

**CORRESPONDENCE ON THE
PRESENT RELATIONS BETWEEN
GREAT BRITAIN AND THE UNITED
STATES OF AMERICA, PP. 1-151**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649543991

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EDWIN W. FIELD & CHARLES G. LORING

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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

BOSTON:
LITTLE, BROWN, AND COMPANY,
110, WASHINGTON STREET.
1862.

PREFATORY NOTE.

THE following Correspondence between an English and an American lawyer was not written with any purpose of publication. It is now printed by the advice of a few friends, by whom the letters were read as they were written or received; and who are of opinion that such a frank interchange of views, entertained by individuals on either side, possessing similar means of somewhat extensive information, entertaining each for the other cordial esteem, and entirely free from any pre-existing national prejudices or ill-will which could unfavorably temper the discussion, might aid in the formation of correct opinions upon the painful relations subsisting between the people of England and the people of the loyal States of America in reference to the Rebellion.

No apology, therefore, need be made for the carelessness of style incidental to an off-hand correspondence; nor for the incompleteness of views, which, under other circumstances, might have been more carefully elaborated.

It is necessary to explain that the "letter in print," alluded to in Letter I., was an article in a daily newspaper on the Trent affair, written by the American correspondent, (his initials being attached to it,) and by him forwarded to his friend in London, not, however, in the form of a letter, or addressed to any one but the editor of the newspaper.

Boston, November, 1862.

CORRESPONDENCE.

I.

SQUIRE'S MOUNT, HAMPSTEAD,
16th January, 1862.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

A letter from you, even though it be in print, and on that wearisome subject of "*The Trent outrage*," is welcome at the old house you remember, on the top of Hampstead Hill. I am so infamous a correspondent, that, knowing I never write at all unless at once, I have passed, and am now performing, a vow to acknowledge it before I go to bed to-night.

You will, ere this, have found argument enough on the Trent subject in our and the French newspapers. I am not going to discuss the question. We English have been the great sinners on these matters, insisting on dragging others into the vortex of our own wars; and out of our own mouths you should be content to judge us. On the question, "What should an admiralty court have done, had the 'San Jacinto' brought up the 'Trent' for adjudication?" it seems to me that the "Hendrik and Alida" case is indisputable. You American lawyers are so much more versed in international law than we are, that I wonder you have

none of you cited that case. I am surprised that your lawyers have not felt more the incongruity of the view, which, having obtained the right of search and of blockade as against neutrals by admitting the Slave States to be belligerents, still claims to hold these belligerents rebels; and I am satisfied that Mr. Seward, with his now declared views, would have been wiser to have acted on them *on the moment of receiving news of the capture*, instead of putting the knaves temporarily into dungeons of the condemned-cell class.

One thing should come out of this affair, — a better rule as to the right of search and the law of contraband. I trust, if we ask too wide a rule, we shall be cut down. The “*Journal des Débats*” (the most favorable, to your views, of the French papers) said the other day to this effect: “It will never do to stretch the rights of belligerency and search in this way. We French have the good fortune to be at war with the Emperor of Cochin China. We have the advantage of being belligerents, and to possess, according to the idea contended for, a universal right of search. We may, therefore, search every packet-boat between Dublin and Holyhead, as long as it pleases us to go on fighting the Brother of the Sun and Moon,” &c., &c.

Why should not we English keep up our coveted right of search on the African coast by reason of our belligerency with the Caffres or New-Zealanders? These questions, to me, seem to suggest the absolute necessity of limiting the right, if not of search, at least of capture.

But I notice your letter principally because it affirms a desire to exist here "for war with America, and also the existence of a long-cherished hatred towards you and your institutions." If the "New-York Herald" had made such a charge, I could have understood it; but that you, or any wise, moderate philosopher in Massachusetts, should hold such a fancy, is to us a marvel beyond expression. We got your letter yesterday; and, on reading it in our circle, there was a perfect outcry, "What on earth will be the next dream of our dear friends? Will they think we are cannibals, and want to pick their bones white?" Let me tell you, that if any thing can be now spoken of Englishmen, *universally*, more than another, it is of their most earnest desire not to quarrel with their brother Anglo-Saxons of the North United States. Include the cotton-men of Lancashire even, and you could not find many dozen men in all the realm to whom the prospect of such a war would not be (nay, was not the other day) as humiliating as the notion would be, that he had on him the stern necessity of fighting a duel with say a brother or brother-in-law. We have here a feeling, all but universal, against the divine right of slaveholding, quite, when we look at history, beyond reason, and exciting in us a shudder like that a silly, superstitious girl sometimes has in passing a graveyard at midnight; and to think, as we have all been thinking lately, that we not only have to fight a duel with a near relative, but also should be drawn, or might possibly be drawn, into any kind of

alliance with those who base their union on this devilish doctrine, has been so disgusting and degrading a prospect to us, that it has made us all sick to loathing. "What a loss!" said Sir Thomas Phillips to me on the day of the news of Prince Albert's death. "Can you think much of the death of any one human creature, however important, compared with the prospect of this miserable war?" was my answer. Let your newspapers, statesmen, and ambassadors tell you what you like: take from me, an old, dispassionate looker-on in politics, the above as almost the most undeniable thing (next to a love for our own freedom) which can be predicated of Britain and the British. As long as you treat us like gentlemen (I think Seward's waiting to see what we did, when he thought all the while we were right, was more like a lawyer than a gentleman), I don't believe the Emperor of the French himself, with all the cotton-lords (and they will be few) he can enlist, will persuade us towards moving to break the blockade, even though it be ever so paperish a one. So far for politics: now to "pastures new."

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Last summer, we had a lone house for our sketching quarters on the Thames, twenty miles below Oxford; a ferry attached to it, which one man was obliged to work day and night too, if the passengers could wake him. I spent many and many a pleasant hour, when saturated with sketching, in sailing my New-York centre-board little boat, the "Yankee"; the star-