

## CHAPTER XXXIV

1861-62

### THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR

THE outbreak of the American Civil War occurred early in 1861. The feeling in England as regards the controversy was largely in favour of the cause of the Confederate States. There were some, however, whose sympathies were entirely with the North. Foremost amongst these stood the Duke of Argyll, who maintained throughout the whole course of the war his strong conviction of the righteousness of the Federal cause. This was based not only on his detestation of slavery, but also, more profoundly, on the essentially 'unionist' political principles which in later years led him to oppose Mr. Gladstone. 'No Government,' he said, 'had ever existed which could admit that right to renounce allegiance to it which was claimed by the Southern States.'

The Duke, as he mentions in his 'Autobiography,' had corresponded with several of the leading American Abolitionists for some time previous to the date when the victory of Lincoln at the polls became the signal for the revolt of the slave States.

On May 14th, 1861, the Duke wrote to Mr. Motley as follows :

' Since I saw you last night I have heard that the French Government entirely concurs in the absolute

necessity of admitting your "rebels" to the position of "belligerents"; and reminds us of a curious fact, which I have not had time to verify, that when the American colonies revolted from England we attempted to treat their privateers as pirates. But we very soon found this would be out of the question, and the English Government *acknowledged its own revolted colonies*, as they were then considered, as entitled to the rights of a belligerent.

'This is a strange case. The truth is that the rights and interests of humanity demand that the rules and principles of some admitted law should be immediately applied to all such contests, and the rules affecting and defining the rights and duties of belligerents are the only rules which prevent war from becoming massacre and murder.

'I don't think the neutral Governments of the world have *any choice* in this matter. But how far the system of privateering may be modified is a separate question. Why should not your Government agree with the Paris Convention, and abolish privateering?'

After the fall of Fort Sumter, President Lincoln declared the Southern ports to be in a state of blockade, which he proceeded to enforce. This raised for the consideration of the English Government the question of the recognition of the Confederate States as belligerents, which is alluded to in the letter just quoted. On May 6th, 1861, it was announced in the House of Commons that this right was to be conceded to them. The fact that the blockade cut off the supply of raw cotton, on which Lancashire depended, helped to excite a strong feeling in England in favour of the recognition of the independence of the Southern States; but the Government declared its intention of maintaining 'a strict and impartial neutrality'—a resolution which displeased both parties in America. The North, relying

on the traditional attitude of Great Britain towards slavery, had looked for active sympathy; and the South, relying, on the other hand, on the expressions of public opinion in this country, had confidently expected recognition as a sovereign and independent State. The North forgot that as yet war was only being waged to prevent secession, and the South failed to realize that rebels cannot achieve a position of independence until they are successful.

At first success seemed to crown the Southern arms, and the rout of the Northern levies at Bull Run on July 21st, 1861, increased the desire in England for the recognition of the South. The feeling soon became so strong that some members of the Cabinet wavered in their opinion as to the advisability of maintaining a strict neutrality. Chief among those who stood firm upon this point were Lord John Russell and the Duke of Argyll. Lord John wrote to the Duke on September 13th, 1861 :

‘ I have no intention of recognising the Southern Confederacy for a long time to come. If the United States utterly fail in subduing them, a question will then arise as to what is to be done. I should think that in April of next year we shall be able to judge on which side, conquest or independence, the probabilities lie. . . .’

In a letter to Mr. Gladstone of August 23rd, 1861, the Duke alludes to the grounds of his adherence to the cause of the North :

‘ Have you seen a letter from Mrs. Stowe to Lord Shaftesbury? I think it good; but she fails to see, what is surely obvious on her own statement, that the North is not entitled to claim all the sympathy which belongs to a cause which they do not avow, and which

is promoted only as an indirect consequence of a contest which, on their side, at least, is waged for other objects and on other grounds. Still, I agree with her that that cause is really and substantially at stake, and I take my side accordingly.'

*From Mr. Motley, Boston (June 28th, 1861).*

'MY DEAR DUKE,

'I remember that you expressed a wish to hear a word from me as to my impressions on residing in this country. I consider it a privilege to be allowed to do so. . . . You will perhaps not have forgotten that on the last occasion when I had the pleasure of seeing the Duchess and yourself at Campden Hill I expressed my fears that a rupture between our two countries was not an impossible event, and that I regarded such a contingency with greater horror than I did even the civil war already existing at home. . . .

'There is no need of my saying a word to you of my love and veneration for England, of my deep respect for the English character, for the very name of Britain. A war between the American Republic and the British Empire seems to me a calamity too awful to contemplate. Ruin and desolation to at least one whole generation of men would be the results to my own country; triumph to the lovers of despotism and to the despisers of national self-government, despair to the hearts of all who cherish human freedom, would be the consequence to the world at large. Its disastrous effects upon England I will not discuss, for I know that I am addressing one in whose heart I can find entire sympathy on this great occasion.

\* \* \* \* \*

'Never did I feel more intense gratitude for the friendship, very far above my deserts, which has been accorded to me in England than I do now, when, perhaps, I may be the instrument, in however limited a degree, of

promoting a more friendly feeling between the two countries.

\* \* \* \* \*

‘Men did not wish assistance. They would have scorned material aid. But they did expect sympathy. They thought that some voice in high places would have been lifted up to say, “We are sorry for your trials; we are compelled to look on with folded arms, but your cause is noble. Our hearts are with you. You are right in resolving upon two things—first, to prevent the farther extension of the system of African slavery, which you had the constitutional power of doing; and, secondly, to maintain your nationality, your unity, which is all that saves you from anarchy and barbarism. We know that the conspirators and traitors, although noisy, dangerous, and desperate, are comparatively few in number, and that they cannot hope long to cope with the overwhelming power of the Government.” Instead of all this, there came denunciations of the wickedness of civil war—as if the war had not been forced upon the Government. . . .

\* \* \* \* \*

‘The cause of this rebellion is slavery. Already one great step in advance has been taken. Slavery will never make another inch of progress on this continent. Slavery is dethroned for ever from the dominion which it has exercised over American affairs for these forty years. It must remain a local, municipal institution henceforth, and the attempt to make it national, to spread it over the territories and over the free States, has been completely and for ever foiled. But there is no intention of interfering with it in the States where it constitutionally exists, because to confiscate £400,000,000 sterling of property would be a stupendous crime, and to make such a compensation would be an impossibility. We have gone to war to maintain the constitution in its integrity, because we believe that, with a few trifling modifications, it would be

difficult to improve upon it at present. But if the question be *death to the republic* or *death to slavery*, if the conspiracy makes a foreign alliance or protracts the anarchy and civil war into which it has plunged us beyond a reasonable time, then the great law of self-defence *will cause that sword to be drawn*, the unsheathing of which causes us all to shudder.

‘Observe that I am not giving my own opinions, but I am communicating to you what is the deliberate conviction of the most intelligent and the most influential men with whom I speak as to the necessary sequence of causes and effects. . . .’

In a speech to his tenantry in October, 1861, the Duke compared the secession of the South to the habits of

‘a curious animal in Loch Fyne which I have sometimes dredged up from the bottom of the sea, and which performs the most extraordinary, innocent and able acts of suicide and self-destruction. It is a peculiar kind of star-fish, which, when brought up from the bottom of the water, and when any attempt is made to take hold of it, immediately throws off all its arms, its very centre breaks up, and nothing remains of one of the most beautiful forms in nature but a thousand wriggling fragments. Such, undoubtedly, would have been the fate of the American Union if its Government had admitted what is called the right of secession. . . . We ought to admit, in fairness to the Americans, that there are some things worth fighting for, and that national existence is one of these. And then, if we look at the matter from the Southern point of view, difficult as it may be for us to do so, I must say also that I am not surprised at their conduct, if they believe, as they loudly proclaim that they do believe, that slavery is not an evil which is to be tolerated only and brought to an end as soon as possible, but a divine institution for the benefit of mankind, to be maintained and, if possible, extended, and which, if it is assailed even in a single

outpost, must be defended to the death—then, even though the citadel of slavery be not assailed, but only an important outwork, it is but natural that the South should rise in its defence. But, of course, in this, as in all other revolutions, those who take part in them must be judged finally by the moral verdict of mankind upon the justice of the course which they have risen to assert.

‘But, whatever may be our private sympathies, we, as a nation, must take no part whatever in the contest. Most earnestly do we trust and pray that it may be brought to a speedy end; yet I confess that there is another wish which, I think, in our minds ought to stand even before this one, and that is the wish that the end of this war, whenever it does come, be it soon or late, may be such as shall be worth the sacrifice and the cost—such as shall tend to the civilization of the world, and promote the causes of human freedom.’

This speech was very heartily welcomed by many in the Northern States, as an assurance of sympathy and as a sound expression of opinion on the political principle involved. The Duke received many letters of thanks. Of these, the following from Mr. Motley is of chief interest:

‘LEGATION OF THE UNITED STATES  
OF AMERICA AT VIENNA,

‘16th November, 1861.

‘MY DEAR DUKE,

‘The day after my arrival in this place I had the great pleasure of reading your admirable remarks in regard to our affairs in the course of your eloquent speech to your friends and tenants at Inveraray.

‘You may imagine with what a thrill of delight we read such noble words coming from such a source.

\* \* \* \* \*

‘As you so well say—and alone among English statesmen you have said it—“there are some things worth fighting for, and national existence is one of

these." It is a pleasure to me to write to you on the subject, because I know that you look upon this dread epoch in America with the earnestness and respect which it deserves. . . . "No more tremendous issues," to quote again from your speech, "were ever submitted to the dread arbitrament of war than those which are now submitted to it upon the American continent." For observe, this word "secession" is a sham. The South, foiled in its attempt to frighten the Free States out of electing the antislavery extension candidate last November, seceded—not in order to *get out of* the Union, but to *reconstruct* it on the basis of slavery. *All the States were invited* to join the new confederacy, whose corner-stone was slavery, and it was confidently expected by the South that all but New England would do so within six months. Thus, in place of the old Union was to be a new United States, with slavery for the law of the whole land, and all of them slave States; while the hated New England was to be thrust out into Canada, or held as a conquered province, as might seem most advisable to the slave-holders. To accomplish this great scheme the slave-holders went to war.

\* \* \* \* \*

'I firmly believe that all that is noblest and truest in the noble English heart feels for America in this the hour of its fiery trial. We shall go through the ordeal and come out purified, but we shall sacrifice vast treasure, and drain much of our best and dearest blood. But the prize will be worth the sacrifice, and a people can only be redeemed by suffering.

'Meantime, I earnestly trust and believe that your own great personal influence and talents will be used to prevent that most dreadful of calamities—a war between America and England.'

The Duke started for the Continent on November 22nd, 1861, with the Duchess and some of his family. Travelling by Boulogne to Paris, and breaking the



journey at Lyons, Avignon, and Toulon, they arrived at Cannes on December 3rd. After a few days spent there, the journey was continued by carriage to Nice and Mentone.

From Boulogne the Duke wrote to Mr. Motley as follows (November 22nd, 1861):

‘ We are on our way to Genoa to escape the depth of winter in England. I received your very kind letter last night before I left the old country, and am very glad to hear that my speech has afforded you any satisfaction. I considered many of the speeches made in England so unfair that I thought it was due to America to point out that the war, whatever may be the prospects of its duration or of its success, was at least a war for important objects, and, indeed, a matter of necessity for the Federal Government. . . . ’

*To Mr. Gladstone (December 10th, 1861).*

‘ MENTONE.

‘ What a delicious place and climate we are now enjoying! Mural precipices of limestone rise high overhead, falling down into lower hills covered with olives of noble growth, and gardens of orange and lemon. We have just returned from a drive to Monaco, the King of which we met on the road. It is quite a place of fairy beauty. The road to it is along the almost precipitous sides of a mountain, but every inch of soil supported by terraces growing the finest olive and carrouba trees I ever saw, with immense quantities of lemon and orange. Below, one looks into the clear blue water of the Mediterranean. On the little promontory which supports the town the precipitous sides are cut into little walks, steps, and terraces full of the aloe, cactus, and red geranium in full flower. I think this place by far the most charming I have yet seen on this coast. One is bored—at least, we are—by this bit of purely Italian country being now French. The people

shrug their shoulders when one asks them if they approve. At Nice the popular language seems to be French, but here it is pure Italian. . . . We intend to go to Genoa on the 14th and to Turin on the 17th. Next day we hope to be joined by our boys from Eton. I had intended to go home with them slowly along this delicious coast, but now I think I can do no more than accompany them to Genoa, and then go back over the Mont Cenis to England, leaving the Duchess to take the homeward route at leisure along the coast. I have had a very bad cold for the last two or three days, but hope to be fit for the journey home from Turin. I should not like being away when the discussions arise on the American reply. Pray write to me either to Genoa or Turin, telling me how matters stand, and your own impression. I am relieved to hear to-day from the Duchess of Sutherland that you seem in good heart as to averting war.

‘War with America is such a calamity that we must do all we can to avoid it. It involves not only ourselves, but all our North American colonies.’

The second critical difficulty with which the English Administration was confronted, arising out of the American Civil War, was what came to be known as ‘the *Trent* affair’—the seizure of certain Confederate Envoys on board an English vessel. These men, Slidel and Mason, had been charged by the seceding States with a mission to the European Powers, from whom they were to attempt to obtain international recognition of the rebels. Having embarked on the *Trent* at Havanna, they were taken prisoners on November 8, 1861, by Captain Wilkes of the U.S. sloop *San Jacinto*, in contempt of the fact that they were sailing under the red ensign. The action of Wilkes was at once pronounced illegal by Britain, and immediate apology and release were demanded.

Unfortunately, however, the excited Americans did not at first see the matter in the same light. Captain Wilkes was thanked by the House of Representatives, and became a popular hero. The British Government therefore thought it advisable to prepare for war, and troops were hastily despatched to Canada.

The Duke was at Avignon when the news of the *Trent* affair reached him. He immediately wrote to Mr. Gladstone (November 29th, 1861):

'I am all against submitting to any clear breach of international law, such as I can hardly doubt this has been. Even the doctrine of contraband of war, as applicable to civilian passengers, would surely not apply in the case of a vessel going away from both of the belligerent Powers.

'I write chiefly to beg that you will send me a line to say how it is decided that we are to act.'

*From Mr. Gladstone (December 3rd, 1861).*

'I must write to you in haste, and let all antiquities, scenery and the like, and all good wishes and even inquiries about health and well doing, stand over.

'The Cabinet determined on Friday to ask reparation, and on Saturday they agreed to two despatches to Lord Lyons, of which the one recited the facts, stated we could not but suppose the American Government would of itself be desirous to afford us reparation, and said that in any case we must have (1) the Commissioners restored to British protection, and (2) an apology or expression of regret. The second of these despatches desired Lyons to come away within seven days if the demands are not complied with.'

\* \* \* \* \*

*To Mr. Gladstone (December 7th, 1861).*

'NICE.

'I got your letter yesterday at Cannes. The telegrams in the English and French papers have made

me sure as to the course which the Government would take, and must take. The latter reconciled me in some degree to my absence, because, so far as I can see, we could not possibly submit, and I do not think that our resistance could take any milder or more procrastinating expression. 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) to excite popular sympathy with their cause. 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."'

To this letter Mr. Gladstone replied on December 11th :

' I am very glad to hear that you mean to come home after Christmas. Let me advise you not to lose a moment after Christmas Day. It is perfectly possible, indeed, that we may not have the reply of the American Government until (as far as I understand) about the last day of the month. But this is on the supposition of their not sending the reply until the term of seven days has expired.'

On December 20th the Duke wrote to Mr. Gladstone :

' It is quite clear that if the American Government are carried by the votes of popular passions around them into a war with us on the *Trent* affair, it will be against their wish and desire. Seward desired Adams to say that Wilkes had acted without orders, and the Government had given no approval, waiting to know first what we thought of the transaction.

' Could anything show more clearly that they desired

to avoid collision, to keep open a door for their own retreat? If that door has since been closed, it will have been closed by the action of the people "out of doors." Yet, of course, we have to deal with ultimate decisions, not with half-formed intentions. Nevertheless, the clear absence of any previous intention to offend ought a little to be remembered in our action, in any way consistent with the maintenance of an essential principle.'

*To Mr. Gladstone (January 1st, 1862).*

'No one feels more strongly than I do the total impossibility of submitting to Wilkes' act. Indeed, I have all along taken a stronger and less technical objection than the English Press generally, agreeing with the French argument that a vessel plying between neutral ports cannot contain contraband of war at all, and that packets such as the *Trent* must be held free from seizure by any belligerent Power.

'The news by the *Africa* is good. Congress seems to be alarmed, and though voting thanks personally to Wilkes on the score of zeal and good intentions, has declined to pledge itself to the legality of his act. This I apprehend to be virtually the meaning of what they have done.

'I rejoice, of course, not merely in the prospect of peace, but specially in any loophole of escape out of a war in which *nolens volens* we should have been the ally of the Confederates.'

To Mr. Motley the Duke wrote from Cannes (December 5th, 1861):

'We have heard this wretched news of the *San Jacinto* and the *Trent*. I have always told you that, however unsympathetic the English people and Press may have been to the American Government, there was no danger of a quarrel coming from us, but that

the danger lay in your Government doing something at variance with the law of nations and rights of neutrals. So it has been. As regards municipal law, the Government has perhaps been compelled by sheer necessity to override it by military force; but as regards international law, Seward ought to have been more than usually scrupulous. I can't conceive that your Government will be so foolish as to drive us into a quarrel about this absurd seizure of men whom it will have done them no good whatever to have caught.'

Wiser counsels, however, soon prevailed in the United States. The action of Wilkes was recognised to be wholly indefensible, and the Confederate Envoys were released on New Year's Day, 1862, and sailed immediately for Europe. The Duke on January 8th wrote to congratulate Mr. Motley on this fortunate release from the menace of war :

'A few hours ago we received, to our great joy, the telegram giving us assurance of peace with your Government. I am sure I need not tell you how sincere our joy has been, and all the greater as the previous accounts had seemed very hopeless.

\* \* \* \* \*

'As regards the merits of the *Trent* affair, I hear that Sumner had early expressed privately his agreement with the verdict at once given by the Prince de Joinville that the arrest was wholly illegal.

\* \* \* \* \*

'From the first moment, when I wrote to you from Avignon, I always took the broad ground adopted by the French—that a neutral vessel going *from one neutral port to another, bonâ fide*, cannot be subject to arrest at all, else no refugee would be safe anywhere in the world. This is so clear that I cannot conceive any American disputing it, because the American Government would never have allowed its own vessels

to be violated under similar circumstances. I hear that Joinville took precisely the same illustration that I took in my letter to you—the case of Kossuth passing from Hungary in a Mediterranean packet. Under the principle of Captain Wilkes he would have been arrestable by an Austrian ship of war.

‘And now will it be peace, or only a temporary truce? I find the idea rooted in many minds here that your Government meant to force us into a war. Such folly is inconceivable—I mean the folly of believing this; but the converse belief is quite as strong on your side of the water, and I hold it to be equally groundless. There is much in the popular language here, as well as there, with which I have no sort of sympathy; but I have all along said that the only danger of war arose from the possible recklessness of the American Government in a time of intense excitement.

‘However, I don’t write to scold either my own countrymen or yours for their respective follies, but to tell you what a relief the news of to-day has been to us, and how sincerely I trust and pray that this sharp passage and narrow strait of danger may remove many dangers for the future. I see that your Press for the most part denounced us, and declared that vengeance is only postponed. But when the American people have had time to know the unanimous verdict of impartial Governments, I have no doubt this feeling will pass away.’

The Duke’s return from the Continent was accelerated by the sad tidings of the death of the Prince Consort on December 14th, 1861. This unexpected blow which had fallen on the Queen and country was deeply felt by the Duke, not only on account of his intense sympathy with his Sovereign, but because of his high appreciation of the great abilities of the Prince, and the admiration he felt for his beautiful character

and stainless life. In a letter at this time the Duke wrote: 'The whole nation is mourning as it never mourned before'; and referring to his last interview with the Prince, which had taken place after a Privy Council at Windsor, shortly before he left England, he writes of the 'great kindness of the Prince Consort's manner' to him on that occasion, and adds: 'The extraordinary beauty and sweetness of his parting smile will remain engraved on my memory for ever.'

The Duke often spoke of the many interesting conversations he had enjoyed with the Prince, which had greatly impressed him with the extent and versatility of His Royal Highness's knowledge and information. The Prince had also corresponded with him on a variety of subjects—literary, scientific, and political. From these letters the following extracts are taken:

'BALMORAL,

'September 20th, 1858.

'MY DEAR DUKE,

'I have to thank you for the kind transmission of your article on Hugh Miller, the perusal of which has given me the greatest pleasure. You have enabled your reader quite to identify himself with your hero and to appreciate the peculiarity of his talent by the judicious extracts from his works.

'I am glad to hear that you were pleased with your visit to Berlin. The Princess had spoken to us of the pleasure it had given her.

\* \* \* \* \*

'Believe me always, yours truly.

'ALBERT.'

'BALMORAL,

'October 7th, 1859.

'MY DEAR DUKE,

'The paper which you have sent me has very much interested me. You seem to have absolutely



mastered the nature of the birds' flight, and the causes which stand in the way of aerial navigation succeeding on the principles as yet followed. I am not sure whether the flight of some insects would not throw additional light on the question. Take the heavy beetles—for instance, the cockchafer, etc. Their wings are very small in proportion to the body; the body is very heavy; they have no tail, no plumage, nothing to support them in the air but muscular action; their flying-wings carry, when expanded, very heavy coverings, and yet they fly very fast and with great force. The action of their wings is certainly perpendicular, but their power is obtained by velocity of stroke. You should follow up your theory.

'We are starting in half an hour for the top of Ben Muich-Dhui; the weather looks promising. We cannot rise much higher in these isles, unless we are supported by an aerial machine!

'Ever yours truly,

'ALBERT.'

Early in May, 1862, the Duke went to Balmoral as Minister in attendance upon the Queen. Shortly after his arrival he wrote to Mr. Gladstone in answer to his inquiries about Her Majesty:

'I thought the Queen more low than when I saw her in February at Osborne. When I first went in and asked Her Majesty how she was, she seemed unable to speak—merely shook her head. But in the course of the hour I was with her she was able to talk with even some eagerness. She spoke of the many things sent to her with the kindest intentions which were but poor comfort, and I hear from others that one may easily say things which go against her, even when one least suspects it. This makes one's work in talking difficult and delicate. Out of doors here she says she feels soothed, but the house is most trying

to her, associated solely with days of happiness, and of his happiness especially. She says she feels borne down by its very atmosphere. How can one get oil or wine to pour into such wounds as these? There is but one thing which tells upon her spirits—the hope of reunion; and all that may enter in by that door, and along with that hope, is received with pleasure. She said one thing so touchingly: “I am sure they [the dead] see our sorrow, but they see it as we see the sorrows of children. They see the end at the same time.” I spoke to her of the infinitesimal shortness of our life as yet compatible with its reality and greatness, to which she responded very heartily. I have sent her to-day some very striking lines quoted in *Macmillan* from Mrs. Browning’s “Last Poems”—“De Profundis,” the lament of which is exactly the language of the Queen, and ending by a beautiful verse of thanksgiving. After all, what one gives her must have some relation to her own present frame of mind. . . . Dr. Robertson (the factor here) has just been to me, saying that he hears the Queen has had a day of the deepest waters to go through, and the Princess Alice is quite knocked up. The Queen is now, however, out driving, and when out, the Duchess of Athole tells me, she seems to enjoy it. How humble and truthful she is! Surely the comforts and consolations of His Spirit will come in time to this most broken heart.’

*To Mr. Gladstone (May 7th, 1862).*

‘When I saw the Queen on Saturday last she spoke to me of the Countess Blücher as one who was the greatest comfort to her, and said she would show me some things sent to her by the Countess. These I was anxious to see, it being clear from the way she spoke that the influence was considerable.

‘It was therefore with the greatest pleasure I found that the papers the Queen sent me were quite excellent. One was simply a transcription of a passage

from Butler's "Analogy," but the other was apparently by the Countess herself, and was thoroughly simple and thoroughly Christian, founding all it held out in respect to the future world on our Lord's words, direct or indirect, and not on metaphysical reasoning of any sort or kind.

'I returned them to the Queen with a letter expressing pleasure and gratification in finding that these papers had afforded her so much comfort.

'Last night, after dinner, the Queen sent for me, and I thought her far better than I had yet seen her. I did not wait to let her talk about herself, but led the conversation at once to the hills, birds, and waterfalls I had seen during the day, and in a few minutes she was talking quite cheerfully, with interest and (at least) momentary enjoyment, constantly referring to her husband, the birds he liked, the roads he had made, his speeches, etc., but all as if he were still with her, and with the sweetest smiles of grateful memory—a most enviable power! I never saw it, even among the poor, in the same degree.'

*To Mr. Gladstone (May 11th, 1862).*

'I have been with the Queen for upwards of an hour to-day, and I do think there is perceptible improvement. She was much moved after the service, but was calm and even cheerful in her long conversation with me. The talk with the country people and his favourite gillies, and the country itself are, I think, soothing to her. Her health, Dr. Jenner tells me, is much better than when she came. She was very nervous before the journey. This is why she felt she could not see Canning. She was both unwell and low.

'Since I wrote to you, besides my talks with her, she sent me down one day a long and most touching letter, which I shall show you when we meet. Part of it is an injunction to make her views known on the

impossibility of ever joining in the "frivolities of a Court." I replied to her in a way to indicate that the love borne to her by her people is one so uncommon, and so valuable to them and for them, that a response to it, in some form or other, by allowing her people to see her and testify their feelings, would be some day one of her public duties. This was very guardedly expressed, but the drift was clear, and she sent me a message which showed that she liked being reminded of a sympathy and affection of which the Prince was proud, and which she herself appreciates.'

A letter from Mr. Richard Cobden to the Duke is an evidence of the sympathy felt for the Queen by her subjects of all shades of thought and opinion, and shows a touching appreciation of Her Majesty's position in the years following the death of the Prince Consort :

'Never was Her Majesty more beloved than now by those whose devotion is her real strength, and the knowledge of which, if made known to her, ought to be her great consolation. For myself, the most disinterested of courtiers, I never knew how loyal I was until I saw the Queen, in her great sorrow, visiting hospitals and poorhouses, offering sympathy to individual suffering and rebuking cruel amusements, whilst all the while she is unequal to the pageantries of her office, which a less earnest nature would, under the plea of duty, have flown to for distraction.'

During the spring and summer of 1862 the American Civil War continued to engross attention. The Southern States were, on the whole, victorious ; but they were unable to follow up their successes, and the final issue remained uncertain.

The success of the South was received with acclamation by the majority of the British people, but it

gradually became evident that the struggle was one in which the mastery would fall into the hands of the side which could longest support the dreadful waste in blood and treasure of a devastating and protracted civil war. As soon as it was certain that the conflict could not be decided by a few critical engagements, there remained the inevitable conclusion that the resources and population of the North must eventually overwhelm the Confederate cause.

In a letter to Mr. Gladstone, April 29th, 1862, referring to the destitution in England caused by the war in America, the Duke points out the effect of the war on British industries :

‘ How oddly the American (just and righteous !) war tells in different ways ! I heard yesterday that it was telling severely in lowering the price of cheese. I supposed by the withdrawal of the Northern market ? Not at all. The Northern cheeses are eaten “down South” in general, but they can’t be so eaten now. So the Northern cheeses are sent over to England instead—coarse but low-priced, cheap and nasty—and so they lower the price of the products of our good rainy pastures.

‘ Not even this sad effect, any more than the loss of cotton, makes me anxious for a new nation whose “corner-stone is slavery.”

‘ By-the-by, I have been wondering ever since I read it what you could mean by saying that “we have no confidence in free institutions being established by the sword.” It seems to me that free institutions have hardly ever been established except by the help of the sword at some stage or other. They were so in this country, as well as in many, many others ; and I have a firm conviction that the sword is doing good and solid work now in America—work which it behoved to be done, as Carlyle would say.’

In spite of the terrible privation caused by the cotton famine, the working men of Britain were generally in favour of the North. Among statesmen there were, besides the Duke of Argyll, some warm champions of the anti-slavery cause, such as Mr. Cobden, Mr. John Bright, Mr. John Stuart Mill, and Sir George Lewis. At the same time, the South had many sympathizers, and it was not until General Lee had surrendered to the Federal arms that many of them would admit that the North was really victorious. Prior to that event the Government was constantly petitioned to acknowledge the independence of the Confederate States, but the Ministry was firm, and maintained a strict neutrality. To Mr. Gladstone, on May 13th, 1862, the Duke wrote :

‘Your corrected speech *in re* America has nothing in it which is not true, in a sense ; but then that sense appears to me to be irrelevant, and to pass by altogether the essential issues of the great contest in America. “Free institutions imposed on a people unprepared to receive them” : all such phrases have a very distant application to the position of slavery in the United States.

‘That this war is having a powerful, a daily increasing effect on the hold of slavery over opinion in America is, in my judgment, a fact so evident, and is so natural and so necessary a consequence of the whole circumstances, that I cannot understand its being questioned. The war, however, is not waged directly for this object, neither does it need this as a justification. The doctrine of secession is simply the doctrine of anarchy ; its hand is against every Government, and the hand of every Government must be, and ought to be, against it. “Them’s my sentiments.”’

*From Mr. Gladstone (August 3rd, 1862).*

'I came away from the Cabinet yesterday with rather a bad conscience, seeing that the question to move or not to move in the matter of the American Civil War was still in discussion; and, like other people who visit upon others the consequences of their own shortcomings, I want to now beg you of your charity to let me know at what point the matter was left.

'My opinion is that it is vain, and wholly unsustainable by precedent, to say that nothing shall be done till both parties are desirous of it; that, however, we ought to avoid sole action, or anything except acting in such a combination as would morally represent the weight of impartial Europe; that with this view we ought to communicate with France and Russia, to make with them a friendly representation (if they are ready to do it) of the mischief and the hopelessness of prolonging the contest in which both sides have made extraordinary and heroic efforts; but if they are not ready, then to wait for some opportunity when they may be disposed to move with us. The collusion of other Powers would be desirable if it does not encumber the movement. Something, I trust, will be done before the hot weather is over to stop these frightful horrors.'

Early in August, 1862, the Duke received a long letter from Mr. Motley, which contained the following passage:

'I thank you for your very kind and cordial expressions both with regard to us and to the United States, and I cannot but think that you will always rejoice as long as you live (and I sincerely hope that that will be very long) for the noble words that you have publicly spoken on the great subject of the age, and the unwavering attitude which you have maintained in regard to the merits of the controversy.'

Replying to this letter, the Duke wrote on August 10th :

‘ I have maintained unshaken my opinion of the merits of the contest ; and I told Tennyson the other day that my motto was taken from him : “ Better to have fought and lost than never to have fought at all.” . . . At least, the war will have established the doctrine that secession is revolution, to be maintained only at the cost of war, and this is the doctrine which has always appeared to me to be essential to your existence as a nation. . . .

‘ One result of the contest which I have always foreseen has been abundantly realized — viz., its increasing and intensifying anti-slavery character. But on this subject I must say one word in explanation of what is so commonly and so foolishly said in England, that slavery has nothing to do with the war. People who say this are denying, not what you or I assert, but what they suppose us to assert. It is always supposed in England that we who sympathize with you on the subject mean that the war is carried on *as* a war against slavery. It is this which is so commonly denied in England in language which goes much further. But people here confound two distinct propositions—viz., the proposition “ that slavery is the cause of the war,” and the proposition “ that the abolition of slavery is the object of the war.” But I have generally found the first proposition admitted when it was clearly explained that the second was not intended or supposed to be involved.

‘ I am not sure that you will be satisfied with me on this point. But I have always freely admitted to my opponents that the anti-slavery character of the contest is, and will be, the result or development of events, rather than the consequence of any principle of policy consciously entertained by the Federal party.

‘ On the other hand, I have always found that the most effective argument in support of the view that,



on the whole, the cause of the Government is the cause opposed to slavery is this: "I am content to accept this on the testimony of those who know best—viz., the Southern States themselves. They have declared that, in their opinion, slavery *was* in danger. The danger must be indirect and distant. But they tell us it was real—so real that it justified them in seceding." I have never found any answer to this. But in justice to the vulgar view in England, it ought to be admitted that the sympathy which may be claimed on behalf of a policy consciously entertained is different from the sympathy which is due only on account of indirect and unintended effects.

'In my opinion sympathy is due, to some extent, on both grounds. But to appreciate this, more accurate knowledge of the history of American parties is required than our people generally possess. So much I say in explanation of a state of feeling and opinion in this country which I have much regretted.'

The Duke of Argyll and Mr. Gladstone, as their correspondence shows, held diametrically opposite views on the American question, and in later years the Duke used to say that he had never been able to understand Mr. Gladstone's sympathy with the cause of the Southern States.

*To Mr. Gladstone (September 2nd, 1862).*

'As regards the origin of the war and its essential character, I retain my opinion unchanged that on the part of the Government of the United States it was just and unavoidable, and that no war which we have ever waged during the many centuries of our existence has been more just or more necessary.

'I dissent, also, from the view you express as to the conduct of Americans in respect to their alleged inconsistency on the subject of revolts. It is not

inconsistent to sympathize with revolts which are just, and to fight against other revolts which are unjust. I confess this is my own state of mind. Who ever heard of anybody supporting, avowedly, revolts as such, without reference to their cause and object? If Americans ever did so, they were wrong; but no American would admit that they ever did so, apart from the supposed merits of the case in hand.

' Apart, however, from any opinion which you or I may have on the merits of the quarrel, there are many considerations which make me most reluctant to interfere with it. To my mind it has all the marks of one of those great events in history whose issues lie beyond and above the intentions of the parties fighting.

\* \* \* \* \*

' You sometimes tell me, as I see others saying, "For the anti-slavery cause nothing so good as separation," an opinion which may or, quite as probably, may not be true—an opinion which I may receive as a matter of speculation, but which would be utterly unjustifiable as a basis of any action in the direction of interference. When I see a great contest going on, one of the parties in which represents, if any cause ever did, the very impersonation of all that is corrupting, my wishes and my opinions are not affected by the assurance that it is much better that the devil should succeed, for he will all the sooner be hanged afterwards.

' I do not think that the English people are now as alive as they ought to be to the moral aspects of this contest, nor to the terrible effects which the slave system is producing on the character of the American people. My firm conviction is that it is rotting the very heart and conscience of the whites, all over the Union, in direct proportion to their complicity with it. This war can't go on without intensifying the antagonism which has arisen out of these causes, and the more intense that antagonism becomes, the better.

I would not interfere to stop it on any account. It is not our business to do so ; and even short-sightedly, it is not our interest. Do you wish, if you could secure this result to-morrow, to see the great cotton system of the Southern States restored ? Do you wish to see us again almost entirely dependent on that system for the support of our Lancashire population ? I do not.

‘ No one has a greater horror than I have of parsons preaching about judgments. But there is one case in which we are safe in forming an opinion. Where great calamities arise visibly out of certain natural causes and the operation of natural laws, we may safely pronounce on their character. The laws of Nature are the laws of God, and the consequences which result from their violation are His judgments on the earth. If ever there was a case of such judgment, this war is one of them. When its natural issues have been reached by the exhaustion of the war, then I should not object to help in the terms of peace.’

*To Mr. Gladstone (September 8th).*

‘ If the Confederates gain such successes as seriously to imperil Washington and the possession of Maryland, what will the effect be ? I watch with intense interest these ebbs and flows, thinking it a matter of supreme wonder how those ends are to be accomplished which, I am convinced, are the ends (or some of the ends) in view. The Duchess has had an eloquent letter from Mrs. Stowe, which you would think very unjust to England. I wish I could think the same. But she says : “ I do not know whether God is with us, but I am sure He is with the slave,” and this “ heartens her trust ” in the cause she at least has most at heart.’

In a speech made at a banquet given in Edinburgh to Lord Palmerston on April 1st, 1863, the Duke said :

‘As my noble friend at the head of the Government told the meeting he addressed last night at Glasgow, “we may all have our individual opinions as to the merits of the contest in America.” I, for one, have never concealed my own. As a Government and a people, we must be what we have always been—absolutely neutral. We must take no part whatever in that contest; only, let me remind you, the peace and goodwill we are all desirous should be maintained between these two great countries does not depend only—nay, does not depend principally—upon the conduct of the Government. My noble friend [Lord Palmerston] has spoken of the miseries of civil war, as well he may; but no word has ever fallen from his lips which implies that anyone was entitled to cast censure on the American Government for the contest in which they are engaged.

‘Who are we, that we should speak of civil war as in no circumstances possible or permissible? Do we not remember that our own liberties have been secured through every form and variety of civil war? How much blood has been shed in the streets of this ancient capital of Edinburgh! How many gory heads have been nailed up in its streets! How many victims of civil war crowd our churchyards in every portion of the country! How many lie upon our mountains with nothing to mark them but the heath or the cairn! What do we say of these men? Do we consider their course to have been an evil one? Do we not rather turn back to these pages of history with the loving chisel of Old Mortality, to refresh in our minds the recollection of their immortal names? Yes, gentlemen, if it be true—and it is true—that the blood of the martyrs has been the seed of the Church, it is equally true that the blood of the patriots has been the foundation of the liberties of our country. Let us extend, then, to our brethren in America the liberal interpretation which we seek to be given to our own former annals. I, for one, have not learned to be

ashamed of that ancient combination of the Bible and the sword. Let it be enough for us to pray and hope that the contest, whenever it may be brought to an end, shall bring with it that great blessing to the white race which shall consist in the final freedom of the black.'

Referring to this speech, Mr. Gladstone wrote to the Duchess of Sutherland on April 6th, 1863 :

'That was a most strikingly eloquent speech of Argyll's, and well deserved reading.'

The following appreciation by a visitor from Washington who had heard the Duke on this occasion is quoted here :

'Although Lord Palmerston's speech was the principal attraction of the evening, the Duke of Argyll is by far the best speaker of them all. I send you a report. He made a most beautiful and telling defence of America, and was much applauded. There was not a man there who spoke with his grace and fluency. He is very young-looking, his fair complexion and light, almost golden, hair adding to the youthfulness of his general appearance. He has also a fine, noble countenance, and altogether impressed me more favourably than any of the other speakers.'

From many well-known Americans the Duke received letters of warm thanks for his support of their cause.

*From Mr. Henry Ward Beecher (July 9th, 1863).*

'When our war is over and we are once more at peace, I could wish that you might visit America, and that I might go before you to proclaim: "What shall be done to them who, in places of power, stood

firm and faithful to our cause, amidst the faithless ?” I am sure that you would see that a Republican welcome can be more royal than any that is ever given to royalty.

‘At any rate, it may not be displeasing to you to know that your name will be held in love and honour henceforth for your great kindness to us in our dark hour of trial.’

*From Mr. Motley.*

‘We all read with admiration your speech at Edinburgh. How glad I am that one whose utterances on great subjects are so noble and so genuine is friendly to my country in this hour of her agony!’

*From Mr. Whittier, the poet (April 6th, 1871).*

‘Hast thou never thought of making a visit to the U.S.? Our people would welcome thee as their friend in the great struggle for Union and liberty, and in our literary and philosophical circles thou wouldst find appreciative and admiring friends.

‘Believe me, very truly and with the highest respect,

‘Thy friend,

‘JOHN G. W. WHITTIER.’

In the summer of 1862 the Duke visited Cambridge to receive the honorary degree of LL.D. of that University. In his diary the following mention is made of the occasion :

‘1862. *June* 9.—A day of functions. Went to Senate House at two with Chancellor and other LL.D.’s. Brougham was the favourite. Armstrong received with tremendous applause. In evening dined at Queens’ in a beautiful old gallery. Replied for House of Peers. Dinner most picturesque. Walked back with Sir Edmund Head.

'1862. *June* 10.—More functions. Lunched at Caius. Flower Show in gardens. Great dinner in Trinity Hall in evening at seven. Spoke for the Peers who had been doctored, successfully. Home at twelve. Much congratulated by John Manners, young Stanley, and Mr. Walpole.'