

umny, whatever any other government may have done.

The British Government did not gag its press or manacle private sympathy. Some British citizens made a bad use of their liberty. The London *Times* poured upon the North in its hour of depression a stream of contumely and slander which more than any act of the Government led to the present bitterness; and some members of Parliament so far forgot themselves as to cheer the *Alabama* in the House of Commons—an offence only inferior in gravity to that committed by the American House of Representatives, when by a majority of 172 to 71, it voted, in the name of the people of the United States, an address of welcome to the Fenian patriots (30 Jan., 1871). No language, however held by any British journalist or speaker against the war and its authors, could possibly exceed in violence the language held by a large party among the people of the United States themselves. The most offensive things perhaps that appeared in the British press, were the letters of "Manhattan," published in the *Standard*, but written in New York.

An eminent Italian jurist, the professor of International Law in the University of Pavia, has pronounced the neutrality of Great Britain blameless in respect of both the contending parties, setting aside the case of the *Alabama*, which, misled by persistent and accumulated falsehood, he believes to have been armed and manned in England under the eye of the British Government, and to have brought her prizes into British ports. But what the North really demanded of Great Britain was not neutrality but participation in the war on the Federal side.

Good sense and regard for British honour required that in the case of the *Alabama* all doubt should at once be cleared up, and, if reparation appeared to be due, that it should be promptly made. But diplomacy chose first to repudiate all responsibility, then to

slide into concession, and finally into the imbroglia which we now see.

After much wrangling, the two Governments framed a convention for the mutual settlement of claims. This treaty, though signed in London, was virtually drawn up at Washington, for the British Government acceded to all the proposals of Mr. Seward, and when he wished to amend his original terms, acceded to his amendment also. The American ambassador dined too much in public and made too many friendly speeches, probably with a view to facilitate his negotiation. But this was not the fault of the British Government, nor could the British Government go behind his credentials and inquire whether he really represented the nation. His appointment had been unanimously confirmed by the Senate, including Mr. Sumner, who, it has been positively and repeatedly stated, specially commended Mr. Reverdy Johnson to Mr. Bright, and afterwards wrote to the same statesmen a letter which was equivalent to one of congratulation on the conclusion of the treaty.

Under these circumstances Great Britain was entitled at least to courtesy. But the treaty was flung out by the Senate with every mark of contumely. The rule of secrecy was suspended that the Chairman of the Committee on Foreign Relations might publish an inflammatory libel against the British Government and nation. A torrent of unprovoked abuse and menace was poured forth against Great Britain by all the organs of American opinion, which, however, somewhat changed their tone when the effect of their language was perceived, and began to rally the British on their baseless fears, having no idea that a nation assailed with the most odious calumnies could feel wounded in its honour. The fact, indeed, is that some deduction ought probably to be made from the offensiveness of American charges on the ground of the habitual use of injurious imputations as ordinary weapons of debate among American politicians.