

these rights—what would follow? Clearly, that all subsequent proceedings were illegal, and the Alabama claims must be admitted without further discussion. Such a decision would also quite as clearly involve that between the North and South there was no such rights, for it would be absurd to assert that such rights existed, and the Foreign Powers might not recognize their existence.

"Now, the chief belligerent rights which affect this question are those of blockade, and the right, under certain circumstances, of seizure on the high seas. If an umpire decided that from the nature of our civil struggle no such rights were created, where should we stand? Why, that every capture of a blockade runner was illegal, and that for every such vessel sunk or destroyed the United States must indemnify the owners. Would not Great Britain in such a case have an overwhelming offset against the Alabama claims? But again, our courts of highest jurisdiction have again and again decided prize cases under the laws of war, and yet Mr. Seward would submit to an arbitration whether there really was any war after the courts have decided repeatedly that there was.

"Lord Stanley claims as a postulate that a state of war actually existed, between the Northern and the seceding States, and with every decision of our courts, and the whole course of legislation during the past three years in favor of his position, it is difficult to see what, except delay, Mr. Seward can gain by refusing to accede to this. The United States Court gains nothing, which ever way the question be decided, except a mass of perplexities and contradictions. Great Britain could gain a good deal; but then in sweeping away any defence for the outrages of the Alabama, and other vessels, she would claim an enormous offset which we might not be likely to admit, and thus open up fresh issues and new embarrassments. Everything shows that Great Britain honestly wishes these irritating questions settled, and if any damages are awarded to pay them and get quit of the matter, and profit for the future by the lesson we have taught her. The question now is, is the obstacle that Mr. Seward has interposed a fair and honest one. Can he have any lurking fears that the award would not be altogether in his favor, and in so far as it fell short of his claims, leave him shorn of so much glory?"

This is all very fair and candid enough, and deals with the matter in a spirit which we wish was more in vogue among our neighbors. We do not and never did believe that the United States Government entertained any serious intentions of getting up a quarrel with Great Britain upon this question. But when we come to regard this matter in relation to the peculiar exigencies of American party politics, it assumes an aspect which throws considerable light upon the persistent urging of these "claims," and there can be little doubt but that the main spring is an electioneering dodge acted by a little of that stockjobbing always going on in the vicinity of the Capitol. When this matter has been made to serve the uses for which its agitation was intended, it will die away like others of past Presidential electioneering moves, and we will hear no more of the "Alabama claims."

It is reported that a great pan-slave conspiracy, against the Austrian Empire, has been discovered in Hungary.

## LORD RANELAGH AND THE ENGLISH VOLUNTEERS.

A bombshell has been hurled into the camp of the British Volunteers, and that from the hands of one of the first and most prominent members of the force. The facts are, that on the occasion of the distribution of the prizes of the Queen's (Westminster) Volunteers, about the end of last month, Lord Ranelagh declared that the Volunteers of Great Britain are 'a mere sham, and as an army, not worth the flip of his fingers.' This broad assertion, coming from the lips of one who was always regarded as an enthusiastic Volunteer, and who was thought rather inclined to place too high a value upon the Volunteer force, was received with no little astonishment by his brethren in arms. This remark was immediately taken hold of by a portion of the English press, who, for some reason, have shown a great antipathy to the Volunteers, and a great deal more made of it than we are sure its author intended. For some time previous, there had been a great deal of discussion upon the merits of the Volunteer force, arising out of the defeat of the Garibaldians by the French at Mentana, upon which we made some remarks at the time. And it was openly asserted in many influential papers, that were the British Volunteer army placed in a like situation they would share a like fate as that which befel the followers of the Liberator.

The fallacy of this assertion was well and ably proved at the time, and we merely refer to it now in connection with this last astounding hit at the national Institution. The circumstances which led to the defeat of the Garibaldians were such as never could befall a British Volunteer force; and all the depreciatory remarks of adverse journalists could have but little influence upon the subject of Volunteer organisation when it was well known that they were but superficially acquainted with the matter on which they treated. But when one occupying a position and wielding an influence like that possessed by Lord Ranelagh gives color and consistency to the foregoing assertions, it would be well to make a closer inquiry into the bearing of the questions involved by his remarks. No doubt he had the good of the Volunteers at heart when he made the remark and when he published subsequently his communication upon the same subject in the columns of the *Daily Telegraph*, for we find him endeavoring to set himself right with the Volunteers in a letter published in the *Volunteer Service Gazette* of January 25th, in which he says that the epithet "sham" was not applied by him to the Volunteers; he further remarks:—"I distinctly, and decidedly used it as applicable only to the 'Volunteer force as an army. For the Volunteers; either as battalions, regiments, or companies, I entertain and have always entertained, the very highest opinion. It is because I feel their worth to be so great

that I the more lament the invidious and 'impotent position in which they are allowed to remain.' If the object of the noble Lord was to provoke discussion, which we are assured it was, for the ultimate good of the force, he has certainly succeeded in the leading portion of his intention, but we must say he has taken a very odd way of securing the latter object.

As our Volunteer system in Canada is to a great extent formed upon the English model, anything which affects the force in Great Britain must naturally bear upon us, it would be well if, at this particular time, we were to consider this subject carefully. In England the Volunteer system receives its greatest encouragement and support from the wealthy and aristocratic classes, while we in Canada must depend upon, first the good will and patriotism of the people, and secondly upon such support and assistance as can be given by the Government. This state of affairs naturally entails upon a portion of the people a task which is no light addition to the burthen of every day cares. So that candidly speaking the Volunteers of Canada are not in as good a position as those of England, so that if the words of Lord Ranelagh be true in reference to the latter, how will they apply to the former? The Volunteers of Canada, in the event of hostilities, must form her main reliance, and the many defects at present existing in our organisation are in fact the very same as those which led Lord Ranelagh to designate the British Volunteer army "a sham." The principal defect pointed out is the want of transport and commissariat supplies, with ambulances and all the other requisite paraphernalia of an army in condition to take the field. And if these are indispensable to the Volunteer force in England, where the danger of invasion is the remotest of possible contingencies, how much more so are they to the Volunteer army of Canada, which may at any moment be called upon to take the field and engage in actual warfare? Another defect is the want of organisation in Battalions and Brigades that the force may become acquainted with, and accustomed to movements in large masses. These and all the details necessarily connected with the proper development of the Volunteer force in Canada, are matters which it is to be presumed will be provided for by the new Militia Law, and it is to be hoped they will be wisely dealt with. The people will do their part, and it rests with the Legislature to make, by liberal action, the Volunteers of Canada fit, as they are willing, to do all that may be required of them, if ever they should unfortunately be compelled to take the field in defence of their "altars and hearthstons."

In the present issue we publish the first of the now famous letters of Historicus upon the "Alabama claims" question. It deals with the matter in a thoroughly conclusive and logical manner. Next week we will give his second letter which appeared in the *London Times* under date of January 21st.