

that we were not faultless, and for those faults that can fairly be proved we are willing to atone; but I must refer, in conclusion, to what evidently constitutes the groundwork of your irritation against us. It is the want of sympathy this country showed for the North in its time of trouble. You cannot put this into a bill of damages, but it inclines you to push to the extremest verge every legal claim you can establish against us.

I admit, in common with most of my countrymen, that the press and public men of England bore hardly on the North during the struggle; we feel now that we took wrong views on some points, and did the patriotism of your people scant justice. We frankly apologise for this error. But we do not feel that our conduct was base or mean—neither was it irrational; the “rebels” of the South were our flesh and blood as well as the “loyal” men of the North; they made an amazingly heroic stand for what they honestly deemed to be their rights, and it need not be wondered at if many in our country sympathised with the weaker party, struggling gallantly against tremendous odds. Besides, the feeling largely prevailed on this side the Atlantic, that your confederation was a voluntary union of States, and that the principles of your Government and the facts of your history alike forbade a war for the subjugation of recalcitrant members. We thought that as your countrymen had invariably, from the days of Washington, sympathised with discontented nationalities, and proclaimed their right to rebel, you would not feel it right to coerce a great section of your own people.

Then the question of slavery was in a large measure withdrawn from the controversy, for had not your Government proclaimed that the war was for union, not emancipation, and many people in England thought that a union so restored would rivet slavery more firmly than ever. To these motives must be added another, which, if not exalted, is at least human. There was a fear, lest your Republic, if allowed to grow undivided, would become overwhelmingly powerful in the scale of nations, and many who had no dislike of Americans as a people, thought it better for the welfare of the world that a peaceable division of North America should take place. History had taught us this lesson, that no nation can