toured the United States during the war for the Daily Telegraph
(and received permission, by the way, to visit the front lines)
wrote that he had heard "that on the battle-field of Antietam, in
the intervals of the bloodiest charges, the rovdy little newsboys
would come scampering along the ensanguined ranks, crying
'extras' of the New York papers." (4)

The reliability of this news, however, was not outstanding.
Civil war newsmen too often sacrificed accuracy and completeness
in their frenzied rush to get the news to their editors ahead of
the rest of the pack. This unfortunate tendency to report and
print the news without checking stories and without waiting for
the final outcome of battles made any responsible editor's job a
difficult one, and for, Delane, far removed as he was from the
news source, the task was even more arduous. In this his
correspondents were of little help, for their letters were simply
not frequent and timely enough. When the American papers arrived, full of reports which were as lengthy as they were often contradictory and frequently outrageous, it was Delane's job to sift the real from the spurious.

According to the American diplomat, William Thayer, who visited Delane in 1862, Delane's tendency was, not surprisingly, to believe what made sense to him. Since he was convinced the South would be victorious and thought Northern officials were braggarts, he tended to accept news of Federal disasters more readily than reports of Federal victories. Since he was convinced, also, that the American press was hopeless, he had the freedom to pick and choose as he wished. Thus Delane accentuated, in his news choice, the already one-sided nature of the letters from his correspondents.

Having decided, then, that The Times's correspondence was thin and one-sided, that Delane's choice of news from America was equally skewed, that this was based on the view of The Times that the war was an abomination even greater than slavery because it would cause economic ruin, and that the North was primarily to blame for this war because it had stubbornly refused to recognize that the war was a hopeless one and that the Union was not worth saving, we want to know next to what extent these views of The Times represented British opinion, and to what extent The Times reflected the official view of the Government.
We have said that we believe that the Americans were right in believing that The Times spoke for the governing classes in this matter, even though there were important dissident groups who never went along with Britain's, and The Times's pro-Southern tilt. John Bright, always an enemy of The Times, claimed at the time of the war that the honest workers of Lancashire supported their democratic brothers in the Northern states who were fighting for free labour. This idea, so appealing to the Northerners, was accepted then and at war's end, presumably on the basis of Bright's reputation. A more recent study by Dr. Mary Ellison, however, indicates that this was not the case at all. Dr. Ellison found, by examining local sources including the press, that Lancashire, with the exception of Rochdale where Bright's influence was the greatest, was, in fact, solidly for the South. (5)

To what degree can we attribute this to The Times? Only marginally, certainly. The Times was the most important national newspaper, of course, and local newspapers often looked to the capital for information and guidance on foreign affairs. In this case, however, the influence probably flowed in the other direction. The Times had no need to convert Liverpool and Manchester to a pro-Southern viewpoint. These cities were full of Confederate supporters, some American, mostly British, who had everything to gain from a Southern victory. Letters of the American officials in Britain are full of allusions to the-
Southern sympathizers of Manchester and Liverpool. It was not by accident that the chief Southern propagandist, James Spence, was a Liverpudlian. Nor was Spence a lone voice crying in the wilderness. He represented a majority view in his city. When *The Times* offered him the New York post in 1862, they were turning to him for help, not he to them. It was he who articulated the Southern case which *The Times* found increasingly appealing.

The merchants, textile manufacturers, industrialists, and shipbuilders of Lancaster were all for the South, once war broke out, and just as importantly, and contrary to what Bright claimed, they brought their workers with them. Bright certainly favoured greater power and influence for the honest working classes, but unhappily this state had not yet been reached. As Peter d'A. Jones wrote in his *Epilogue* to Ellison's book, "Dr. Ellison puts the case strongly for the impotence of the workers, their total exclusion from political consideration by the governing classes." (6)

*The Times* may have pulled away from the "heart" of Britain, however, on the slavery issue. Apart from differences of opinion in Britain on the value of democracy, the major stumbling block for those who could not bring themselves to support the South was always this repellent characteristic of Southern society. William Howard Russell, for example, who had good reason to be angry with Northern leaders, still could never forget that the
South stood for slavery. The result was that he disagreed with his editor on the course Britain should adopt in the war, and, with reservations, he supported the North.

But Delane could ignore slavery -- and he largely did. When Lincoln proclaimed Emancipation, (a subject which we have not had space to examine in this study) Delane reproved Lincoln for having done what he would have applauded him for doing earlier. His leaderwriters assailed Lincoln for declaring slaves free in areas over which he had no control, while refusing to free those in the North. Lincoln, The Times argued, had proclaimed emancipation with the ignoble purpose of inciting a servile rebellion in the South. Thus Lincoln was burdened with the double guilt of having provoked a needless war, plus having urged slaves to murder their masters.

In spite of this position taken by The Times, (which position was also trumpeted by Southern propagandists), a strong movement of support for the North began to develop in Britain very soon after the Emancipation Proclamation. As the months proceeded, Charles Francis Adams at the American Legation in London noted in his diary that he had begun to detect a small current of sympathy for the North. Mass meetings were held, letters were written, and delegations were sent by British groups who took Lincoln at his word that emancipation would take place. Delane, however, was too caught up in his disgust at the leadership in the North to recognize the emotional sway emancipation would have upon his
countrymen.

On the Government side, as between Palmerston and Russell, it was Russell who seemed to be most uncomfortable with the idea of a slave empire in the South, and it was he who came soonest to accept and respect the American Minister Adams. In fact, relations between both Lyons and Seward in Washington, and Russell and Adams in London, actually improved as the war proceeded, with the exception of the Trent flare-up, Adam's furious reaction to Palmerston over the latter's criticism of General Butler in New Orleans, and Adams's ultimatum to Russell over the Laird "Rams". The professional statesmen showed an increasing ability to ignore and rise above the clash of words in the public press, focussing their attention on the need to steer their countries through some very difficult times with a minimum of conflict.

There seems little doubt, therefore, that The Times, while generally representative of the views of Britain's rulers, and supportive of the British government in its formal declaration of neutrality and its firmness during the Trent crisis, did not work as hard as its diplomatic representatives and leaders did in striving for peace, even as it proclaimed loudly that peace was what it wanted. The Times was for peace only so long as that meant that the South was to be allowed to go its own way. The Times did not look for a peace resulting from a reduction of the South by a dominant North. The British government showed a
greater willingness than *The Times* to downplay differences between Britain and the North.

Why was this true? Delane and Palmerston were in agreement, in their heart of hearts, in their desire to achieve a weakening of the American presence in the world. Palmerston also accepted (as did Morris, for example, in a letter to Haklay) that some amount of war was inevitable, and that this blood-letting was a good thing for the overweening Americans. But Palmerston did not control his cabinet in the same way that John Delane controlled *The Times*. While both Palmerston and Russell agreed in the late summer and fall of 1862 that the time had come to strike for peace by urging mediation on the Americans, and Gladstone even went to the length of announcing that he believed there were now two nations in America, Palmerston never felt strong enough to take the kind of positive step of recognition or intervention urged by the more autocratic Napoleon, unless he was sure one side or the other was going to win.

During the fall of 1862 when recognition, or mediation, or intervention seemed most likely, Palmerston cautiously waited for news from America before committing his country to any overt action. When the news arrived that North seemed to have been victorious over the South at the battle of Antietam, Palmerston quickly retreated from the mediation initiative. His heart was not on his sleeve, as was Delane’s. It was on whichever sleeve the victor wore. Palmerston and his cabinet, with the notable
exception of Gladstone on that one occasion, did not lead the nation on an obviously anti-North or pro-South crusade as did John Delane.

Was The Times then responsible for damaging relations between the United States and Britain for a generation after the war if its government was more circumspect? Had The Times indeed wrought "malicious mischief" in its coverage of the war, and its editorializing on the merits of the conflict? To a degree the answer to both questions must be an affirmative, if for no other reason than a sizeable group of influential Americans thought so. Whether right or wrong, this collection of American observers blamed the British government for whatever insults it detected in The Times.

On the other hand, the Northern government and the hysterical press in the North must share some part of the blame as well. After all, it was the angry reaction by politicians and editors alike to Britain's Declaration of Neutrality which caused the first public breach between the two nations. The Northerners, feeling betrayed, were the first to heap genuine abuse. Britain could hardly be blamed for responding with some heat, for, on the face of things, the government had merely acted prudently.

The Northern press was also the agency which was primarily responsible for pillorying Russell, (along with any other scapegoat who could be found to blame for the frustration of a
bumbling war effort). Had Russell not been driven from the North, *Times* readers would certainly have had a more balanced account of events in America, even if his paper's tone did make it harder and harder for him to operate effectively. Had Russell been allowed to accompany the armies, he could not have avoided chronicling its many defeats, but he would also have provided *Times* readers with a much more accurate assessment of the increasing might and determination of the North than did, say, Charles Mackay, who knew nothing of armies, and not much about politics.

We may blame the Northern Secretaries Seward and Stanton, also, for being so cowardly as to throw Russell to the wolves, and for refusing to allow *The Times* to accredit another experienced correspondent to the Northern armies later on. Their public affairs acumen was seriously wanting in this matter. They, themselves, had become so irritated with Britain and *The Times* (and Stanton with the press in general) that they were not able to see that they were acting against their own best long-range interests. At the very least, when they were less pressed, after the Northern victories at Gettysburg and Vicksburg perhaps, they ought to have recognized that *The Times* had a valid claim to have a representative among the accredited military observers -- no matter what position the paper took.

Still, the major share of the responsibility for the gulf which grew up between Britain and the North must, indeed, be laid at
the feet of John Delane. It was he who directed his newspaper’s editorial policy which was far more damaging to relations between the two countries than the occasional letters from his correspondents. It was he who chose those correspondents, and who decided to print or suppress their letters, to disavow or support any blatant misstatements or distortions made by them. It was he who chose to quote so extensively from the New York Herald which had a distinctly Southern bias at the beginning of the war when Russell was there. It was Delane who had the power to accept or reject conflicting stories. He could have printed both claims, when in doubt, for example, instead of printing what he wanted to believe. And he could have reserved judgment more frequently on matters about which he knew little. Above all he could have been more consistent, he could have admitted when he was wrong, and he could have been more honest in dealing with the slavery issue.

Unfortunately for both nations, Delane, and The Times under his guidance, did represent, for most of the war, the large majority of those who ran Britain. Moreover, that majority, believing that the South must ultimately be triumphant in its fight against the North, rejoiced in the humbling of a people they resented and looked down upon, and looked forward to profiting from America’s misfortunes. The vital difference between Delane and The Times and the British Government was that Delane exercised his enormous power with a good deal less restraint.
To summarize: the gulf which developed between Britain and the North during the American Civil War was the result of mistakes made by many players of the diplomatic game. The Northern Congress antagonized the British commercial community by passing a high tariff bill as soon as the Southern representatives withdrew. The British Government antagonized the North by declaring neutrality in a conflict the United States looked upon as internal. The government and press of the Northern States reacted angrily, heaping abuse on a Britain which felt itself unfairly maligned.

Northern leaders, giving into the blandishments of their own press, denied The Times's major correspondent access to their armies, in effect forcing him to leave. The Times exaggerated the conflict by persisting in the anti-North position it had adopted even though it had originally sided with the North. The Times ridiculed the Northern government and press, staffed its foreign posts with correspondents who were unfriendly to the North, continually predicted a Southern victory, and selected news and opinions from the American press which seemed to prove itself to be right. Neither The Times nor the Northern government would budge from their fixed views of the other, even when it was clear that both were being unreasonable.

Nevertheless, and in spite of all these sorry happenings, the one vital thing which the North most feared and the South most desperately needed never occurred. Although Palmerston and his
government winked at Confederate activities in Britain, and although the British Cabinet seriously considered more than once taking steps that would have helped the South more overtly, the British Government never actually intervened on the side of the South, never recognized the South, never even officially received the envoys of the Confederate States of America, though these men were welcomed in private homes and sat in the galleries of the British Parliament.

The Times could express its opinions all it wanted, and its correspondents could write any number of letters. In the final analysis, it was not the words of The Times but the inaction of the British government which was decisive. In other words, the bad feeling for which The Times was blamed did not really matter. The Times was not, as Lincoln said, as powerful as the Mississippi. It only thought it was.

2. The Times, 9, 11 January 1862.
6. Ibid., 211.
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