

THE "ALABAMA" CLAIMS.

AN AMERICAN VIEW OF THE SITUATION.

THE New York *Financial Chronicle* says.—Without pretending to apportion accurately either to our own government or the government of Great Britain such blame as is justly due to *somebody*, for the protracted misunderstanding which now enters upon its seventh year between England and America, we must be permitted to say, in the interest of both countries and of that commerce which is the common life of both, that it is time *something* should be done to put an end to a state of things so unsatisfactory and so perilous.

It is probably true that the diplomatic discussion of the "Alabama claims," under which general name it has now become the fashion to describe all the questions at issue between the two nations, has, on the whole, been conducted with more coolness and a larger regard to consequences by the American than by the British Foreign Office. This much at least is certainly conceded by Lord Hobart, an intelligent English member of the House of Commons, and his apparent of a seat in the Lords who has undertaken recently to bring the matter sharply up for settlement before the British public. Even Mr. Vernon Harcourt, who under the well known signature of *Historicus*, attempts to contravene the position of Lord Hobart in letters to the British press, fails to attack Lord Hobart's impeachment of the temper in which the American claims were originally met by the late Whig occupant of the British Foreign Office, Earl Russell. On the other hand, it is only just to admit that so far as our difficulty with England has been made a theme of debate in the British Parliament and in our Congress, the advantage in point of judicious language and statesmanlike self command rests rather with the elder of the two legislative bodies. This being the case it is clear that the matter has by no means passed the stage at which a rational and manly settlement of it is practicable. For, while in respect to our foreign relations, the action of Congress is less decisively important than the action of the State Department, the reverse precisely is true of the comparative importance of the British Foreign Office and of the British House of Commons in respect to the like relations of Great Britain. It is fortunate, therefore, that on both sides of the Atlantic we find a disposition to forbearance manifested in exactly that quarter in which forbearance is most important and can produce the best results. This would be true were Earl Russell still in power in England. But Earl Russell has been succeeded by a statesman, Lord Stanley, whose treatment of the case so far has been much less open to criticism than that of his predecessor, saving and excepting that he, too, while conceding arbitration in principle, has insisted upon certain reservations in the submission of the difficulty to arbitration which neither the American State Department, nor the Congress, nor the people of this country can accept. The arrival in this country of a new British minister brings the matter prominently forward at the precise moment when it is apparent that something decisive must be done, and makes it desirable that public opinion here should find full and moderate expression upon the real demands of the United States. These, as we have said before are not represented by the average tone of recent Congressional utterances on the subject. It is unfortunate that the suspension just at this time of the *habeas corpus* act in Ireland should have led certain local authorities in that part of the British Empire into measures which have exasperated popular feeling here; but thoughtful Americans sincerely desirous to have the real difficulty between ourselves and Great Britain properly adjusted, will not permit themselves to confound with that difficulty a merely passing and temporary matter, about which there can be no sort of question either as to our abstract rights, or as to the impolicy of interference with them. No respectable or responsible British organ of opinion, no British public man would for a moment think of denying that the arrest of American citizens on British soil, for words spoken or deeds done beyond the sphere of British sovereignty, is utterly indefensible. This is so certain to be the case, that while the arrest of American citizens in such cases may make an excellent topic of popular declamations, it will hardly be so much as debated in any diplomatic conference. Putting that aside, therefore, as a point already settled in our favor, and about which only the details of the satisfaction proper to be made to persons aggrieved can remain to be discussed, let us reiterate our hope that serious public opinion here will at once make itself felt in favor of peace between the two countries, by giving the new British Minister and his Government to understand clearly and unmistakably that the American people not the passionate and unthinking but the grave and weighty public of the United States, expect of England now to make the offer to us which, when made by us to her, was so hastily declined.

A decided demonstration in this sense here cannot be considered in a just sense a hostile demonstration by Great Britain. The questions upon which we asked before, and should now be willing to accept arbitration, are not in themselves so formidable as they have become formidable by over long gestation. Whether Great Britain was or was not over-hasty in conceding belligerent rights to the Southern States, Lord Russell chose to consider a question not proper to be discussed in an arbitration upon British responsibility for certain results not perhaps brought about by but certainly made possible by that concession. But surely the question is of a large general interest affecting not merely Great Britain and the United States, but the possible relations of all states. We never asked such a decision of it as should require of Great Britain, were that decision unfavorable to her policy either apology or compensation for that policy. We simply insisted and insist that to a decision concerning her responsibility for losses inflicted upon our commerce by vessels which would never have got to sea had she not recognized the belligerent rights of the Southern States, an examination

of the propriety of such recognition by her is necessarily germane, and must be of interest to herself and to other powers as well as to ourselves.

As has been frequently set forth in these columns heretofore, the question whether Great Britain did or did not properly execute her existing laws is of less significance than the question whether her existing laws, so far as they affect international relations in time of war, are or are not suited to the requirements of international justice and amity in those days. In short, the "British difficulty" is far more a difficulty of temper and feeling than of conflicting national dignity and inherent rights on the one side and on the other. This, which makes it particularly dangerous, should also make it particularly easy of settlement. The longer it remains under discussion the more dangerous it becomes. It keeps up a sort of feverish, vague, national ill feeling on both sides. It inflames every such incident as this to which we have alluded in connection with the actual political condition of Ireland. It lies ready, to the use of political parties in this country as a means of capturing this or that class of popular sympathies. It is always in the mind of the Continental cabinets in their calculations upon the part which England may be made or expected to play in the growing complications of Europe.

Let it then be settled—settled for the benefit of both countries, even though the apparent triumph in the settlement should be with the United States. We have no wish to humiliate England, no interest in her humiliation, no sort of belief that a decision in our favor as to her liability for acts done by her subjects during the recent civil war would really be to her a humiliation. Modern political economy has revealed this truth that whatever clearly establishes the right between any two countries is a positive boon to both. Now that Mr. Thornton is in Washington, and the most important business a British Minister has for years been called upon to transact is vividly "on the order of the day," let it be distinctly made known that the opinion of this country insists upon a prompt and final reference of the matters in dispute between us to a competent arbitration.

PROSTRATION OF AMERICAN MANUFACTURES.

THE prostration of all domestic manufactures in this country, in spite of high protection, is universally felt, and the subject of much complaint. The fact is in contradiction to the theories of the protectionists. Our manufactures cannot compete with foreign imported articles, even in our own markets, though subject to high duties and gold payments. Formerly, we had markets abroad for our manufactures, and cotton, wool, iron, &c., to a great extent. Now, we are informed from the best sources that there is not one article of American manufacture which can be exported to compete with the foreign articles of the same kind in any foreign market. The causes of this prostration have been erroneously supposed by some to be the late contraction of the currency, and taxes on manufactured goods.

In the convention of manufacturers, lately held, the true causes have been but partially explained. Mr. Guthrie, when Secretary of the Treasury, held the opinion that manufactures, under a proper tariff, would increase to such an amount that, besides diminishing imports they would supply foreign markets, and that the loss of revenue from imports thus occasioned would be amply supplied by the small excise upon the manufactured products. In pursuance of this policy the tariff of 1857, reducing the duties on raw materials, or making them free of duty, was framed.

The war tariff since adopted would, it was contended, be of vast benefit to the manufacturers and producers of wool iron, &c. The wool-growers especially were to be benefitted by making wool dear and forcing the manufacturers to purchase it at five times the price at which it could be imported. The result is, that new wool is unsaleable, and the woolen factories are even more depressed than those of cotton. Mr. D. A. Wells recommends, in his reports, a return to the system of low duties on raw materials which enter into domestic manufacture.

This subject was fully discussed in the deliberations of Congress upon the tariff in 1833 and 1842. It was then ably maintained by the opponents of a protective policy that manufactures could only be encouraged and built up as a permanent interest by the natural process and harmonious development of the productive powers of the people in all branches of industry. It was strongly maintained by Mr. Calhoun and others that American manufactures would best flourish under a strictly revenue tariff, which should be equally just to all sections and interests of the country. It was then argued too, with much force, that our manufacturers must not be confined to production for the home market, but must look to foreign countries for an extensive and profitable market. To effect this object they must have a sound currency and low taxation. The evils complained of by the manufacturers then, as now, were chiefly the result of a deranged, redundant, and fluctuating currency. With a sound currency and low taxation our manufactures may revive and flourish, and form one of our chief articles of export; but not until our currency and revenue system shall be thus reformed. The manufacturing interest has itself contributed largely to the evils of which it complains. When, in the course of time, a better state of things shall exist they may be benefitted by measures which they now deprecate. A great reduction in the cost of labor and material and the expense of living must take place before our manufactures can find a market abroad in competition with foreign industry.—*National Intelligencer*.

RAILROADS IN NEW YORK.

A Capital of \$140,000,000—Length of Tracks 4,900 Miles—217 Persons Killed in One Year

MR. Barnes, the late Deputy State Engineer and Surveyor has presented a report of the condition of the Railroad Companies in New York, for the year ending September 30, 1867. It points out the following result:—

ROADS OPERATED BY STEAM.	
Amount of capital stock by charter and Acts of Legislature	\$139,000,000 00
Amount of capital stock subscribed for and paid in by last report	115,677,088 88
Amount of funded debt, as by last report	99,038,221 61
Amount now of funded debt	113,630,286 74
Amount now of floating debt, as by last report	74,003,327 69
Amount now of floating debt	74,317,691 26
Total amount now of funded and floating debt	4,947,483 55
Total cost of construction and equipment	6,814,807 65
Length of road in miles	162,016,749 02
Length of roads laid	3 63 45
Length of double track, including sidings	2 918 74
Length of branches laid	1 233 20
Length of double track on same	704 64
Length of equivalent single track	43 43
Number of engines	4,900 10
Number of first-class passenger cars	1 076
Number of second-class cars	187
Number of baggage, mail, and express cars	325
Number of freight cars	16,625
Miles run by passenger trains	8,765,959
Number of passengers, all classes, carried in cars	17,377,465
Number of miles traveled by passengers, or number of passengers carried one mile	656,524,676

EXPENSES.	
Allotted to passenger transportation	\$5,141,277 62
Allotted to freight transportation	9 990 732 09
Expenses not classified	269,128 06
Roads operated by horse power, &c.	\$16,401,137 67
	6,181,682 77

EARNINGS.	
Roads operated with steam.—	
From passenger business	\$16,169,655 87
From freight business	30,842,452 23
From other sources	2,631,4 21
Total earnings	\$49,671,672 20
Roads operated with horse power.—	
From passenger business	\$7,673,795 83
From freight business	9 869 91
From other sources	797,193 23
Total earnings	\$8,469,848 97

PAYMENTS.	
Roads operated with steam —	
For transportation expenses	\$34,874,178 23
For interest	5,297,111 81
For dividends on stock	5,957,427 69
Amounts carried to surplus funds	989,660 57
Payments not included above	2,332,914 15
Total payments	\$49,352,186 94
Roads operated with horse power —	
For transportation expenses	\$6,627,600 17
For interest	648,829 44
For dividends on stocks	810,370 10
All other payments	368,221 06
Total payments	\$8 196,200 67

ACCIDENTS.	
Number of passengers killed	13
" " " injured	79
" " employees killed	67
" " " injured	65
" " others killed	35
" " " injured	18
Total number killed	175
" " injured	203

REGISTERED LETTERS.—The Toronto *Globe* says — In our telegraphic dispatch from Montreal it was lately mentioned that 10,000 registered letters had been received at the post-office in that city during the month of January of this year. We were very glad to notice the fact as indicative of a good amount of business being done by the Montrealers. We are, if possible, still better pleased to learn from our *City Post* master, that Toronto has something even better to show. During the month referred to, 20,732 registered letters were received at the post-office here. Of these 12,978 were for city delivery, 3,114 were posted for despatch by mails and 5,340 were received as mails for other offices. During the same month \$50,855 51-100 were paid on money orders, and \$7,668 62-100 received for money orders issued, while \$5,628 postage stamps were sold to agents. This, we think, is an interesting and satisfactory statement, and we hope that every town and city in Ontario can exhibit a proportionately encouraging state of things.