

CURRENT EVENTS.

ENGLAND.

THE UNITED STATES AS A PLAINTIFF IN ENGLISH COURTS.—The *Solicitors' Journal* says that some curious reasons seem to have been given for rejecting the proposal, which has been recently revived at Washington, that measures should be taken for the recovery by the United States from the Bank of England of balances remaining to the credit of the Southern Confederacy at the time of its collapse. The grounds of objection are stated to be, first, that the United States Minister is not willing to ask any favor of the British Government, such as the right to sue in the English courts, and next, that when inquiries were made into the matter during the administration of General Grant the "representatives of the British Government" expressed themselves as perfectly willing to recognize the United States as the successor of the defunct Confederacy, and to turn over to it all balances formerly belonging to the Confederacy held in Great Britain, provided the United States would assume its liabilities to British subjects. The first objection seems absurd. No "favour" of the British Government is needed to enable the United States to sue in our courts. As a matter of fact, the United States itself has been more than once admitted to sue as a matter of right; and in numerous cases, such as *The King of the Two Sicilies v. Wilcox*, 1 Sim. (N.S.) 301, where the plaintiff recovered ships bought by a revolutionary government out of his own despoiled treasury; and *Emperor of Austria v. Day*, 9 W.R. 712, where the plaintiff prevented the issue of bank notes by M. Kossuth, foreign states have had justice done them in our courts without fear or favor. As to the second objection we do not see what our Government has to do in the matter; and we imagine the reference intended must be not to any declaration of the "representatives of the British Government," but to the doctrine laid down in the case of *United States of America v. McRae*, 17 W. R. 764, L. R., 8 Eq. 69, in which Lord Justice James, then Vice-Chancellor, expressly distinguished between property coming to the restored Government of the United States as successor of the confederacy, and property coming to it by virtue of its right as a restored government. It was

there held, dismissing a bill for an account against an agent for the Confederate Government, that money voluntarily contributed to the Confederate Government could only be recovered from an agent of that Government to the same extent, and subject to the same rights and obligations, as if the Confederate Government had not been displaced, and was itself proceeding against the agent.

LENGTH OF TRIALS.—A solicitor, says the *Solicitors' Journal*, moved by the recollection of the Tichborne trial, and the seven days' trial of the Penge case, has been at the pains to give, in a letter to a daily journal, an interesting analysis of the principal criminal trials which have taken place during the last fifty years, with a view to ascertain how far they differ, in intricacy, and in the number of witnesses examined, from the trials of the present day. The result of his investigation, as to the earlier trials, says the *Journal*, may be summed up as follows:—

"At Patch's trial, in 1806, for the murder of his partner,—a very intricate case,—there were thirty-three witnesses, and the trial lasted one day. Bellingham's trial, for the murder of Spencer Perceval, in which there were sixteen witnesses and long defence, lasted only one day. Thistlewood's trial, for the Cato-street conspiracy, with forty witnesses, lasted two days. In 1824 occurred Thurtell's trial, at which there were forty-six witnesses—including one who was an accomplice, and who was examined at considerable length, and another who was called in the course of the summing up. The trial lasted two days. In 1828, Corder was tried, a long indictment read, twenty-six witnesses; and the trial lasted one day and half. In 1828, Burke's trial took place; a long argument as to the indictment, sixteen witnesses (one of them being an accomplice), and the trial lasted one day. In 1831, Bishop, Williams, and May were tried for the murder of the Italian boy; there were forty-one witnesses, and the trial lasted one day. In 1837, Greenacre's case; thirty-five witnesses, two days. In 1839, Frost, for high treason; there were sixty-nine witnesses, one whole day taken up with legal arguments, and the trial lasted seven days. In 1840, Courvoisier: forty-four witnesses, three days; and, in the same year, Gould's case: forty witnesses, one day.