

CHAPTER XVI.

THE CIVIL WAR, 1860-1865.

THE OUTBREAK OF CIVIL WAR.--MRS. STOWE'S SON ENLISTS.--
THANKSGIVING

DAY IN WASHINGTON.--THE PROCLAMATION OF EMANCIPATION.--
REJOICINGS IN

BOSTON.--FRED STOWE AT GETTYSBURG.--LEAVING ANDOVER AND
SETTLING IN

HARTFORD.--A REPLY TO THE WOMEN OF ENGLAND.--LETTERS FROM JOHN
BRIGHT,

ARCHBISHOP WHATELY, AND NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE.

Immediately after Mrs. Stowe's return from Europe, it became only too evident that the nation was rapidly and inevitably drifting into all the horrors of civil war. To use her own words: "It was God's will that this nation--the North as well as the South--should deeply and terribly suffer for the sin of consenting to and encouraging the great oppressions of the South; that the ill-gotten wealth, which had arisen from striking hands with oppression and robbery, should be paid back in the taxes of war; that the blood of the poor slave, that had cried so many years from the ground in vain, should be answered by the blood of the sons from the best hearthstones through all the free States; that the slave mothers, whose tears nobody regarded, should have with them a great company of weepers, North and South,--Rachels weeping for their children and refusing to be comforted; that the free States, who

refused to listen when they were told of lingering starvation, cold, privation, and barbarous cruelty, as perpetrated on the slave, should have lingering starvation, cold, hunger, and cruelty doing its work among their own sons, at the hands of these slave-masters, with whose sins our nation had connived."

Mrs. Stowe spoke from personal experience, having seen her own son go forth in the ranks of those who first responded to the President's call for volunteers. He was one of the first to place his name on the muster-roll of Company A of the First Massachusetts Volunteers. While his regiment was still at the camp in Cambridge, Mrs. Stowe was called to Brooklyn on important business, from which place she writes to her husband under the date June 11, 1861:--

"Yesterday noon Henry (Ward Beecher) came in, saying that the Commonwealth, with the First (Massachusetts) Regiment on board, had just sailed by. Immediately I was of course eager to get to Jersey City to see Fred. Sister Eunice said she would go with me, and in a few minutes she, Hatty, Sam Scoville, and I were in a carriage, driving towards the Fulton Ferry. Upon reaching Jersey City we found that the boys were dining in the depot, an immense building with many tracks and platforms. It has a great cast-iron gallery just under the roof, apparently placed there with prophetic instinct of these times. There was a crowd of people pressing against the grated doors, which were locked, but through which we could see the soldiers. It was with great difficulty that we were at last permitted to go inside, and that

object seemed to be greatly aided by a bit of printed satin that some man gave Mr. Scoville.

"When we were in, a vast area of gray caps and blue overcoats was presented. The boys were eating, drinking, smoking, talking, singing, and laughing. Company A was reported to be here, there, and everywhere. At last S. spied Fred in the distance, and went leaping across the tracks towards him. Immediately afterwards a blue-overcoated figure bristling with knapsack and haversack, and looking like an assortment of packages, came rushing towards us.

"Fred was overjoyed, you may be sure, and my first impulse was to wipe his face with my handkerchief before I kissed him. He was in high spirits, in spite of the weight of blue overcoat, knapsack, etc., etc., that he would formerly have declared intolerable for half an hour. I gave him my handkerchief and Eunice gave him hers, with a sheer motherly instinct that is so strong within her, and then we filled his haversack with oranges.

"We stayed with Fred about two hours, during which time the gallery was filled with people, cheering and waving their handkerchiefs. Every now and then the band played inspiriting airs, in which the soldiers joined with hearty voices. While some of the companies sang, others were drilled, and all seemed to be having a general jollification. The meal that had been provided was plentiful, and consisted of coffee, lemonade, sandwiches, etc.

"On our way out we were introduced to the Rev. Mr. Cudworth, chaplain of the regiment. He is a fine-looking man, with black eyes and hair, set off by a white havelock. He wore a sword, and Fred, touching it, asked, 'Is this for use or ornament, sir?'

"'Let me see you in danger,' answered the chaplain, 'and you'll find out.'

"I said to him I supposed he had had many an one confided to his kind offices, but I could not forbear adding one more to the number. He answered, 'You may rest assured, Mrs. Stowe, I will do all in my power.'

"We parted from Fred at the door. He said he felt lonesome enough Saturday evening on the Common in Boston, where everybody was taking leave of somebody, and he seemed to be the only one without a friend, but that this interview made up for it all.

"I also saw young Henry. Like Fred he is mysteriously changed, and wears an expression of gravity and care. So our boys come to manhood in a day. Now I am watching anxiously for the evening paper to tell me that the regiment has reached Washington in safety."

In November, 1862, Mrs. Stowe was invited to visit Washington, to be present at a great thanksgiving dinner provided for the thousands of

fugitive slaves who had flocked to the city. She accepted the invitation the more gladly because her son's regiment was encamped near the city, and she should once more see him. He was now Lieutenant Stowe, having honestly won his promotion by bravery on more than one hard-fought field. She writes of this visit:

Imagine a quiet little parlor with a bright coal fire, and the gaslight burning above a centre-table, about which Hatty, Fred, and I are seated. Fred is as happy as happy can be to be with mother and sister once more. All day yesterday we spent in getting him. First we had to procure a permit to go to camp, then we went to the fort where the colonel is, and then to another where the brigadier-general is stationed. I was so afraid they would not let him come with us, and was never happier than when at last he sprang into the carriage free to go with us for forty-eight hours. "Oh!" he exclaimed in a sort of rapture, "this pays for a year and a half of fighting and hard work!"

We tried hard to get the five o'clock train out to Laurel, where J.'s regiment is stationed, as we wanted to spend Sunday all together; but could not catch it, and so had to content ourselves with what we could have. I have managed to secure a room for Fred next ours, and feel as though I had my boy at home once more. He is looking very well, has grown in thickness, and is as loving and affectionate as a boy can be.

I have just been writing a pathetic appeal to the brigadier-general to let him stay with us a week. I have also written to General Buckingham

in regard to changing him from the infantry, in which there seems to be no prospect of anything but garrison duty, to the cavalry, which is full of constant activity.

General B. called on us last evening. He seemed to think the prospect before us was, at best, of a long war. He was the officer deputed to carry the order to General McClellan relieving him of command of the army. He carried it to him in his tent about twelve o'clock at night. Burnside was there. McClellan said it was very unexpected, but immediately turned over the command. I said I thought he ought to have expected it after having so disregarded the President's order. General B. smiled and said he supposed McClellan had done that so often before that he had no idea any notice would be taken of it this time.

Now, as I am very tired, I must close, and remain as always, lovingly
yours,

HATTY.

During the darkest and most bitter period of the Civil War, Mrs. Stowe penned the following letter to the Duchess of Argyll:--

ANDOVER, July 31, 1863.

MY DEAR FRIEND,--Your lovely, generous letter was a real comfort to me, and reminded me that a year--and, alas! a whole year--had passed

since I wrote to your dear mother, of whom I think so often as one of God's noblest creatures, and one whom it comforts me to think is still in our world.

So many, good and noble, have passed away whose friendship was such a pride, such a comfort to me! Your noble father, Lady Byron, Mrs. Browning,--their spirits are as perfect as ever passed to the world of light. I grieve about your dear mother's eyes. I have thought about you all, many a sad, long, quiet hour, as I have lain on my bed and looked at the pictures on my wall; one, in particular, of the moment before the Crucifixion, which is the first thing I look at when I wake in the morning. I think how suffering is, and must be, the portion of noble spirits, and no lot so brilliant that must not first or last dip into the shadow of that eclipse. Prince Albert, too, the ideal knight, the Prince Arthur of our times, the good, wise, steady head and heart we--that is, our world, we Anglo-Saxons--need so much. And the Queen! yes, I have thought of and prayed for her, too. But could a woman hope to have always such a heart, and yet ever be weaned from earth "all this and heaven, too"?

Under my picture I have inscribed, "Forasmuch as Christ also hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves with the same mind."

This year has been one long sigh, one smothering sob, to me. And I thank God that we have as yet one or two generous friends in England who understand and feel for our cause.

The utter failure of Christian, anti-slavery England, in those instincts of a right heart which always can see where the cause of liberty lies, has been as bitter a grief to me as was the similar prostration of all our American religious people in the day of the Fugitive Slave Law. Exeter Hall is a humbug, a pious humbug, like the rest. Lord Shaftesbury. Well, let him go; he is a Tory, and has, after all, the instincts of his class. But I saw your duke's speech to his tenants! That was grand! If he can see these things, they are to be seen, and why cannot Exeter Hall see them? It is simply the want of the honest heart.

Why do the horrible barbarities of Southern soldiers cause no comment? Why is the sympathy of the British Parliament reserved for the poor women of New Orleans, deprived of their elegant amusement of throwing vitriol into soldiers' faces, and practicing indecencies inconceivable in any other state of society? Why is all expression of sympathy on the Southern side? There is a class of women in New Orleans whom Butler protects from horrible barbarities, that up to his day have been practiced on them by these so-called New Orleans ladies, but British sympathy has ceased to notice them. You see I am bitter. I am. You wonder at my brother. He is a man, and feels a thousand times more than I can, and deeper than all he ever has expressed, the spirit of these things. You must not wonder, therefore. Remember it is the moment when every nerve is vital; it is our agony; we tread the winepress alone, and they

whose cheap rhetoric has been for years pushing us into it now desert en masse. I thank my God I always loved and trusted most those who now do stand true,--your family, your duke, yourself, your noble mother. I have lost Lady Byron. Her great heart, her eloquent letters, would have been such a joy to me! And Mrs. Browning, oh such a heroic woman! None of her poems can express what she was,--so grand, so comprehending, so strong, with such inspired insight! She stood by Italy through its crisis. Her heart was with all good through the world. Your prophecy that we shall come out better, truer, stronger, will, I am confident, be true, and it was worthy of yourself and your good lineage.

Slavery will be sent out by this agony. We are only in the throes and ravings of the exorcism. The roots of the cancer have gone everywhere, but they must die--will. Already the Confiscation Bill is its natural destruction. Lincoln has been too slow. He should have done it sooner, and with an impulse, but come it must, come it will. Your mother will live to see slavery abolished, unless England forms an alliance to hold it up. England is the great reliance of the slave-power today, and next to England the faltering weakness of the North, which palter and dare not fire the great broadside for fear of hitting friends. These things must be done, and sudden, sharp remedies are mercy. Just now we are in a dark hour; but whether God be with us or not, I know He is with the slave, and with his redemption will come the solution of our question. I have long known what and who we had to deal with in this, for when I wrote "Uncle Tom's

Cabin" I had letters addressed to me showing a state of society perfectly inconceivable. That they violate graves, make drinking-cups of skulls, that ladies wear cameos cut from bones, and treasure scalps, is no surprise to me. If I had written what I knew of the obscenity, brutality, and cruelty of that society down there, society would have cast out the books; and it is for their interest, the interest of the whole race in the South, that we should succeed. I wish them no ill, feel no bitterness; they have had a Dahomian education which makes them savage. We don't expect any more of them, but if slavery is destroyed, one generation of education and liberty will efface these stains. They will come to themselves, these States, and be glad it is over.

I am using up my paper to little purpose. Please give my best love to your dear mother. I am going to write to her. If I only could have written the things I have often thought! I am going to put on her bracelet, with the other dates, that of the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia. Remember me to the duke and to your dear children. My husband desires his best regards, my daughters also.

I am lovingly ever yours,

H. B. STOWE.

Later in the year we hear again from her son in the army, and this time the news comes in a chaplain's letter from the terrible field of

Gettysburg. He writes:--

GETTYSBURG, PA., Saturday, July 11, 9.30 P. M.

MRS. H. B. STOWE:

Dear Madam,--Among the thousands of wounded and dying men on this war-scarred field, I have just met with your son, Captain Stowe. If you have not already heard from him, it may cheer your heart to know that he is in the hands of good, kind friends. He was struck by a fragment of a shell, which entered his right ear. He is quiet and cheerful, longs to see some member of his family, and is, above all, anxious that they should hear from him as soon as possible. I assured him I would write at once, and though I am wearied by a week's labor here among scenes of terrible suffering, I know that, to a mother's anxious heart, even a hasty scrawl about her boy will be more than welcome.

May God bless and sustain you in this troubled time!

Yours with sincere sympathy,

J. M. CROWELL.

The wound in the head was not fatal, and after weary months of intense suffering it imperfectly healed; but the cruel iron had too nearly

touched the brain of the young officer, and never again was he what he had been. Soon after the war his mother bought a plantation in Florida, largely in the hope that the out-of-door life connected with its management might be beneficial to her afflicted son. He remained on it for several years, and then, being possessed with the idea that a long sea voyage would do him more good than anything else, sailed from New York to San Francisco around the Horn. That he reached the latter city in safety is known; but that is all. No word from him or concerning him has ever reached the loving hearts that have waited so anxiously for it, and of his ultimate fate nothing is known.

Meantime, the year 1863 was proving eventful in many other ways to Mrs. Stowe. In the first place, the long and pleasant Andover connection of Professor Stowe was about to be severed, and the family were to remove to Hartford, Conn. They were to occupy a house that Mrs. Stowe was building on the bank of Park River. It was erected in a grove of oaks that had in her girlhood been one of Mrs. Stowe's favorite resorts. Here, with her friend Georgiana May, she had passed many happy hours, and had often declared that if she were ever able to build a house, it should stand in that very place. Here, then, it was built in 1863, and as the location was at that time beyond the city limits, it formed, with its extensive, beautiful groves, a particularly charming place of residence. Beautiful as it was, however, it was occupied by the family for only a few years. The needs of the growing city caused factories to spring up in the neighborhood, and to escape their encroachments the Stowes in 1873 bought and moved

into the house on Forest Street that has ever since been their Northern home. Thus the only house Mrs. Stowe ever planned and built for herself has been appropriated to the use of factory hands, and is now a tenement occupied by several families.

Another important event of 1863 was the publishing of that charming story of Italy, "Agnes of Sorrento," which had been begun nearly four years before. This story suggested itself to Mrs. Stowe while she was abroad during the winter of 1859-60. The origin of the story is as follows: One evening, at a hotel in Florence, it was proposed that the various members of the party should write short stories and read them for the amusement of the company. Mrs. Stowe took part in this literary contest, and the result was the first rough sketch of "Agnes of Sorrento." From this beginning was afterwards elaborated "Agnes of Sorrento," with a dedication to Annie Howard, who was one of the party.

Not the least important event of the year to Mrs. Stowe, and the world at large through her instrumentality, was the publication in the "Atlantic Monthly" of her reply to the address of the women of England. The "reply" is substantially as follows:--

January, 1863.

A REPLY

To "The affectionate and Christian Address of many thousands of Women of Great Britain and Ireland to their Sisters, the Women of the United States of America," (signed by)

ANNA MARIA BEDFORD (Duchess of Bedford).

OLIVIA CECILIA COWLEY (Countess Cowley).

CONSTANCE GROSVENOR (Countess Grosvenor).

HARRIET SUTHERLAND (Duchess of Sutherland).

ELIZABETH ARGYLL (Duchess of Argyll).

ELIZABETH FORTESCUE (Countess Fortescue).

EMILY SHAFTESBURY (Countess of Shaftesbury).

MARY RUTHVEN (Baroness Ruthven).

M. A. MILMAN (wife of Dean of St. Paul).

R. BUXTON (daughter of Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton).

CAROLINE AMELIA OWEN (wife of Professor Owen).

MRS. CHARLES WINDHAM.

C. A. HATHERTON (Baroness Hatherton).

ELIZABETH DUCIE (Countess Dowager of Ducie).

CECILIA PARKE (wife of Baron Parke).

MARY ANN CHALLIS (wife of the Lord Mayor of London).

E. GORDON (Duchess Dowager of Gordon).

ANNA M. L. MELVILLE (daughter of Earl of Leven and Melville).

GEORGIANA EBRINGTON (Lady Ebrington).

A. HILL (Viscountess Hill).

MRS. GOBAT (wife of Bishop Gobat of Jerusalem).

E. PALMERSTON (Viscountess Palmerston).

(And others).

SISTERS,--More than eight years ago you sent to us in America a document with the above heading. It is as follows:--

"A common origin, a common faith, and, we sincerely believe, a common cause, urge us, at the present moment, to address you on the subject of that system of negro slavery which still prevails so extensively, and, even under kindly disposed masters, with such frightful results, in many of the vast regions of the Western world.

"We will not dwell on the ordinary topics,--on the progress of civilization, on the advance of freedom everywhere, on the rights and requirements of the nineteenth century; but we appeal to you very seriously to reflect, and to ask counsel of God, how far such a state of things is in accordance with his Holy Word, the inalienable rights of immortal souls, and the pure and merciful spirit of the Christian religion. We do not shut our eyes to the difficulties, nay, the dangers, that might beset the immediate abolition of that long-established system. We see and admit the necessity of preparation for so great an event; but, in speaking of indispensable preliminaries, we cannot be silent on those laws of your country which, in direct contravention of God's own law, 'instituted in the time of man's innocency, deny in effect to the slave the sanctity of marriage, with all its joys, rights, and obligations; which separate, at the will of the master, the wife from the husband, and the children from the

parents. Nor can we be silent on that awful system which, either by statute or by custom, interdicts to any race of men, or any portion of the human family, education in the truths of the gospel and the ordinances of Christianity. A remedy applied to these two evils alone would commence the amelioration of their sad condition. We appeal to you then, as sisters, as wives, and as mothers, to raise your voices to your fellow-citizens, and your prayers to God, for the removal of this affliction and disgrace from the Christian world.

"We do not say these things in a spirit of self-complacency, as though our nation were free from the guilt it perceives in others.

"We acknowledge with grief and shame our heavy share in this great sin. We acknowledge that our fore-fathers introduced, nay compelled the adoption, of slavery in those mighty colonies. We humbly confess it before Almighty God; and it is because we so deeply feel and unfeignedly avow our own complicity, that we now venture to implore your aid to wipe away our common crime and our common dishonor."

This address, splendidly illuminated on vellum, was sent to our shores at the head of twenty-six folio volumes, containing considerably more than half a million of signatures of British women. It was forwarded to me with a letter from a British nobleman, now occupying one of the highest official positions in England, with a request on behalf of these ladies that it should be in any possible way presented to the attention of my countrywomen.

This memorial, as it now stands in its solid oaken case, with its heavy folios, each bearing on its back the imprint of the American eagle, forms a most unique library, a singular monument of an international expression of a moral idea. No right-thinking person can find aught to be objected against the substance or form of this memorial. It is temperate, just, and kindly; and on the high ground of Christian equality, where it places itself, may be regarded as a perfectly proper expression of sentiment, as between blood relations and equals in two different nations. The signatures to this appeal are not the least remarkable part of it; for, beginning at the very steps of the throne, they go down to the names of women in the very humblest conditions in life, and represent all that Great Britain possesses, not only of highest and wisest, but of plain, homely common sense and good feeling. Names of wives of cabinet ministers appear on the same page with the names of wives of humble laborers,--names of duchesses and countesses, of wives of generals, ambassadors, savants, and men of letters, mingled with names traced in trembling characters by hands evidently unused to hold the pen, and stiffened by lowly toil. Nay, so deep and expansive was the feeling, that British subjects in foreign lands had their representation. Among the signatures are those of foreign residents, from Paris to Jerusalem. Autographs so diverse, and collected from sources so various, have seldom been found in juxtaposition. They remain at this day a silent witness of a most singular tide of feeling which at that time swept over the British community and made for itself an expression, even at the risk

of offending the sensibilities of an equal and powerful nation.

No reply to that address, in any such tangible and monumental form, has ever been possible. It was impossible to canvass our vast territories with the zealous and indefatigable industry with which England was canvassed for signatures. In America, those possessed of the spirit which led to this efficient action had no leisure for it. All their time and energies were already absorbed in direct efforts to remove the great evil, concerning which the minds of their English sisters had been newly aroused, and their only answer was the silent continuance of these efforts.

From the slaveholding States, however, as was to be expected, came a flood of indignant recrimination and rebuke. No one act, perhaps, ever produced more frantic irritation, or called out more unsparing abuse. It came with the whole united weight of the British aristocracy and commonalty on the most diseased and sensitive part of our national life; and it stimulated that fierce excitement which was working before, and has worked since, till it has broken out into open war.

The time has come, however, when such an astonishing page has been turned, in the anti-slavery history of America, that the women of our country, feeling that the great anti-slavery work to which their English sisters exhorted them is almost done, may properly and naturally feel moved to reply to their appeal, and lay before them the history of what has occurred since the receipt of their affectionate

and Christian address.

Your address reached us just as a great moral conflict was coming to its intensest point. The agitation kept up by the anti-slavery portion of America, by England, and by the general sentiment of humanity in Europe, had made the situation of the slaveholding aristocracy intolerable. As one of them at the time expressed it, they felt themselves under the ban of the civilized world. Two courses only were open to them: to abandon slave institutions, the sources of their wealth and political power, or to assert them with such an overwhelming national force as to compel the respect and assent of mankind. They chose the latter.

To this end they determined to seize on and control all the resources of the Federal Government, and to spread their institutions through new States and Territories until the balance of power should fall into their hands and they should be able to force slavery into all the free States.

A leading Southern senator boasted that he would yet call the roll of his slaves on Bunker Hill; and for a while the political successes of the slave-power were such as to suggest to New England that this was no impossible event.

They repealed the Missouri Compromise, which had hitherto stood like the Chinese wall, between our Northwestern Territories and the

irruptions of slaveholding barbarians.

Then came the struggle between freedom and slavery in the new territory; the battle for Kansas and Nebraska, fought with fire and sword and blood, where a race of men, of whom John Brown was the immortal type, acted over again the courage, the perseverance, and the military-religious ardor of the old Covenanters of Scotland, and like them redeemed the ark of Liberty at the price of their own blood, and blood dearer than their own.

The time of the Presidential canvass which elected Mr. Lincoln was the crisis of this great battle. The conflict had become narrowed down to the one point of the extension of slave territory. If the slaveholders could get States enough, they could control and rule; if they were outnumbered by free States, their institutions, by the very law of their nature, would die of suffocation. Therefore Fugitive Slave Law, District of Columbia, Inter-State Slave-trade, and what not, were all thrown out of sight for a grand rally on this vital point. A President was elected pledged to opposition to this one thing alone,--a man known to be in favor of the Fugitive Slave Law and other so-called compromises of the Constitution, but honest and faithful in his determination on this one subject. That this was indeed the vital point was shown by the result. The moment Lincoln's election was ascertained, the slaveholders resolved to destroy the Union they could no longer control.

They met and organized a Confederacy which they openly declared to be the first republic founded on the right and determination of the white man to enslave the black man, and, spreading their banners, declared themselves to the Christian world of the nineteenth century as a nation organized with the full purpose and intent of perpetuating slavery.

But in the course of the struggle that followed, it became important for the new confederation to secure the assistance of foreign powers, and infinite pains were then taken to blind and bewilder the mind of England as to the real issues of the conflict in America.

It has been often and earnestly asserted that slavery had nothing to do with this conflict; that it was a mere struggle for power; that the only object was to restore the Union as it was, with all its abuses. It is to be admitted that expressions have proceeded from the national administration which naturally gave rise to misapprehension, and therefore we beg to speak to you on this subject more fully.

And first the declaration of the Confederate States themselves is proof enough, that, whatever may be declared on the other side, the maintenance of slavery is regarded by them as the vital object of their movement.

We ask your attention under this head to the declaration of their Vice-President, Stephens, in that remarkable speech delivered on the

21st of March, 1861, at Savannah, Georgia, wherein he declares the object and purposes of the new Confederacy. It is one of the most extraordinary papers which our century has produced. I quote from the verbatim report in the "Savannah Republican" of the address as it was delivered in the Athenæum of that city, on which occasion, says the newspaper from which I copy, "Mr. Stephens took his seat amid a burst of enthusiasm and applause such as the Athenæum has never had displayed within its walls within the recollection 'of the oldest inhabitant,'"

Last, not least, the new Constitution has put at rest forever all the agitating questions relating to our peculiar institution,-- African slavery as it exists among us, the proper status of the negro in our form of civilization. This was the immediate cause of the late rupture and present revolution. Jefferson, in his forecast, had anticipated this as the "rock upon which the old Union would split." He was right. What was a conjecture with him is now a realized fact. But whether he fully comprehended the great truth upon which that rock stood and stands may be doubted.

The prevailing ideas entertained by him, and most of the leading statesmen at the time of the formation of the old Constitution were, that the enslavement of the African was in violation of the laws of nature; that it was wrong in principle, socially, morally, and politically.

In the mean while, during the past year, the Republican administration, with all the unwonted care of organizing an army and navy, and conducting military operations on an immense scale, have proceeded to demonstrate the feasibility of overthrowing slavery by purely constitutional measures. To this end they have instituted a series of movements which have made this year more fruitful in anti-slavery triumphs than any other since the emancipation of the British West Indies. The District of Columbia, as belonging strictly to the national government and to no separate State, has furnished a fruitful subject of remonstrance from British Christians with America. We have abolished slavery there, and thus wiped out the only blot of territorial responsibility on our escutcheon.

By another act, equally grand in principle, and far more important in its results, slavery is forever excluded from the Territories of the United States.

By another act, America has consummated the long-delayed treaty with Great Britain for the suppression of the slave-trade. In ports whence slave vessels formerly sailed with the connivance of the port officers, the administration has placed men who stand up to their duty, and for the first time in our history the slave-trader is convicted and hung as a pirate. This abominable secret traffic has been wholly demolished by the energy of the Federal Government.

Lastly, and more significant still, the United States government has

in its highest official capacity taken distinct anti-slavery ground, and presented to the country a plan of peaceable emancipation with suitable compensation. This noble-spirited and generous offer has been urged on the slaveholding States by the chief executive with earnestness and sincerity. But this is but half the story of the anti-slavery triumphs of this year. We have shown you what has been done for freedom by the simple use of the ordinary constitutional forces of the Union. We are now to show you what has been done to the same end by the constitutional war-power of the nation.

By this power it has been this year decreed that every slave of a rebel who reaches the lines of our army becomes a free man; that all slaves found deserted by their masters become free men; that every slave employed in any service for the United States thereby obtains his liberty; and that every slave employed against the United States in any capacity obtains his liberty; and lest the army should contain officers disposed to remand slaves to their masters, the power of judging and delivering up slaves is denied to army officers, and all such acts are made penal.

By this act the Fugitive Slave Law is for all present purposes practically repealed. With this understanding and provision, wherever our armies march they carry liberty with them. For be it remembered that our army is almost entirely a volunteer one, and that the most zealous and ardent volunteers are those who have been for years fighting, with tongue and pen, the abolition battle. So marked is the

character of our soldiers in this respect, that they are now familiarly designated in the official military dispatches of the Confederate States as "the Abolitionists." Conceive the results when an army so empowered by national law marches through a slave territory. One regiment alone has to our certain knowledge liberated two thousand slaves during the past year, and this regiment is but one out of hundreds.

Lastly, the great decisive measure of the war has appeared,--the President's Proclamation of Emancipation.

This also has been much misunderstood and misrepresented in England. It has been said to mean virtually this: Be loyal and you shall keep your slaves; rebel and they shall be free. But let us remember what we have just seen of the purpose and meaning of the Union to which the rebellious States are invited back. It is to a Union which has abolished slavery in the District of Columbia, and interdicted slavery in the Territories; which vigorously represses the slave-trade, and hangs the convicted slaver as a pirate; which necessitates emancipation by denying expansion to slavery, and facilitates it by the offer of compensation. Any slaveholding States which should return to such a Union might fairly be supposed to return with the purpose of peaceable emancipation. The President's Proclamation simply means this: Come in and emancipate peaceably with compensation; stay out and I emancipate, nor will I protect you from the consequences.

Will our sisters in England feel no heartbeat at that event? Is it not one of the predicted voices of the latter day, saying under the whole heavens, "It is done; the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ"?

And now, sisters of England, in this solemn, expectant hour, let us speak to you of one thing which fills our hearts with pain and solicitude. It is an unaccountable fact, and one which we entreat you seriously to ponder, that the party which has brought the cause of freedom thus far on its way, during the past eventful year, has found little or no support in England. Sadder than this, the party which makes slavery the chief corner-stone of its edifice finds in England its strongest defenders.

The voices that have spoken for us who contend for liberty have been few and scattering. God forbid that we should forget those few noble voices, so sadly exceptional in the general outcry against us! They are, alas! too few to be easily forgotten. False statements have blinded the minds of your community, and turned the most generous sentiments of the British heart against us. The North are fighting for supremacy and the South for independence, has been the voice. Independence? for what? to do what? To prove the doctrine that all men are not equal; to establish the doctrine that the white may enslave the negro!

In the beginning of our struggle, the voices that reached us across

the water said: "If we were only sure you were fighting for the abolition of slavery, we should not dare to say whither our sympathies for your cause might not carry us." Such, as we heard, were the words of the honored and religious nobleman who draughted this very letter which you signed and sent us, and to which we are now replying.

When these words reached us we said: "We can wait; our friends in England will soon see whither this conflict is tending." A year and a half have passed; step after step has been taken for liberty; chain after chain has fallen, till the march of our armies is choked and clogged by the glad flocking of emancipated slaves; the day of final emancipation is set; the border States begin to move in voluntary consent; universal freedom for all dawns like the sun in the distant horizon, and still no voice from England. No voice? Yes, we have heard on the high seas the voice of a war-steamer, built for a man-stealing Confederacy, with English gold, in an English dockyard, going out of an English harbor, manned by English sailors, with the full knowledge of English government officers, in defiance of the Queen's proclamation of neutrality! So far has English sympathy overflowed. We have heard of other steamers, iron-clad, designed to furnish to a slavery-defending Confederacy their only lack,--a navy for the high seas. We have heard that the British Evangelical Alliance refuses to express sympathy with the liberating party, when requested to do so by the French Evangelical Alliance. We find in English religious newspapers all those sad degrees in the downward-sliding scale of defending and apologizing for slaveholders and slave-holding, with

which we have so many years contended in our own country. We find the President's Proclamation of Emancipation spoken of in those papers only as an incitement to servile insurrection. Nay, more,--we find in your papers, from thoughtful men, the admission of the rapid decline of anti-slavery sentiments in England.

This very day the writer of this has been present at a solemn religious festival in the national capital, given at the home of a portion of those fugitive slaves who have fled to our lines for protection,--who, under the shadow of our flag, find sympathy and succor. The national day of thanksgiving was there kept by over a thousand redeemed slaves, and for whom Christian charity had spread an ample repast. Our sisters, we wish you could have witnessed the scene. We wish you could have heard the prayer of a blind old negro, called among his fellows John the Baptist, when in touching broken English he poured forth his thanksgivings. We wish you could have heard the sound of that strange rhythmical chant which is now forbidden to be sung on Southern plantations,--the psalm of this modern exodus,--which combines the barbaric fire of the Marseillaise with the religious fervor of the old Hebrew prophet:--

"Oh, go down, Moses,
Way down into Egypt's land!
Tell King Pharaoh
To let my people go!
Stand away dere,

Stand away dere,
And let my people go!"

As we were leaving, an aged woman came and lifted up her hands in blessing. "Bressed be de Lord dat brought me to see dis first happy day of my life! Bressed be de Lord!" In all England is there no Amen?

We have been shocked and saddened by the question asked in an association of Congregational ministers in England, the very blood relations of the liberty-loving Puritans,--"Why does not the North let the South go?"

What! give up the point of emancipation for these four million slaves? Turn our backs on them, and leave them to their fate? What! leave our white brothers to run a career of oppression and robbery, that, as sure as there is a God that ruleth in the armies of heaven, will bring down a day of wrath and doom? Remember that wishing success to this slavery-establishing effort is only wishing to the sons and daughters of the South all the curses that God has written against oppression. Mark our words! If we succeed, the children of these very men who are now fighting us will rise up to call us blessed. Just as surely as there is a God who governs in the world, so surely all the laws of national prosperity follow in the train of equity; and if we succeed, we shall have delivered the children's children of our misguided brethren from the wages of sin, which is always and everywhere death.

And now, sisters of England, think it not strange if we bring back the words of your letter, not in bitterness, but in deepest sadness, and lay them down at your door. We say to you, Sisters, you have spoken well; we have heard you; we have heeded; we have striven in the cause, even unto death. We have sealed our devotion by desolate hearth and darkened homestead,--by the blood of sons, husbands, and brothers. In many of our dwellings the very light of our lives has gone out; and yet we accept the life-long darkness as our own part in this great and awful expiation, by which the bonds of wickedness shall be loosed, and abiding peace established, on the foundation of righteousness. Sisters, what have you done, and what do you mean to do?

We appeal to you as sisters, as wives, and as mothers, to raise your voices to your fellow-citizens, and your prayers to God for the removal of this affliction and disgrace from the Christian world.

In behalf of many thousands of American women.

HARRIET BEECHER STOWE.

WASHINGTON, November 27, 1862.

The publication of this reply elicited the following interesting letter from John Bright:--

ROCHDALE, March 9, 1863.

DEAR MRS. STOWE,--I received your kind note with real pleasure, and felt it very good of you to send me a copy of the "Atlantic Monthly" with your noble letter to the women of England. I read every word of it with an intense interest, and I am quite sure that its effect upon opinion here has been marked and beneficial. It has covered some with shame, and it has compelled many to think, and it has stimulated not a few to act. Before this reaches you, you will have seen what large and earnest meetings have been held in all our towns in favor of abolition and the North. No town has a building large enough to contain those who come to listen, to applaud, and to vote in favor of freedom and the Union. The effect of this is evident on our newspapers and on the tone of Parliament, where now nobody says a word in favor of recognition, or mediation, or any such thing.

The need and duty of England is admitted to be a strict neutrality, but the feeling of the millions of her people is one of friendliness to the United States and its government. It would cause universal rejoicing, among all but a limited circle of aristocracy and commercially rich and corrupt, to hear that the Northern forces had taken Vicksburg on the great river, and Charleston on the Atlantic, and that the neck of the conspiracy was utterly broken.

I hope your people may have strength and virtue to win the great cause intrusted to them, but it is fearful to contemplate the amount of the

depravity in the North engendered by the long power of slavery. New England is far ahead of the States as a whole,--too instructed and too moral; but still I will hope that she will bear the nation through this appalling danger.

I well remember the evening at Rome and our conversation. You lamented the election of Buchanan. You judged him with a more unfriendly but a more correct eye than mine. He turned out more incapable and less honest than I hoped for. And I think I was right in saying that your party was not then sufficiently consolidated to enable it to maintain its policy in the execution, even had Frémont been elected. As it is now, six years later, the North but falteringly supports the policy of the government, though impelled by the force of events which then you did not dream of. President Lincoln has lived half his troubled reign. In the coming half I hope he may see land; surely slavery will be so broken up that nothing can restore and renew it; and, slavery once fairly gone, I know not how all your States can long be kept asunder.

Believe me very sincerely yours,

JOHN BRIGHT.

It also called forth from Archbishop Whately the following letter:--

PALACE, DUBLIN, January, 1863.

DEAR MADAM,--In acknowledging your letter and pamphlet, I take the opportunity of laying before you what I collect to be the prevailing sentiments here on American affairs. Of course there is a great variety of opinion, as may be expected in a country like ours. Some few sympathize with the Northerns, and some few with the Southerns, but far the greater portion sympathize with neither completely, but lament that each party should be making so much greater an expenditure of life and property than can be compensated for by any advantage they can dream of obtaining.

Those who are the least favorable to the Northerns are not so from any approbation of slavery, but from not understanding that the war is waged in the cause of abolition. "It was waged," they say, "ostensibly for the restoration of the Union," and in attestation of this, they refer to the proclamation which announced the confiscation of slaves that were the property of secessionists, while those who adhered to the Federal cause should be exempt from such confiscation, which, they say, did not savor much of zeal for abolition. And. if the other object--the restoration of the Union--could be accomplished, which they all regard as hopeless, they do not understand how it will tend to the abolition of slavery. On the contrary, "if," say they, "the separation had been allowed to take place peaceably, the Northerns might, as we do, have proclaimed freedom to every slave who set foot on their territory; which would have been a great check to slavery, and especially to any cruel treatment of slaves." Many who have a great dislike to slavery yet hold that the Southerns had at

least as much right to secede as the Americans had originally to revolt from Great Britain. And there are many who think that, considering the dreadful distress we have suffered from the cotton famine, we have shown great forbearance in withstanding the temptation of recognizing the Southern States and to break the blockade.

Then, again, there are some who are provoked at the incessant railing at England, and threats of an invasion of Canada, which are poured forth in some of the American papers.

There are many, also, who consider that the present state of things cannot continue much longer if the Confederates continue to hold their own, as they have done hitherto; and that a people who shall have maintained their independence for two or three years will be recognized by the principal European powers. Such appears to have been the procedure of the European powers in all similar cases, such as the revolt of the Anglo-American and Spanish-American colonies, of the Haytians and the Belgians. In these and other like cases, the rule practically adopted seems to have been to recognize the revolters, not at once, but after a reasonable time had been allowed to see whether they could maintain their independence; and this without being understood to have pronounced any decision either way as to the justice of the cause.

Moreover, there are many who say that the negroes and people of color are far from being kindly or justly treated in the Northern States. An

emancipated slave, at any rate, has not received good training for earning his bread by the wages of labor; and if, in addition to this and his being treated as an outcast, he is excluded, as it is said, from many employments, by the refusal of white laborers to work along with him, he will have gained little by taking refuge in the Northern States.

I have now laid before you the views which I conceive to be most prevalent among us, and for which I am not myself responsible.

For the safe and effectual emancipation of slaves, I myself consider there is no plan so good as the gradual one which was long ago suggested by Bishop Hinds. What he recommended was an ad valorem tax upon slaves,--the value to be fixed by the owner, with an option to government to purchase at that price. Thus the slaves would be a burden to the master, and those the most so who should be the most valuable, as being the most intelligent and steady, and therefore the best qualified for freedom; and it would be his interest to train his slaves to be free laborers, and to emancipate them, one by one, as speedily as he could with safety. I fear, however, that the time is gone by for trying this experiment in America.

With best wishes for the new year, believe me

Yours faithfully,

Rd. Whately.

Among the many letters written from this side of the Atlantic regarding the reply, was one from Nathaniel Hawthorne, in which he says:--

I read with great pleasure your article in the last "Atlantic." If anything could make John Bull blush, I should think it might be that; but he is a hardened and villainous hypocrite. I always felt that he cared nothing for or against slavery, except as it gave him a vantage-ground on which to parade his own virtue and sneer at our iniquity.

With best regards from Mrs. Hawthorne and myself to yourself and family, sincerely yours,

NATH'L HAWTHORNE.