

contraband of war, and all those semi-nautical semi-military rules and axioms which it is necessary that all Attorneys-General and such like should at the present moment have at their fingers' end. But it must be evident to the most ignorant in those matters, among which large crowd I certainly include myself, that it was essentially necessary that Lord John Russell should at that time declare openly what England intended to do. It was essential that our seamen should know where they would be protected and where not, and that the course to be taken by England should be defined. Reticence in the matter was not within the power of the British Government. It behoved the Foreign Secretary of State to declare openly that England intended to side either with one party or with the other, or else to remain neutral between them.

I had heard this matter discussed by Americans before I left England, and I have of course heard it discussed very frequently in America. There can be no doubt that the front of the offence given by England to the Northern States was this declaration of Lord John Russell's. But it has been always made evident to me that the sin did not consist in the fact of England's neutrality,—in the fact of her regarding the two parties as belligerents,—but in the open declaration made to the world by a Secretary of State that she did intend so to regard them. If another proof were wanting, this would afford another proof of the immense weight attached in America to all the proceedings and to all the feelings of England on this matter. The very anger of the North is a compliment paid by the North to England. But not the less is that anger unreasonable. To those in America who understand our constitution, it must be evident that our Government cannot take official measures without a public avowal of such measures. France can do so. Russia can do so. The Government of the United States can do so, and could do so even before this rupture. But the Government of England cannot do so. All men connected with the Government in England have felt themselves from time to time more or less hampered by the necessity of