THE ALABAMA CLAIMS.

Lord Stanley's Speech in Reply to Mr. Lefevre.

Official Defence of England's Policy in the American War.

BY THE ATLANTIC CABLE.

The following is Lord Stanley's speech, delivered in the English House of Commons on Friday evening last, on the Alabama claims question, as presented by Mr. Shaw Lefevre:—

Lord Stanley said:—I think it due to the honorable member who has brought this subject forward, and who has dealt with it in so clear and condensed a manner, to acknowledge that he has said nothing which is calculated to increase any feeling of international irritation that may still remain or to aggravate the complications which have unfortunately arisen. In one portion of his remarks I cannot, at all events, help expressing my cordial concurrence in the tribute which he has paid to the high character and accomplishments of the United States Minister, whose services, unfortunately, we are about to lose. (Cheers.) Few men could have had a more difficult part to perform and fewer still could have displayed in all that has been done a sounder judgment or greater forbearance. (Cheers.) It is not my wish to follow the honorable gentleman into that part of his speech which related to the conduct of Lord Russell. Lord Russell had many difficulties to encounter, and he has many friends and representatives in this house who will be prepared to vindicate anything that may be said in criticism of the steps taken by him. My business is rather with the present aspect of the controversy than the past. I certainly regretted that the honorable member should, in one respect, have displayed a slight tinge of partisanship, which, to do him justice, he generally succeeded in avoiding. The honorable gentleman appeared to regard it as extraordinary that we should have consented to refer this question to arbitration, and seems to think that, owing to some changes in our opinions, our conduct had altered. I do not want to revive old points of controversy, but it would be very difficult to point out one single word in any speech made by my right honorable friend, the First Lord of the Treasury, or by myself, which could show that we had prejudiced the issue. Whatever else may be the matter of the controversy it is, I hope, needless to make any profession of my anxiety to settle this dispute if possible. England has nothing to gain by keeping it open, and something to gain by closing it. We have vast commercial relations with the United States; a long line of continuous frontier. We meet and cross one another in every quarter of the globe; we have on both sides an enormous load of debt, which neither can wish to increase. ("Hear, hear!" and a laugh.) We can do each other incalculable harm, and I believe it is equally the wish as well as the interest of both nations to remain on amicable terms. (Cheers.) I need not therefore say that we want to arrange this matter if we can; nor do I think in the present state of the question any difficulty arises from popular feeling in England. So far from that being the case, the reaction from our earlier feelings is so strong that we are almost too ready to accuse ourselves of faults which we have not committed and to assume in every doubtful point that the decision ought to be against us. This is, no doubt, an error on the right side; but indiscriminate resistance to reasonable demands and indiscriminate concession of whatever is asked are equally likely to end in mischief. What we have to do is to try and find out what are the strict rights of the case, to state the case so ascertained and to temperately and fully endeavor to do justice to ourselves and to appeal to a corresponding spirit in those with whom we have to treat. Now, sir, there never was a case in which it was more desirable to define accurately the points to be settled, because on the other side there are certain questions complicated by all sorts of grievances of rather a vague character—grievances which I do not say are unreal or unfounded, but which those who feel them would find it hard to define. I do not complain of this, but merely refer to it as a fact. If we were Northern Americans we should probably entertain pretty much the same feeling. Men who have emerged from a civil war, in which they sacrificed a million of lives and incurred five hundred million pounds sterling of debt are not for some little time in a position to appreciate with perfect coolness the conduct of bookers on. (Cheers.) I am not now saying whether our course was in every instance one of rigid neutrality; that is the very point we are endeavoring to ascertain by arbitration; but if our neutrality had been the most absolute it is possible to conceive there can be no doubt that we should have fallen short of the expectations of the people of the United States. What they expected was not neutrality, pure and simple, but physical neutrality, coupled with sympathy and moral support. (Cheers.) When such a feeling exists and is disappointed it is obvious that the disappointment so produced will find vent in some shape, and that is the key to a great deal of the exaggerated writing and speaking which has been observable in the earlier stages of the question, and in that point of view I do not regret the time that has passed on both sides. We can discuss this matter more calmly in 1868 than in 1864. (Cheers.) Passions of the moment pass away, but facts and arguments remain, and happily, as the case now stands, the controversy still pending is reduced within the narrowest possible limits. On doubtful questions of fact, as to which it would not be likely that the two governments should agree, we are of one mind as far as this, that we know we cannot agree and are ready to refer to a third and personally impartial party. The principle of arbitration has been accepted, as far as we are concerned, which is an important step. I am not finding fault because that step was not taken earlier. Time, we know, makes many things possible which were not so at first. The truth is, we have conceded everything asked for when the dispute began. (Hear, hear.) At that time the question of premature recognition of belligerent rights had not assumed its present importance. Incidentally it was mentioned, but that was all. But by a curious process that grievance, whatever its value may be, has been gaining importance in the minds of American public men just in proportion as we are willing to remove other causes of complaint. (Hear, hear.) The sole point unsettled between us is this:—"You are willing," the United States say, "to refer to arbitration the question of the Alabama and other kindred vessels; are you willing to include, as a point in the reference, the question whether you were right or wrong in recommending the confederation when you did?" The answer we have given, in substance is, that as at present advised we cannot see what bearing the two things have on each other; for all practicable purposes, as bearing on the event of 1862, you might as well include the question whether we were right or wrong in the war of 1812. There are some persons who do not accept that view of the case. I will, therefore, endeavor to enforce it. I suppose that no human being will contend that at no period during that prolonged struggle of four years the Confederates had become entitled to belligerent rights, or that such a pretension has ever been put forward; but if they were belligerents at some time, and not so when recognized as such, when did they become so? Take a date that will test the question. If ever they were belligerents, I suppose they were so after the celebrated battle of Bull Run. They had then a large force in the field. For a time at least they had achieved a military superiority, and, above all, Washington was threatened. Suppose we had recognized them after that battle, would any human being have found fault with us? Could any one have charged us with being precipitate in our recognition? And had we done that, how would it have affected the Alabama question? The Alabama escaped in April, 1862; Bull Run was fought in July, 1861. If I had chosen to take that line of argument in my dispatch it would have been competent for me to contend in this way. I grant that we were wrong in recognizing the confederacy when we did. We ought to have done it in August, and not in May. We were six months too soon. But having admitted that, will you, the American government, tell me how your case, as regards the Alabama, would be in any way affected if we had done what you contended we ought, and made the recognition six months instead of twelve months before the Alabama sailed? (Cheers.) It is on this ground of irrelevancy that I rest, more than that of national dignity. But there is another objection to a compliance with the United States demand that this question of recognition included—would any arbiter deal with it? That is a point on which I find considerable doubt. Arbitration as we proposed it was simple in character and not difficult to deal with. Give the two belligerents and a neutral power, and the problem is, has the neutral power fulfilled the obligations imposed on it by international law? Now, granting that international law is sometimes vague, that new circumstances occur not met by precedent, and that much must be left to the discretion of the arbiter, that is still a question governed in the main by recognized principles and which a friendly government would not be unable or probably unwilling to pronounce a decision upon. But if you add to that complicated matter a question of a totally different character, as to whether a certain political act, the recognition of a belligerent, was or was not suitable to circumstances under which the government was placed, what rule is there to go by? Is it a matter of precedent or moral justice? Are political considerations included also? Is it contended that recognition was premature? But premature in what sense and for what purpose? No one will question that it was a matter on which, as an independent, we were entitled to use our own discretion. That doctrine of freedom in such matters has been insisted upon by no persons more strenuously than by the United States government themselves in 1849. Only twenty years ago the United States government proposed to recognize the revolutionary government of Hungary, not merely as a belligerent, which is all the question now, but as an established thing. The Austrians complained and a correspondence ensued. It was conducted on the American side by Mr. Webster, certainly not the least able of American statesmen, and Mr. Webster's reply was in these words:—"That if they had done so, though the step would have been precipitate and one from which no benefit would have resulted, it would not, nevertheless, have been an act against the law of nations, provided they took no part in the contest against Austria." Does not that utterance go immeasurably further than anything which has come from us? (Cheering.) And yet that is a document put forward by the United States. I will cite another case:—In 1836 Texas was fighting for independence from the Mexican republic. The question arose about the admission to New York of a vessel bearing the Texan flag. The United States government defended the admission of these vessels, and in the course of their argument they used some remarkable words, which I should like to read. They begin by saying that from the beginning of the Revolution South American vessels had been admitted, with their own or any other flag, to the ports of the United States, and that the same rule had been observed in civil wars that had arisen between the various States.

Mr. ROEBUCK—Who is the writer?

Lord STANLEY—The Foreign Minister of the day. And he goes on:—"It has never been held necessary, as a preliminary to the extension of the rights of hospitality to either party, that the chances of the war should be balanced and the probability of eventual success determined. For this purpose it has been deemed sufficient that the party had declared its independence and at this time was actually maintaining it." Had not the South declared its independence in 1861, and was it not maintaining it? (Cheers.) In the face of these claims, put forward by the United States government, to absolute freedom of action in such a matter, how can they contend that an independent State ought to submit to pay a fine if its discretion has been unwise? Put it in the other way—suppose we had not recognized the South, and suppose that fortune had decided in their favor, could they be entitled to call us to account for not having recognized them soon enough, and thereby having injured their prospects? So stated, the question seems absurd. But if we are responsible one way we are responsible the other. If damages are to be given for premature recognition as injury on one side, why not for tardy recognition as injury on the other? In what position is a neutral Power placed whenever a war breaks out? This is not a question for the moment only. (Hear, hear.) It is a question of a general international law. It is a question which will create a precedent, and we are bound not merely to what is convenient for the moment, but what is right in the light of duties of nations in general towards each other. (Cheers.) But the grounds I rest on are these:—First, that the United States propose to us a matter for consideration which is irrelevant to the issue. Secondly, that the irrelevant question was one to be decided by considerations of State policy and not of legal obligation, and therefore is incapable of receiving legal solution. Thirdly, that the United States government in their parallel cases had absolutely refused to admit any responsibility for adopting a similar course; and, lastly, that I believe no one would undertake to arbitrate on a case entirely vague and undefined. I will not now argue the case on its merits as far as recognition is concerned, but it may be necessary to remind the House that in recognizing the Confederates when we did we were simply declaring, on May 13, a state of things to be civil war which, in official documents since published, Mr. Seward, on the part of the United States government, himself declared to be such. These documents were not private letters, but papers which have been since published and laid before the public. They bear date nine, twelve and sixteen days before the Queen's proclamation. I will read only one, and that shall be brief. On the 4th of May, nine days before the issue of the Queen's proclamation of neutrality, Mr. Seward writes in these terms:—"The insurgents have instituted revolution, with open, flagrant, deadly war, to compel the United States to acquiesce in the dismemberment of the nation. The United States have accepted the civil war as an inevitable necessity." [Correspondence relating to foreign affairs accompanying the President's Message to Congress in December, 1861.] I should be sorry to say anything that would even look like want of respect for the distinguished diplomatist by whom this correspondence has been conducted throughout, and than whom no man in the United States has probably had greater experience. But if the question was one which we could discuss apart from politics, and if we were not thousands of miles apart, but could meet face to face, I should venture to ask him whether he could with gravity call upon me solemnly to refer to the arbitration of some neutral body—of some third party—this question, whether we, the British government, had a right, on the 13th of May, to declare that to be a civil war which in various documents, especially in one dated the 4th of May, he (Mr. Seward) himself had christened by that name. (Cheers.) Let it be noted, also, that the highest court of law in the United States, in a passage which has often been quoted, declared the state of things which then existed to be a state of war; and another argument, familiar to all who have studied the subject, is that if there were no war there was, of course, no blockade, and we might claim damages for every blockade runner captured. (Hear, hear.) Claims such as these would mount up to an almost inconceivable total, and I really cannot think that the statesmen of the United States would be willing to let in these enormous claims for the sake of insisting upon a point which, practically and in its immediate applications, are not important, though I admit that indirectly it may have considerable importance. I am glad to believe, and there can, I think, be no doubt that, as there has been a great change of feeling here within the last two years, so, on the other side of the water, a corresponding change is taking place. (Cheers.) Now that the question is better understood I do not wish to detain the House—(loud cheering)—but I think I have said enough to show that the proposed conditions of the reference were not arbitrary or capricious. Still less were they (as I have seen it hinted out of doors that they were) mere devices to evade referring the matter to arbitration at all; but that they were founded on an ineligible and, I think, sound principle. If the negotiations have been for a time suspended—I will not say broken off, but suspended—the rupture or suspension does not come from our side. We made our offer and it has been declined. According to the ordinary usage it is now for the complaining party, if they do not like our plan of an arrangement, to propose their own. Something was said by the honorable member as to our language being varied at different stages of the negotiations. It is difficult to remember with accuracy all the arguments which have been put forward; but I can answer for it that my own ideas on the subject never varied.

Mr. SHAW LEFEVRE—I said that Mr. Seward's language varied.

Lord STANLEY—Oh, very well then, I will pass that matter over. (Cheers.) I am very glad that the honorable member, with his recent American experience, agrees with me as to the general character of the correspondence. But then it is said, you ought to settle this matter at once, or you will have a quarrel. I am as anxious to settle it as any man in any part of this House can be, but I do not believe in the likelihood of the quarrel. (Hear.) I have never concealed my opinion that the American claimants, or some of them, at least, under the reference proposed by us, were very likely to make out their case and to get their money. To us the money part of the affair is inappreciably small—(cheers)—especially as we have on our side claims which, if only a small portion of them hold water—and you never can tell beforehand how these matters will turn out—will form a by no means unimportant set off to the claims preferred against us. (Hear, hear.) But I think if matters were fairly adjusted, even if the decision went against us, we should not be disposed to grudge the payment. (Loud and general cheering.) The expense would be quite worth incurring if only in order to obtain an authoritative decision as to the position of neutrals in future wars. (Hear, hear.) If, therefore, the Alabama claimants are kept out of what may be due them, they ought to understand, and I think that they will understand, that it is not by the act of this government. And though party politics may run high in the United States, I will not believe that any party can be so reckless or insensible to the interest of their own country, as to engage in a quarrel possibly ending in a great and costly war, for the sake of enforcing in one particular way a claim which it was in their power to settle, and probably settle in their own sense, without any recourse to violence. To do so would be contrary, not only to the reasonable view of American people, but would be, in the French phrase, for which no English equivalent exists, *enfoncer une porte ouverte*—breaking open a door that is not locked. ("Hear, hear," and laughter.) I cannot but think that in some way, indirectly if not directly, the United States government will be induced to waive this point. If they decline to do that it remains to be seen whether any other solution of the question in dispute can be found. Mr. Seward has more than once thrown out hints of a general commission, which should deal with all outstanding questions of all descriptions between the two countries. I have verbally and through Mr. Adams suggested that he should develop that idea. Speaking as an isolated individual, and without prejudice to what may be done in the future, I should have thought that international questions were better settled one by one. But I am not disposed to reject any reasonable mode of settlement, and if we can agree upon the substance I do not think either the government, the House or the country would be disposed to stand out on matters of form. (Cheers.)

Before I sit down I may say that the reception of the British Minister at Washington has been not only friendly, but cordial, and everything leads me to think that the feeling in the United States towards England is improving. (Loud cheers.) Having stated the facts of the case, and stated them as briefly as I could, I shall leave the matter to the judgment not only of this House and of the public in this country, but I shall leave it to the judgment of all fair and impartial persons on both sides of the Atlantic.

The noble lord, in resuming his seat, was cheered in the most cordial manner from both sides of the House.

Mr. W. E. FORSTER said he could not conceive anything more calculated to appease the irritation between the two countries than the concluding remarks of the noble lord; and although he objected in some slight degree to the course which the noble lord had taken with regard to the negotiations, he fully believed that he had been most anxious to bring them to a favorable conclusion, and that there was really less difference between himself and the American government than the noble lord perhaps supposed. There was one part of the motion of his honorable friend, the member for Reading, which was couched in too strong terms and hardly borne out by the speech of the noble lord. As to the failure of the negotiations with the United States government beyond the immediate point at issue, he should very much regret the fact of any such failure, for this had been the first serious principle of arbitration, which if acted upon in this case would doubtless be extended to disputes of still greater importance. (Hear, hear.) With regard to this question of arbitration it was but due to the noble lord to remember the difficulties of his position. Originally when Mr. Seward offered to arbitrate the war was still proceeding, and it was for the interests of the American government that the questions should be referred; but when in 1867 the noble lord made a similar offer the war had ceased and it was for our interest to terminate the controversy. But the position of the American government had changed. They fell back from their position of advocates of belligerent rights to their old standpoint of a great neutral Power, and advocates accordingly of the privileges of neutrals. Hence the noble lord was now placed in the position of making an offer in accordance with our own interests which the British government had refused when made by the Americans in accordance with their interests at the moment. He did not for a moment sympathize with the complaint of the American government in what they called our premature recognition of the belligerent rights of the Confederates; but he did not think the ground now broken by that government was the one stated by the noble lord. He did not believe they expected anything so absurd as that. We should state there was no civil war raging at the time of the recognition. The American government did not allege that there was no civil war raging at that time. What they did allege was that there was no war raging at sea. They said it was not your business to act upon assumption of what might take place; but you did so by proclaiming your neutrality in a war which had not then begun, and which, for aught you know, never might have begun. He thought that was an unsound opinion, but it was one held by a man in America of very great intelligence. He might here observe that though Mr. Adams had protested against the recognition, and though Mr. Seward had subsequently referred to the matter, the first official despatch on the subject from the American government, was written in April, 1865. In that despatch it was stated that the dispute between the countries had had its origin in this country having acknowledged the Confederates as belligerents on the sea before they had a single vessel of their own. He thought there was good reason for believing that the American government were mistaken in the position they took. He was not ashamed to confess that during the struggle he was a partisan, in consequence of his views on the slavery question. On the 9th of May, 1861, he put a question to the government on the subject, and in reply the late Sir G. C. Lewis stated that the proclamation would be issued certainly at that time. The issuing of the proclamation appeared to himself and other friends of the North as not an unfriendly act on the part of our executive towards the government of the United States. (Hear, hear.) Therefore, he could not agree in the opinion which Mr. Seward had formed of that proceeding. But as the point was one which warmly interested the North, before the publication of the Queen's proclamation he had heard that letters of marque were about to be issued in this country by Mr. Davis, acting for the Confederates, and he had been anxious to ascertain the light in which British vessels sailing under such letters would be regarded. He had been informed that the crews of such vessels would be looked upon as pirates, and he believed there was no doubt that would have been the case fifty years ago. He thought the noble lord, the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, expected too much of Mr. Seward. In his despatch of November 29, 1867, Mr. Seward said the United States government was distinctly informed by Lord Stanley that they must altogether waive their conviction that the proclamation was not justified. He distinctly understood Mr. Seward to complain that as a preliminary to an arbitration on the Alabama claims the noble lord, the Secretary of Foreign Affairs, required of him to waive his conviction that a proclamation was premature and contrary to international law. In effect the noble lord said to Mr. Seward, I will not refer the other matters to arbitration, but you acknowledge yourself wrong on the grounds that you have constantly taken to the proclamation having been premature and contrary to international law.

Lord STANLEY.—I did not require that; I only said I objected to have that question before the arbitrator. (Hear, hear.)

Mr. W. E. FORSTER would infer from the noble lord's own despatch that he went further than that, and he believed that Mr. Seward had arrived at the same conclusion. Again, as to not referring the question to arbitration, while he thought we had the clearest case on the point itself, he could not see why we should object to make that case before an arbitration. There might be an objection to such a course if arbitration was merely meant to be a mode of making confession where we knew we were wrong; but he believed that the parties to the treaty of Paris intended that arbitration should in future be regarded as a means of deciding disputes between two nations by the intervention of a third party without war or threat of war. In that line he trusted arbitration would henceforth be regarded, and therefore he could not see that the fact of our thinking ourselves right was any reason why we should decline arbitration as between ourselves and another nation also interested in the matter, but taking the opposite view. However, Mr. Seward did not ask for so much. He thought Mr. Seward's last despatch admitted of a different interpretation from that which might naturally be given to his first despatch. He appeared to require there should be arbitration on the question of the proclamation as well as that of the claims against the Alabama. But he thought that the noble lord's arguments on the subject of recognition must have had their effect on Mr. Seward. In his last despatch he either changed his ground or defined it so as to admit of a different interpretation being given to his demand from that which the wording of his first despatch seemed to require. In his last despatch he only claimed to make use of his opinion on the recognition as bearing on the case of the vessels. His impression was that if the noble lord had replied, to the effect that although we could not for a moment think of referring the question of our sovereign power to recognize the Confederate States, and that we did not think such recognition had anything to do with the departure of the Alabama, yet Mr. Seward might state his opinion on the subject as an argument to be taken into consideration, although in our judgment it was not a sound one. If he had made such a reply there could be little doubt that the representative of the United States at the arbitration would have felt that Mr. Seward's argument was an unsound one, and in that event we should have heard no more about it. But as Mr. Seward stood committed to his opinion, it was hardly possible that he would abandon it at the bidding of the noble lord. After all this was only a hitch, and he believed some mode of surmounting the difficulty might be devised. Everybody in England wished to have the difficulty amicably arranged, as did every party in the United States, with the exception of the Fenians. The noble lord was himself most anxious to settle, and if his suppositions were correct, that all the United States government wanted was to make use of certain arguments, he hoped the noble lord would not allow the negotiations to break off on that ground, but would reserve to himself the right of disproving these arguments. We are also to consider whether this matter could be settled otherwise than by arbitration. (Hear, hear.) He thought that if a statesman of high position were sent to America with power from the noble lord the matters in dispute might be arranged. Of course it was not for him to point out the exact mode in which this was to be done, but he trusted the noble lord would take the question into consideration. (Hear, hear.)

Sir G. BOWYER and Mr. SANFORD then addressed the House.

Mr. MILL while acknowledging the good feeling displayed towards America by the honorable member for Malden (Mr. Sanford), thought he and other speakers had quite overlooked the fundamental question—namely, the distinction between the shipping of contraband articles and the use of a neutral country as the basis of military or naval operations. (Hear, hear.) It was quite true that a vessel might have been sent to one of the belligerents just as military stores were sent to another without any violation of international law; but there was this condition, that the ship should go direct to the port of the belligerent before commencing hostilities. Now in the case of the Alabama this country was used for the fitting out of a naval expedition against the commerce of the North. The honorable member from Dundalk (Sir G. Bowyer) appeared to think this would be fair if both parties enjoyed the same advantage; but in point of fact only one side enjoyed the benefit of it. A neutral power ought not to permit its territory to be used for the fitting out of a hostile expedition. If the Alabama had been fitted out in a Confederate port, the North, on receiving the intelligence of it, might have intercepted the departure or have bombarded the harbor, but being fitted out in this country they had no opportunity of getting at it. Had we permitted this wilfully it would have clearly been a breach of neutrality. (Hear, hear.) The honorable member for Malden had blamed the noble lord for consenting to refer to arbitration the question of the violation of our municipal law, with which a foreign country could have nothing to do. The noble lord, however, was not open to any such blame. What we were bound to do was to make our municipal law sufficient for the fulfilment of our international obligations. It was not sufficient already, and this was the only ground of complaint which could be urged. The question was whether we were bound by international law to prevent certain things from being done, and whether, if we were so bound, we did all that we could to fulfil the obligation. He congratulated the House and the public that the issue between the United State, and this country was an exceedingly small one, and that this small point alone prevented the settlement of a great question. He did not think there was much room for blame in any quarter. This discussion had brought out the evidence that the two parties to the correspondence did not understand one another. (Hear, hear.) The noble lord, as it seemed, had not thoroughly understood what the United States demanded, and the United States government had not understood what the noble lord refused. He apprehended that the United States had never demanded that the question whether we were premature in recognizing the belligerent right of the Confederates should be referred to arbitration. It could not be maintained that our recognition, even if premature, would be a violation of international law. He had again and again seen it admitted by Americans, and even in the writings of Mr. Seward himself, that our recognition of the belligerent rights of the South was a thing about the truth of which we had by international law a right to decide for ourselves. It was, however, urged that what we did was unfriendly—precipitate, and in its precipitation was unprecedented. But he was not aware it had been contended that we had thereby committed any violation of international law for which we owed them reparation. What the Americans had claimed was that they should be allowed to use this early recognition as an argument to convince the arbitrator that the depredations of the Alabama would not have taken place at all, or at all events not to so great an extent, if it had not been for that unfriendly act on our part. Whether this was a good argument he would not say. But if it were a relavant argument for us to advance they ought to be allowed to use it; and if it were not relavant, why should this country stipulate for its exclusion? For if we were to stipulate for the exclusion of every frivolous or irrelavant argument he feared there would be a very long list of such stipulations. Surely any one competent to arbitrate between two great States was competent to decide what arguments were relavant and what were not. No impartial person would have any difficulty in allowing either side to have full liberty to introduce what arguments they pleased, and to listen to anything that might be urged against the conduct of this country by way of aggravation of the claim against us for damages. Some latitude must be left, limited only by the check imposed by the good sense and forbearance of the disputants on the other side. They might stipulate on their part that this country should not use irrelavant arguments, but they have not done so. (Hear, hear.) This, however, was only a part of the case, and he cordially welcomed the hints thrown out by the noble lord as to the probability of solving this question in some other way than by arbitration. Indeed, he did not see for what arbitration was specially required in this country at present. Who were disposed to deny that we owed reparation in some sort of degree to the United States? It was quite clear that the noble lord was of this opinion. This, therefore, was not a case in which arbitration was wanted. If we owed anything we must pay it; and what we wanted was some one to say, not whether we ought to pay, but how much, and this would be best decided not by arbitration, but by a mixed commission. (Hear, hear.) The principle of such a commission would be to investigate the claims in each particular case and to say what might be rejected altogether and what had nothing particular to do with the depredations of the Alabama, and to ascertain, in fact, what damage the commerce of the United States had received from our negligence in allowing the Alabama to leave our ports. He could not but think that there was a great increase of good and friendly feeling on both sides of the water. There were few people in this country who did not believe the arbitrator would decide against us, and that would be exceedingly bad for the interest of this country that he should do so. (Hear, hear.) In such a state of affairs, if some person, he would not say his honorable friend, the member for Birmingham, not unacceptable to the Americans, were sent to them, and if negotiations were reopened on the basis of an admission that we owed them reparation, and that the object was merely to ascertain the amount, he could not believe there would be any considerable difficulty in arriving at a settlement without going beyond the two despatches. He earnestly hoped that something of this kind was intended in the hint which Mr. Seward had thrown out. The great point for consideration was that there should be a settlement of what was the real law of nations on this matter, and that question was settled when we admitted that reparation was due from us. If this country admitted that we owed reparation for acts which the Alabama, without any intention on our part, was enabled to commit, then a question of international law which might again be the subject of quarrel would, so far as these two countries were concerned, be forever settled. (Cheers.)

Mr. GLADSTONE—The observations I have to make are very few, and they will be confined to the point before us. I cannot, however, allow the debate to close without expressing my obligations to my honorable friend the member for Reading for the very temperate and able manner in which he brought this subject before the House. I am bound also to express my obligations to the noble Lord the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs on account of the statement which he has made here. That was a speech of the most thorough equity, both to those who preceded him in office and those with whom he has come in contact during these very difficult negotiations. (Hear, hear.) In referring to the proceedings of Earl Russell he fairly stated the difference made by time and circumstances in the nature of the same proposal when it proceeds from the same parties. Bearing that in mind I think I may admit that the noble lord, when he determined to make his proposal of arbitration, exercised a wise discretion and without in any degree compromising the honor of this country took a step which was likely to lead to the termination of a difficulty of a very serious character. I listened with great respect to the speech of my honorable friend who has just sat down, and there was one material point in which I concur. I cannot understand from the papers on what precise point it was that the negotiations came to a close. My honorable friend, however, put a construction upon the expressions used by Mr. Seward in declining to waive his title to bring a certain question before the arbitrators, which was entirely different from the construction of the noble Lord. I must own that on reading these papers, having no other source of information open to me, I am not able to decide what was really the meaning of Mr. Seward and in what manner he intended to treat the question of belligerent rights when it should come before the arbitrator. If he intended so to treat it as to obtain the judgment of the arbitrator upon the question we were justified in our recognition, then that is one respect of the case; but if Mr. Seward intended to treat it as a matter of collateral illustration and to show, incidentally, the mischief which resulted to the United States as a consequence of that act, or to show that we were not sufficiently alive to our duty as neutrals, then the question has assumed quite a different aspect. I own that if the effect of the speech of the noble lord had been to leave the House without any prospect of the practical resumption of the negotiation I should have regarded with very great pain and regret what appeared to me to be an ambiguity quite beyond any power of solution by us. My friend who has just sat down may be right in the construction which he puts on the words of Mr. Seward. If we look narrowly at the words of Mr. Seward in his letter of the 29th of November, 1867, all that he refuses is to waive, by a preliminary admission, his title to contend before the arbitration that the Queen's proclamation was not justified. I think I may proceed with safety so far as to congratulate the noble lord on the effect which he evidently had produced in the mind of Mr. Seward between the date at which Mr. Seward first proposed to refer the whole controversy as it originally stood in the papers and the date at which he made the comparatively limited claim that he should not be required by a preliminary admission to waive his contention before the arbitration; that the matter of the Queen's proclamation is relevant to the main issue. I am bound, however, to say that in one opinion expressed by my honorable friend who has just spoken I am not able to concur, and I notice it simply because it is not desirable that a misunderstanding should exist on a point of fact. I understood my honorable friend to say that he thought there were no, or at least but few, members of this House who would hesitate to admit that reparation in some form or other is due from us to the United States in the matter of the Alabama; and he treated the speech of the noble lord as having conveyed on the part of the noble lord the admission that although we might go before the arbitrator, it would be with the expectation that the arbitration would be against us). I confess, sir, that whether rightly or wrongly, I did not so understand the speech of the noble lord. (Hear hear) But whether I understood rightly or wrongly the noble lord's speech, I must frankly own that although I should be thoroughly satisfied if this question can be brought before the judgment of a tribunal more impartial than our own. Yet I certainly am not prepared to make the admission which my honorable friend thinks will universally and without question be made. The reparation as due from us to America in the matter of the Alabama question, of whether what may fairly be called laches can be charged against us in the case, I take to be the very question which is to be referred. (Hear, hear.) But undoubtedly, if we are all of opinion, or if the great majority of us are of opinion that the arbitrator is to decide against us, the meaning of that is that we are of opinion we have committed an international wrong; and if we have committed such a wrong then we ought not to go before the arbitrator at all. (Hear, hear.) But we should by action of our own tender reparation. (Hear, hear.) I do not at all wonder that the government of the United States should feel that they have a cause of complaint in the case of the Alabama. On the other hand, I confess it appears to me that when we go before an arbitrator, if we do go before him, we may do so with a perfectly good and clear conscience, prepared to demand that if any failure or miscarriage has occurred—and no doubt some failure or miscarriage did occur—it was a failure or miscarriage of such a nature as is necessarily incidental to all administration of laws by human hands, and that we may very fairly and with perfect honor abide the issue, whatever it may be. (Hear, hear.) I confess also that I am afraid, if I rightly understand my honorable friend, that he was rather sanguine in his assumption that by admitting the claim of the United States to compensation for the damage inflicted by the Alabama, we should *ipso facto* secure the settlement of these difficult and controverted questions of international law for the future. (Hear, hear.) I own it seems to me that if any such general settlement is to be had in the first place, it cannot be had through the mere reference of any disputed question arising between England and the United States and confined to them alone. (Hear, hear). A great question of international law. No authority can suffice to rule without the concurrence of all the Powers, or, at any rate, all the principal, and especially all important maritime Powers. (Hear, hear.) Therefore I think we must be very careful lest we should assume the matter, which is in the hands of the noble lord, to be admitting of easier settlement than it will be really found to be. What, in truth, is the construction to be put upon these letters is a matter which we could not now critically pursue, even had we lost more confidence in the judgment and the intentions of the noble lord than, I am happy to admit, is the case. (Hear, hear.) This, at least, I think I am perfectly safe in saying, that we were all glad to hear the closing sentences of the noble lord's speech. (Hear, hear.) From those closing sentences I infer that, although the correspondence may have dropped in the special and particular forms in which it appears before us, yet the friendly and amicable prosecution of the question has not dropped at all, and that there is now in the hands of her Majesty's government a communication from the government of the United States, which communication is likely to pass into its further stages, and which will be, or at least may be, effectual, and, as far as we can judge from the manner in which it has been begun, for the settlement of this question. (Hear, hear.) Sir, if that is so I can only say I think that while on the one hand we have every reason to believe that the honor and interest of this country will be safe in the keeping of the noble lord, the noble lord, on his part, may rest perfectly assured that there will be in every part of this house, as well as every class of the people, a disposition to strengthen his hands, as far as may be in our power, and to encourage him in the prosecution of a difficult and arduous yet a most honorable task, namely, that of bringing to an amicable conclusion a controversy which, if unfortunately it took an unfavorable turn, would lead to consequences too disastrous to be dwelt upon for a moment. (Hear, hear.) I can, therefore, with satisfaction only repeat the acknowledgment of the noble lord personally for the fair manner in which he treated this question, with respect to his predecessors as well as to those with whom he is in communication, with which I commenced the few remarks I have made. (Hear, hear.)

The motion was then withdrawn.

LECTURES LAST NIGHT.

Love, Courtship and Marriage.

Last evening the first of a course of three lectures was delivered in the North Baptist church, corner of Christopher and Bedford streets, by the Rev. Dr. Burchard, on "Love, Courtship and Marriage." Although the weather, not to say anything of the horrible condition of the streets, was exceedingly unpropitious, there was a large audience, who during the course of the lecture gave frequent tokens of their interest and approbation of the subject. Strange to observe, however, the subject of courtship was not new to most of them; for at least three-fourths of those present had already passed their probationary exercises, and were beyond the stage either to woo or win again. The reverend gentleman commenced his discourse with an eloquent eulogium upon love, its inspirations and emotions. Referring to the fair sex generally he said that America was the Paradise of women. In no other country in the world—not even France, where politeness was proverbial—had woman so much freedom, so much respect, so much protection, or so much real opportunity for innocent enjoyments as in America. He described the principles which should regulate courtships and which, first of all, should emanate from love; for love was the talisman which seldom failed to beget love. Flirtation he strongly condemned, and pointed out the evil effects of that system unfortunately pursued by many. Love should invigorate the energies of the soul and stimulate one to the attainment of superior excellence. He was an earnest advocate of the marriage state. Young men looked forward to it as the *ne plus ultra* of earthly felicity, and not without good reason. He described in pathetic terms the happiness of home, and drew a beautiful picture of the connubial state generally. Among a few sound practical suggestions he showed that love alone should be the great incentive to marriage, all other considerations being set aside; that the first unkind word should never be uttered, then the second would not come at all. The lecture, which was interspersed with humorous and pathetic anecdotes, was listened to with much attention.

A New System of Elevating Water—Chucks—Gold.

The Polytechnic branch of the American Institute held a meeting last evening at the Cooper Institute to review first "New Inventions and Discoveries," and secondly to listen to a paper by Professor A. L. Fleury on "Gold, its History, Nature and Relationship to other Elements, and the Best Method for its Extraction." The room was fully occupied at the hour advertised for the opening of business, which, without preliminary notice, was commenced by the presentation on the part of Dr. Cole of a patented contrivance for elevating water by means of hydrostatic pressure, through a multiplication of syphons, from one to one thousand feet, if found necessary. The Doctor, while he admitted that there was nothing new in the theory, held that the manner in which he had applied it was sufficiently peculiar to be called novel. The invention, which consisted of syphons and air chambers without valves and in which the water that charged it was found exceedingly sensitive to the touch, was admired; but the mechanical critics present seemed to look upon it as a philosophical toy of little or no value in the world of use. On the retirement of Dr. Cole a gentleman presented a "chuck" for use in lathes, which he considered an improvement on its predecessors. Those present seemed to coincide with the speaker, no one offering any serious objections to the "chuck," at which no doubt its advocate chuckled. Professor A. L. Fleury then read his paper on gold, in which he attempted to show in as popular language as he could employ that quartz, in which gold was coincidentally found in close proximity to the sulphurates, was of aqueous origin, and not, as is usually held, of igneous formation. Quartz was a combination of sulphides, silicum, hydrates, oxides and a white earthy substance into which gold was often found projected, the whole being acted on by the ozone of the atmosphere. Gold, the lecturer held, was found in a molecular, crystalline state, amophrous, but metallic. Like plumbago, lampblack and the diamond, all carbon, it had also been detected, but so impalpable as to lose its granulated state and to be atomic. Gold was found, he also contended, in other than the metallic state, and that, like platinum, it undoubtedly derived its origin from the decomposition of silicates. The lecturer continued his arguments and illustrations until ten o'clock, to the general enlightenment and pleasure of his audience.

Downfall of the Monarchy and Louis Philippe.

The first of a series of descriptive historical lectures on France since 1848 was delivered last evening at the Everett Rooms, corner of Thirty-fourth street and Sixth avenue, by Mr. Tripp. The subject of the lecture was the "Downfall of the Monarchy and Louis Philippe. Owing, probably, to the miserable state of the weather there was a very slim audience present, the majority of which, however, were ladies. The lecturer merely rehearsed the various interesting details of the French revolution, which had for its fearful results the downfall of Louis Philippe, the establishment on the ruins of the monarchy of the republic under the Presidency of Lamartine, and, finally, the return of the Napoleonic dynasty to power. The touching scenes that took place in the palace of the King when the popular tumult had reached its height, the scenes in the convention when the two little princes were brought into the Assembly Hall, and the escape of the King as simple John Smith were described in a very vivid manner by the lecturer, who spoke as an authority on the subject, he happening to be in Paris at the time of the flight of the King and Queen. Louis Philippe the lecturer described as a good husband, a kind father, and a virtuous man, endowed with a mind of great grasp and culture. His downfall he ascribed to the fact that he was unable, notwithstanding his many great qualities of heart and head, to win over "that national sentiment which is the power behind the throne," and "failing to conciliate that patriotism of the national heart," which is the security of a good government, or to remedy the wrongs under which the people were suffering during the latter part of his reign.

California and Its Resources—Lecture by J. H. Warwick.

J. H. Warwick, of San Francisco, delivered his second lecture on "California, its Mines and Manufactures," last evening at Steinway Hall. Owing to the inclemency of the weather the audience was exceedingly small, and consisted mostly of gentlemen, more or less interested in mining. The lecturer had compiled for the occasion a digest of the history of the mining interest in