

Civil War Literature

By CHARLES FRANCIS ADAMS.

IV.

In dealing with the long diplomatic career of Lord Lyons* as a whole, Lord Newton is naturally most attracted to that portion of it in which he himself to an extent participated—the later experience of his chief as Ambassador of Great Britain at Paris during the fall of the Napoleonic dynasty, and the long period of unrest and uncertainty which succeeded thereto; for Lord Lyons's tenure of the office covered the twenty memorable years between 1867 and 1887. In making such use of the large mass of American material at his service as commended itself to his sense of literary proportion, Lord Newton has manifestly felt under a certain constraint as respects the experiences of Lord Lyons. America being to him an unknown diplomatic quantity, the biographer seems to stand in a somewhat unnecessary apprehension of a still surviving sensitiveness. His sense of the humor of a situation at times, however, happily dominates. So we are now favored, again confidentially, with this really droll illustration of the difference resulting from the point of view. It affords what the late Horace Greeley would have termed "mighty interestin' readin'," when taken in connection with the memoirs of Mr. Gideon Welles. It very freshly describes a somewhat surprising conception which at one time seems to have obtained lodgment in the mind of the Secretary of State, but to which reference will in vain be sought in our own historical material, including the three solid volumes, "Service in Washington." Lord Newton says:

In August, 1863 [a month, be it observed, after the Gettysburg crisis] a somewhat surprising proposal came from Mr. Seward. In a confidential conversation with Lord Lyons he expatiated upon the necessity of reviving a better feeling between Great Britain and the United States, and of making some demonstration calculated to produce the desired effect. England, he said, had made such a demonstration before the war by the visit of the Prince of Wales, which had been productive of the happiest results. Now it was the turn of the United States to make a corresponding display of goodwill, but it was difficult to devise the means of doing so, as the President could not travel, and America possessed no Princes. Would Lord Lyons think the matter over?

The latter, having duly reflected, expressed the opinion that there was no real hostility to the United States in England, although there was undoubtedly a certain amount of sympathy with the South, and that consequently there was no necessity to take any extraordinary step. Mr. Seward, however, having returned to his suggestion of making some counter demonstration in the nature of the visit of the Prince of Wales. . . .

"The only conjecture I can make," wrote

Lord Lyons, "is that he thinks of going to England himself. He may possibly want to be absent for some reasons connected with the presidential contest. If he thinks that he has himself any chance of being taken as a candidate by either party he is the only man who thinks so at this moment. It is, however, generally considered to be an advantage to a candidate to be out of the country during the canvass. I cannot see any good which his going to England could effect with regard to public opinion. If he considered himself as returning the Prince of Wales's visit, the absurdity of the notion would alone prevent its being offensive. The majority of the Americans would probably be by no means pleased if he met with a brilliant reception. He has, besides, so much more vanity, personal and national, than tact, that he seldom makes a favorable impression at first. When one comes really to know him, one is surprised to find much to esteem and even to like in him. It is however hardly worth while to say more on the subject, for it is a mere conjecture of mine that he was thinking of going to England when he spoke to me. It might however be of advantage for me to know whether you would wish to encourage the idea of some public demonstration or other, if he should return to the subject when I get back to Washington. I told him that so far as public opinion in England was concerned, the one thing to do was to let us really have a supply of cotton; that without this demonstrations and professions would be unsuccessful: that with it they would not be required."

Whether Lord Lyons's conjecture was well-founded or otherwise, the prospect of a visit from Mr. Seward possessed no charms for Lord Russell, whose antipathy to the American Secretary of State was pretty generally understood. "The following letter," Lord Newton adds, "appears to be full of good sense and instructive as regards the real value of those visits of exalted personages which produce such illimitable enthusiasm in the press." Lord Russell to Lord Lyons, October 2, 1863:

Upon considering Mr. Seward's hints to you of doing something here as an equivalent or a return for the Prince of Wales's visit to the United States, I do not see my way to anything satisfactory. These visits of Great Personages seldom have more than a transient effect; they form no real and solid relation of friendship between nations, though if undertaken at a fortunate moment, they serve to bring out and demonstrate a friendship already existing.

The visit of the Prince of Wales was thus fortunately well timed; but if Mr. Seward or any conspicuous statesman of the United States were to visit this country now he would find us all divided. The Government would show him every attention and civility: the Anti-Slavery party would probably make great show of sympathy by addresses and public receptions. But the party who press for recognition of the South would hold aloof, and in some unmistakable manner, prove that there is a great deal of sympathy with the South in this country.

In these circumstances I do not think that any such mark of friendship as Mr. Seward suggests would be likely to produce the good effect of which he is desirous. Mr. Sumner's conduct is very bad; he has taken infinite pains to misrepresent me in every particular.

I have done my best to counteract his efforts by my speech at Blairgowrie. I don't know how far I may be successful, but I rely on your constant watchfulness to prevent any rupture between the two countries, which of all things I should most lament.

The question of the ironclads is still under investigation. The Cabinet must consider it very soon, and I have no doubt we shall do all that is right to preserve our neutrality free from just reproach—unjust reproach we shall not yield to.

Owing to continued ill-health, Lord Lyons was compelled to pay a visit to Canada in the autumn of 1863, and, upon his return to Washington in October, accompanied by Admiral Milne, then in command of the British South Atlantic naval force, he reports Mr. Seward in a more conciliatory frame of mind than ever, chiefly owing to the detention by the British Government of Confederate ironclads just referred to. "Mr. Welles and the lawyers at the Navy Department, however, still 'appeared to be thoroughly wrong-headed and unable to see that municipal law is one thing and International Law and the relations between Governments another.' The Secretary of the Treasury, Mr. Chase, engaged on an electioneering tour, distinguished himself by spirited speeches, talking of 'taking Old Mother England by the hair and giving her a good shaking,' and was himself outdone (in anti-British rancour) by another distinguished politician, Mr. Sumner. There was in fact no sign of change in the feeling of the people at large towards us, and the visit of a Russian squadron to New York was made the occasion of an anti-British and anti-French demonstration."

We next obtain from these confidential communications a curious glimpse of one feature of our Civil War record to which American investigators have given scant attention. The bounty system in use in recruiting our volunteer army, and the abuses incident thereto, occasioned Lord Lyons an amount of trouble of which the patriotic American of the present day has little realizing sense. Complaining bitterly of the burden of work thrust upon him, Lord Lyons wrote to London:

It seems to me that everybody North and South who gets into trouble discovers that he or she is a non-naturalized British subject.

Lord Newton then proceeds:

Consequently, when hostilities began, the Washington Legation was besieged by persons who desired to be exempted from service by getting registered as British subjects. . . .

The difficulty really arose out of the defective military organization of the United States, which was based upon the voluntary system. The so-called voluntary system, which is in reality only a high-sounding device to impose upon an impecunious minority what ought to be a general obligation, may be an admirable institution in time of peace, but it invariably breaks down in a really serious emergency. . . .

At first these appeals [for additional levies] were responded to with the greatest enthusiasm, but it was not long-lived, for, as has been related, even as early as the battle of Bull's Run in July, militia regiments insisted

*Lord Lyons: *A Record of British Diplomacy*. By Lord Newton. London: Edward Arnold. 2 vols. 30s. net. The work is published in this country by Longmans, Green & Co., New York, \$8.50 net.

upon leaving at the completion of their period of service, and from that date the difficulty in finding recruits continued to increase. . . .

It became clear that not only was it difficult to attract volunteers, but also to keep them when obtained. In view of the methods employed in recruiting it was not surprising that the results were frequently unsatisfactory.

The usual method employed was to inform the Governor of a State of the number of men required. The Governor having made the necessary announcement, private persons came forward offering to raise regiments. Each set forth his claims, his influence in the State or among a certain portion of the population, and his devotion to the party in power. . . .

As the contest progressed, the bounty system was responsible for innumerable cases of kidnapping in which British subjects were the sufferers. Kidnapping especially flourished in New York, where the emigrants were an easy prey. . . .

In the autumn of 1862, Fire Island was filled with unfortunates cheated and deluded, or forced thither by the police who received ten dollars a head for each man. Now in addition to the enormous bounties offered, there is placarded in conspicuous places on the walls of the New Park barracks at the City Hall the following very suggestive notice: "Fifteen dollars Hand Money given to any man bringing a volunteer."

Lord Newton then quotes from a report of Gen. Wistar, in command of the national forces at Yorktown, Va. Gen. Wistar in this report calls attention to what he refers to as an "extended spirit of desertion prevailing among the recruits recently received from the North." He then goes on:

There seems to be little doubt that many, in fact I think I am justified in saying the most, of these unfortunate men were either deceived or kidnapped, or both, in the most scandalous and inhuman manner, in New York City, where they were drugged and carried off to New Hampshire and Connecticut, mustered in and uniformed before their consciousness was fully restored.

Even their bounty was obtained by the parties who were instrumental in these nefarious transactions, and the poor wretches find themselves on returning to their senses, mustered soldiers, without any pecuniary benefit. Nearly all are foreigners, mostly sailors, both ignorant of and indifferent to the objects of the war in which they thus suddenly find themselves involved.

Lord Newton, evidently with an eye to Earl Roberts's movement in favor of compulsory military service, now agitated in Great Britain, then goes on:

These outrages committed in the name of the Voluntary System, and many of the victims of which were Englishmen, constantly took place even after the Act of July, 1862, which provided for the enrolment in the militia of all able-bodied citizens between the ages of eighteen and forty-five, and it may be presumed therefore either that the United States Government was afraid to enforce its laws or that the so-called "volunteers" were chiefly foreign subjects. In any case, amongst these unhappy victims were numerous British youths under twenty-one years of age, and the efforts made to obtain their discharge

on the ground of their being minors were rarely successful and eventually abandoned altogether.

The wealth of undisclosed original material of the character of that here given—revelations from the inside of men, opinions, and events of our Civil War days—reposing in the archive-room of Norfolk House may be inferred from this fact: Lord Newton asserts that early in November, 1863, Lord Lyons had then already that year received from Mr. Seward considerably more than nine hundred notes. At some future time these will afford a rich field for the American historical investigator; but some conception of the Civil War work devolved on the British legation at Washington may be gathered from the official figures given by Lord Newton. During the year 1864 no less than 1,816 dispatches or letters were received from the United States Government; and Lord Lyons during the same period transmitted 2,782, addressed apparently to the Department of State. Lord Newton adds: "Nor does it seem probable that Lord Lyons's numerous private letters to the Secretary of State and other correspondents are included; whilst there is no mention of telegrams." Meanwhile, there is undeniable significance in this extract from a letter subsequently written by Lord Lyons to Earl Granville, then Foreign Secretary: "Above all things, we must try and keep as much as possible out of Blue Books. If it is absolutely necessary to have one now, pray let me have an opportunity of looking over everything of mine it is proposed to publish, and suggesting omissions."

Lord Newton thus refers to the usual routine of the British Chancery at Washington during the Civil War:

The secretaries and attachés had to be at their desks at 9 a. m. They worked continuously without a luncheon interval until past 7 p. m., then adjourned to Willard's Hotel to indulge in the pernicious local habit of swallowing cocktails, dined at 8, and were frequently obliged to return to the Chancery afterwards and work till midnight or even later.

Elsewhere, reference as follows is made by Lord Lyons to the Washington of the war period:

It "is a terrible place for young men; nothing whatever in the shape of amusement for them, little or no society of any kind now; no theatre, no club." (I, 87.)

The simple fact is that with all who have personal recollections of it—now not a large number—the national capital of the Civil War period is, mentally, morally, and socially, an altogether unsavory memory. With its barrack-like taverns, unpaved, unkempt, and overcrowded, the common resort of the vicious and depraved of both sexes, it was a half-built, wretchedly governed, semi-Southern municipality suddenly called upon to meet the requirements of a great war, involving the presence of an improvised army and the daily expenditure of millions in paper dollars and fractional currency. Of Lord Lyons himself under such unattractive envioning conditions his biographer now

says: "He used to state, in after life, with much apparent satisfaction, that during his five years' residence in the United States, he had never 'taken a drink or made a speech.'"

Lord Newton concludes his comments on this subject as follows:

In spite, however, of the disadvantageous circumstances under which Sir Edward Malet passed his time at Washington, it is worthy of note that he considered that every one in the British Diplomatic Service should rejoice if he had the chance of going there, and he bore emphatic testimony that, according to his experience, English people were treated with extraordinary courtesy and hospitality however high political feeling may have run.

Physically broken down by labor of this sort, Lord Lyons welcomed his permission temporarily to return home in December, 1864. So thoroughly was he broken down that upon arriving in England and domesticating himself with his sister, the Dowager Duchess of Norfolk, he made little progress towards recovery, and was for a considerable time almost incapable of either physical or mental exertion. In the spring of 1865, it became necessary for him, therefore, to resign his post at Washington and to retire temporarily from diplomatic service. It is pleasant to find that in doing so his opinion of the American Secretary of State had risen, as the result of long and intimate relations, and he thus wrote to Mr. Seward of his own successor, Sir Frederick Bruce:

You will, I am sure, be glad to form with him the confidential and intimate relations which did so much, in my case, to make my task easy and agreeable. The friendly and unconstrained terms on which we were produced so much good, that I am most anxious that my successor's intercourse with you should be placed at once on the same footing.

Mr. Seward, upon being informed of the resignation of Lord Lyons, in a letter written to him under date of March 20, 1865, thus expressed himself:

I have never desponded of my country, of emancipation of her slaves and of her resumption of her position as an agent of peace, progress, and civilization—interests which I never fail to believe are common with all branches of the British family. So I have had no doubt that when this dreadful war shall be ended, the United States and Great Britain would be reconciled and become better friends than ever.

I have thought that you are entitled to share in these great successes, as you have taken so great a part of the trials of the war. But God disposes. I feel sure that if I never find time to go abroad again, you with recovered health will come here to see the reign of peace and order. So I shall not dwell upon our parting as a final one.

Lord Newton in closing thus expresses himself in regard to the service then rendered by Lord Lyons:

It was the good fortune of this country to be represented during a protracted and dangerous crisis by a man who, distinguished by exceptional prudence, tact, judgment, and sincerity, added to these qualities a most minute knowledge of his own duties accompanied with indefatigable industry. It is not too much to say that any one wanting in these

qualities would have found it impossible to prevent the calamity of war between England and the United States, and the diplomatist who successfully avoids a catastrophe of this nature and at the same time protects the interests of his country is as deserving of gratitude as the successful commander who appears upon the scene when diplomacy had failed.

So far, however, as the distinctively American investigator of our Civil War attitude towards Europe, and especially Great Britain, is concerned, what is perhaps not the least valuable intimation to be found in Lord Newton's biography is contained in a fragment of a familiar letter from Lord Lyons to Lord Granville, dated at Tours, September 19, 1870. The German investment of Paris, after the two capitulations of Sedan and Metz, was then imminent. Referring to a conversation which had just then taken place between the Prussian Ambassador at London and Lord Granville, Lord Lyons wrote:

On his part it is just the old story I used to hear in America from the Northerners: "The ordinary rules of neutrality are very well in ordinary wars, such as those in which we were neutrals, but our present cause is so preëminently just, noble, and advantageous to humanity and the rest of the world, that the very least other nations can do is to strain the laws of neutrality, so as to make them operate in our favor and against our opponents." (I, 323.)

News for Bibliophiles

THE FIRST PUBLISHED ACCOUNT OF JONATHAN CARVER'S TRAVELS.

[The material contained in the following article was originally printed for circulation among its members by the Wisconsin Historical Society.—Ed. THE NATION.]

It is worthy of note that the first published account of Capt. Jonathan Carver's extensive Western travels, from his own pen, appeared in the *Boston Chronicle* of February 22, 1768, in the form of a letter to his wife at Montague, Mass., dated from Michillimackinac, September 24, 1767, and communicated to the paper by a "gentleman of distinction." For some reason, now completely hidden, Carver says in his "Travels" (London, 1778, p. 148) that he arrived at Mackinac in "the beginning of November, 1767," while in the letter which follows he specifically gives the date as the 30th of August. Here is Carver's letter in full:

My Dear—I arrived at this place the 30th of last month, from the westward; last winter I spent among the Naudoussee of the Plains, a roving nation of Indians, near the river St. Pierre, one of the western branches of the Mississippi, near fourteen hundred miles west of Michillimackinac. This nation live in bands, and continually march like the roving Arabians in Asia. They live in tents of leather and are very powerful. I have learned and procured a specimen of their dialect [cf. "Travels," London, 1778, p. 82], and to the utmost of my power, have made minute remarks on their customs and manners, and likewise

of many other nations that I have passed through; which I dare say, you and my acquaintance will think well worth hearing, and which I hope (by the continuation of the same divine Providence that has hitherto in this my journeying, in a most remarkable manner guarded over me in all my ways) personally to communicate. It would require a volume to relate all the hardships and dangers I have suffered since I left you, by stormy tempests on these lakes and rivers, by hunger and cold, in danger of savage beasts, and men more savage than they; for a long time no one to speak with in my native language, having only two men with me, the one a French man, the other an Indian of the Iroquois, which I had hired to work in the Canoe. I never received any considerable insult during my voyage, except on the 4th of November last, a little below Lake Pepin on the Mississippi. About sun down, having stopt in order to encamp, we made fast our canoe, and built a hut to sleep in, dressed some victuals and supped. In the evening, my people being fatigued, lay down to sleep: I sat a while and wrote some time by the fire light, after which I stepped out of my hut. It being star light only, I saw a number of Indians about eight rods off, creeping on the banks of the river. I thought at first they had been some wild beasts, but soon found them to be Indians. I ran into my hut, awakened my two men, took my pistol in one hand, and sword in the other, being followed by my two men well armed. I told them as 'twas dark, not to fire till we could touch them with the muzzle of our pieces. I rushed down upon them, just as they were about to cut off our communication from the canoe, where was our baggage, and some goods for presents to the Indians; but on seeing our resolution they soon retreated. I pursued within ten feet of a large party. I could not tell what sort of weapons of war they had, but believe they had bows and arrows. I don't impute this resolution of mine to any thing more than the entire impossibility I saw of any retreat. The rest of the night I took my turn about with the men in watching. The next morning [we] proceeded up the Mississippi as usual, though importuned by my people to return, for fear of another onset from these Barbarians, who often infest those parts as robbers, at some seasons of the year [cf. "Travels," pp. 51-54].

My travels last year, by computing my journal, amount to two thousand seven hundred miles, and this year, from the place where I wintered, round the west, north, and east parts of lake Superior, to Michillimackinac, are two thousand one hundred miles; the total of my travels since I left New-England, is, four thousand eight hundred miles, by a moderate computation. Part of the plans and journals, with some letters concerning the situation of the country, I sent back with some Indians, which plans and letters Governour Rogers has sent some time ago by Mr. Baxter, a gentleman belonging to London, to be laid before the lords of trade. My travels this summer I am now preparing for the same purpose, which is the reason of my not coming home this fall.

I have seen the places where the Spaniards came and carried away silver and gold formerly, till the Indians drove them away, undoubtedly there is a great plenty of gold in many places of the Mississippi and westward. I trust I have made many valuable discoveries for the good of my king and country.

I cannot conclude without mentioning something of the superstition of the Naudoussees

where I spent the last winter which agrees with the account of the father Hennipin, a French Recollect or a Fryar of that order, (who some years ago traveled among some part of the Naudoussees, tho' not as far west as I have been) has given of that people concerning books [cf. Thwaites's edition of Hennepin's "New Discovery," Chicago, 1903, p. 233]. I had with me some books necessary for my employment, which they supposed to be spirits, for as I by looking on the page when I first opened the book, could tell them how many leaves there were in the book: to that place, they then would count over the leaves and found I told true; supposing the book was a spirit, and had told me the number, which otherways they judged impossible for me to know, they would immediately lay their hands on their mouths, and cry out in their language, Wokonchee, Wokonchee, which signifies, he is a God, he is a God; and often when I desired to be rid of my guests in my hut, I would open the book and read aloud, they would soon begin to go away, saying to one another, he talks with the gods. Many other remarks of the like kind I have made of that people [cf. "Travels," pp. 253-255].

They believe there is a superior spirit, or God, who is infinitely good, and that there is a bad spirit, or devil. When they are in trouble, they pray to the devil, because, say they, that God being good, will not hurt them, but the evil spirit that hurts them, can only avert their misery [cf. "Travels," pp. 381-382]. I have seen them pray to the sun and moon and all the elements, and often hold a pipe for the sun and moon and the waters, to smook.

On my return to this place, I received the thanks of the Governor Commandant, who has promised he will take special care to acquaint the government at home of my services.

I have had my health ever since I left home, blessed be God, I hope you and all our children are well. I have not heard from you since I came away. Give my most affectionate love to my children. I long to see you all. I expect to be at home next July. I have two hundred pounds sterling due to me from the crown, which I shall have in the spring. Give my compliments to all friends and acquaintances. I am, My dear, your's forever,
JONATHAN CARVER.

Capt. Carver returned to his family at Montague in August, 1768, and lost no time in taking steps to have published in book form an account of his travels. The *Boston Chronicle* of September 12, 19, and 26, 1768, contained definite "proposals to the public." In these proposals, the book was described very much as it eventually appeared in London ten years later. The price was to be two Spanish dollars, and "subscriptions are taken in by Capt. Carver at Montague, and by J. Mein, at the London Book Store, north side of King Street, Boston." However, the traveller appears to have received little encouragement in his undertaking, and on February 22, 1769, he sailed for London in the Paoli, Capt. Hall, carrying with him, says the *Essex Gazette* (Salem, February 28, 1769), his draughts and journals, and good recommendations for his faithful service. After many vexatious delays, Carver's "Travels" finally saw the light in London in 1778, and rapidly became immensely popular. To satisfy the demand, many editions appeared in English, French, German, and Dutch.