

LESSON FOUR

∞ Charles Francis and Henry Adams in England ∞ 1861–1863

Sources:

A Cycle of Adams Letters 1861–1865. Volume I. Edited by Worthington Chauncey Ford. Boston, Mass.: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1920.

A Cycle of Adams Letters: 1861–1865. Volume II. Edited by Worthington Chauncey Ford. Boston, Mass.: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1920.

Adams, Charles Francis. “Farewell Address of Mr. Adams to His Constituents upon His Acceptance of the Mission to England.” *The Union and the Southern Rebellion*. London: Henry Stevens, 1861.

✪ *Ambassador to England* ✪

Charles Francis Adams spent eight years of his childhood in Russia and England when his father John Quincy was the American minister to the Courts of Saint Petersburg and Saint James. Charles Francis returned to London as an elder and a diplomat. Immediately after taking office in 1861 President Abraham Lincoln appointed Charles Francis Adams, a fellow Republican representing Massachusetts in the House of Representatives, to the diplomatic post formerly held by his father and first held by his grandfather: American minister to the Court of Saint James.

Charles Francis had a most difficult task; his work included keeping Great Britain—and by extension France and all Europe—out of the American Civil War that began on April 12 at Fort Sumter. Charles Francis took his young son Henry to serve as his private secretary. Upon their arrival, Charles Francis learned that Great Britain had just recognized both the North and the South as belligerents in the war, a step most interpreted as a precursor to official recognition of the Confederacy. Adams had his work cut out for him.

When an American naval captain intercepted the *Trent*, a British ship carrying the Confederate ministers bound for England, Great Britain and the Union came as close to war as they had been since the end of the War of 1812. Adams counseled William Seward, Lincoln's Secretary of State, and soothed the British so that the incident passed without further hostility. It is Adams who later prevented the British from selling ironclad ships to the Confederacy, making it clear that the move would mean war between the United States and the British realm.

When Charles Francis Adams left England in 1868, he successfully solidified the ties between the two nations. In 1871, he returned to negotiate the Alabama claims, which concerned British-built commerce raiders used by the Confederacy during the war. The United States won their claim, but the friendship between the two nations held steady due partially to the diplomatic skill of Charles Francis Adams.

“Farewell Address of Mr. Adams to His Constituents upon His Acceptance of the Mission to England.” May 1, 1861. Excerpted from *The Union and the Southern Rebellion*.

To the People of the Third Congressional District of Massachusetts. Quincy, May 1, 1861.

[...] It ought not, then, to be overlooked by you, that the only public question immediately before you for your consideration turns upon this point. The revolted States desire to establish a reconstructed Government upon their new basis. They hope to be able to persuade some of their ancient associates among us to join them in such a Union. The only difference is to be in the expunction of the Declaration of Independence, and its grand postulate of human liberty. That such is the true state of the facts, I need only appeal to the late speech of Mr. Alexander Stephens, the Vice-President of the new system, to prove. Mr. Stephens was not himself originally an advocate of the separation which has taken place. He seems to have embraced it at last, rather from necessity than choice. His sentiments are not, then, to be regarded as those of an extreme revolutionist, but rather as coming from the moderate class. Yet, in this respect, it will be seen from the following extract, which I quote as I find it in a newspaper, that they go quite the length which I have described:---
 "The prevailing ideas entertained by Jefferson 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. It was an evil they knew not well how to deal with; but the general opinion of the men of that day was that somehow or other, in the order of Providence, the institution would be evanescent and pass away. *The idea, though not incorporated in the Constitution, was the prevailing idea at the time.*

"Our new Government is founded upon exactly the opposite ideas. Its foundations are laid, its corner-stone rests upon the great truth that the negro is not equal to the white man; that Slavery, *subordination to the superior race, is his natural and moral condition*. This, our new Government, is the first in the history of the world based upon this great physical, philosophical and moral truth."

It comes to this, then. The Vice-President of the so-called Confederacy founds his new Government upon a single idea, and that is *force*. And he has the boldness to pretend that this is the first example in the history of the world of a government of the kind; when boys in the schools might tell him that history has been made up of just such instances, from the days of Pharaoh and of Xerxes, of Alaric and Attila, of Genseric and Mohammed, down to those of the present Sultan at Constantinople. It was, on the other hand, the peculiar characteristic of Mr. Jefferson and his compeers, that they boldly cut loose from this old doctrine, and advanced a new one which marked the great political advance of the last age. They assumed that man had natural rights of his own, which his stronger neighbours were bound to respect, and that where he did no wrong he ought to have no wrong done to him. The people of Europe, as well as the people of America, regarded this as the distinguishing feature of the new nation that had succeeded in establishing its own rights against the law of force. The effect of this action has been gradually to mollify the theories even of the most absolute despotisms of the world. Hence it is that at this moment, when some of the people of

the slaveholding States have made up their minds to renounce and disavow the new faith, they can only be regarded as persons who turn their backs on modern truth and return to antiquated error. They are, in fact, creating the bulwarks of a military despotism. The very rule, the application of which they now confine to a subjugated class, may be presently extended by a few of their own number, over themselves. Nay more, it ought to be remembered that those who make themselves the exclusive arbiters of the rights of their neighbours, can find no fault when-ever those neighbours succeed in any effort to turn the tables upon them.

It must be obvious that the assumption of such a theory as a rule of action in Governments, implies so much latitude in the abuse of power, however acquired, as to render any political associations with persons entertaining it, far from safe. The great mass of the American people would not tolerate the notion that any possible state of things, except downright subjugation, could reconcile them to adopt it. They still continue to believe in the doctrine of their fathers so openly repudiated. They still maintain the great principles upon which the Government is admitted by Mr. Stephens to have been founded. They yet propose to preserve the spirit in which it was originally administered. In their eyes, the change proposed, so far from being an improvement, would be discreditable to the political intelligence of the nineteenth century. If it be the pleasure of the revolted States to stand before the world as the exponents of such ideas, let them stand alone. Even the autocratic monarch of all the Russias is at this moment proving by his action how very little sympathy he has with these exploded notions. The whole world is moving forward, excepting the people ruled by King Cotton. It remains yet to be seen whether even his throne will be safe from the consequences of such an experiment.

If I am right, then, in my views, the conclusion inevitably must be that the political revolution of the last year marks a great era in American history, second only to that of our independence. It saved us from the impending domination of slaveholding absolutism. I did hope that it might have been effected without a convulsion. I did believe that it might have been followed by a policy which, while it wronged no one, would in the end save even the slaveholding States from the perils of their situation. In these expectations it would seem, from present appearances, that I was much too sanguine. The desperate agitators have precipitated the more moderate and patriotic classes of their fellow-citizens into a revolution. They have staked their all upon the maintenance of their political supremacy as a slaveholding oligarchy. We cannot refuse the issue thus tendered to us if we would. Their whole action since the sixth of November has been aggressive, insulting, treacherous and violent, a very natural corollary from the principles on which their organization is now based. We have no choice but to sacrifice our independence, if we consent to their demands. The question is between our cherished law of 1776, resting upon the rights of man, and the old notion of Alaric the Goth revived in 1860, that force may be preceded by fraud, and that might makes right. We are now the champions of law and republican liberty, retreat is impossible, even if it were to be desired. We must stand firmly by the old faith, or be disgraced for ever. Deeply as I regret the causes which have conspired to give the impending struggle unnecessary elements of bitterness, I cannot, on looking back, discover how it could have been avoided, excepting by the utter emasculation of a free people.

I must repeat that it is with great regret I leave you in this emergency for another field of duty. I do so only under the belief that I may be of more service there than here. Whether that be so or not, however, will after all depend much more upon the people of the United States than upon their agents abroad. Foreign nations will very naturally look with more attention to the actions of the principals than to that of their representatives. If they see union in council and energy in action; if they find wisdom in deliberation and heroism in the field; above all, if they discover a calm determination to carry the Government firmly through all its trials, in steady consistency with the purposes and policy of its founders, then will follow, as the day follows the night, their brightening sympathy, their admiration, their confidence, and, perhaps, even their co-operation. So it was in 1778; so it will be ever when honest men courageously uphold the right.

Permit me now most earnestly to bid each and every one of you, my fellow-citizens, an affectionate farewell.

Charles Francis Adams

Review Questions

1. What is the only reason, according to Charles Francis Adams, that the Union and the Confederacy have gone to war?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. This speech was published in England upon Charles Francis Adams's arrival. With this in mind, how might the speech be considered a work of propaganda?

Blog Prompt

Where in the modern world is slavery still a problem? What is going on there? How is it similar to the American form of slavery practiced in the South? How is it different?

Charles Francis Adams to Charles Francis Adams Jr., June 7, 1861

Excerpted from *A Cycle of Adams Letters: 1861–1865*, vol. I, p. 7

London, June 7, 1861

For after all that may be said, there is not and cannot be any assimilation of manners and social habits between Americans and English people. All intercourse with the aristocratic class is necessarily but formal. We are invited everywhere, and dine out almost every day, but this brings us no nearer. Everybody is civil, but each one has his interests in England, so that a stranger is but an outsider at best [...]

Review Questions

1. What creates the barrier between Charles Francis Adams and the people of England?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. In what ways are American citizens and British subjects different in the middle 19th century?

Charles Francis Adams to Charles Francis Adams Jr., June 14, 1861*A Cycle of Adams Letters: 1861–1865*, vol. I, p. 11–12

London, June 14, 1861

My position here thus far has not been difficult or painful. If I had followed the course of some of my colleagues in the diplomatic line this country might have been on the high road to the confederate camp before now. It did not seem to me to be expedient so to play into the hands of our opponents. Although there has been and is more or less of sympathy with the slaveholders in certain circles, they are not so powerful as to overbear the general sentiment of the people. The ministry has been placed in rather delicate circumstances, when a small loss of power on either extreme would have thrown them out. You can judge of this by the vote on the Chancellor's budget which was *apparently* carried by fifteen, but *really* by the retirement of opponents from the division. The difficulty seems now to be removed. No farther test vote is expected at this session. I think they are at heart more friendly to the United States than the Conservatives, though the question is not raised between them. I am therefore endeavoring to establish such relations with them as may re-establish the confidence between the countries which has been somewhat shaken of late. Circumstances beyond my control will have more to do with the result for good or evil than any efforts of mine. I wait with patience—but as yet I have not gone so far as to engage a house for more than a month at a time....

Review Questions

1. What does Charles Francis Adams see as his first task as Ambassador to England?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. Why might some people in England support the South?

Charles Francis Adams to Charles Francis Adams Jr., June 21, 1861Excerpted from *A Cycle of Adams Letters: 1861–1865*, vol. I, p. 14–15

London, June 21, 1861

[...] The general impression here is that there will be no war, and a little apprehension is expressed lest the reunion may be the signal for a common crusade against Great Britain. People do not quite understand Americans or their politics. They think this a hasty quarrel, the mere result of passion, which will be arranged as soon as the cause of it shall pass off. They do not comprehend the connection which slavery has with it, because we do not at once preach emancipation. Hence they go to the other extreme and argue that it is not an element of the struggle. With the commercial men the wish is farther to the thought. They look with some uneasiness to the condition of the operatives at Manchester, to the downfall of Southern State stock, to the falling off of the exports of goods and the drain of specie, to the exclusion from the seaports by the blockade, and to the bad debts of their former customers, for all which their sole panacea is *settlement*, somehow, no matter how. If it be by a recognition of two governments, that is as good a way as any other. On the other hand I now look to something of a war. We are in it and cannot get out. The slaveholding

politicians must go down or there will be no permanent peace. I confess that in this sense I look with some anxiety to the meeting of Congress. I know not who there is now to give a right tone to its proceedings. Possibly some of the new men may come in and contribute to help on the work. Judge Thomas has a reputation as a lawyer, and he has also been a little of a legislator as long ago as when I was with him, but this is a new field. I hope and trust he may do well....

Review Questions

1. How do the British interpret the dispute between the Union and the Confederacy?
2. Why do the British not see slavery as an element in the war?
3. Why do “commercial men” see settlement as the best solution to the American conflict?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. What are the economic issues driving British commercial opinions?

Henry Adams to Charles Francis Adams Jr., July 2, 1861

Excerpted from *A Cycle of Adams Letters: 1861–1865*, vol. I, p. 17

London, Tuesday, July 2, 1861

[...] Seward’s tone has improved very much since that crazy despatch that frightened me so. If the Chief had obeyed it literally, he would have made a war in five minutes and annihilated our party here in no time at all. As it is we have worried through safely and are not likely to have much more trouble. There is nothing in the way of particulars to give you so far as I know, for there has been no great scene nor have I met with any very remarkable event. Our presentation was only memorable to my mind from having caused a relapse for me, which frightened me nearly to death [...]

Review Questions

1. Who is “the Chief” to whom Henry Adams refers?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. In what way does Charles Francis Adams imitate his father and grandfather according to Henry’s cryptic remarks?

Charles Francis Adams to Charles Francis Adams Jr., September 7, 1861

A Cycle of Adams Letters: 1861–1865, vol. I, p. 39

London, September 7, 1861

The feeling here which at one time was leaning our way as been very much changed by the disaster at Bull’s run, and by the steady operation of the press against us. Great Britain always looks to her own interest as a paramount law of her action in foreign affairs. She might deal quite summarily with us, were it not for the European complications which are growing more and more embarrassing. There are clouds in the north and in the south, in the east and in the west, which keep England and France leaning against each other in order

to stand up at all. The single event of the death of Napoleon, perhaps even that of Lord Palmerston, would set everything afloat, and make the direction of things in Europe almost impossible to foresee. Hence we may hope that these two powers will reflect well before they inaugurate a policy in regard to us which would in the end react most fatally against themselves...

Review Questions

1. How does the “disaster at Bull’s run” affect opinion in England?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. Why would the Union’s loss at Bull Run affect English opinion so?

Henry Adams to Charles Francis Adams Jr., September 14, 1861

Excerpted from *A Cycle of Adams Letters: 1861–1865*, vol. I, p. 43–46

London, September 14, 1861

[...] The main principles which you aim at demonstrating, that the American monopoly of cotton is in fact a curse both to America and to Great Britain, and its destruction might be made the cause of infinite blessings to the whole range of countries under the torrid zone, this principle is and has always been an axiom here. It needs no proof, for the cotton-merchants themselves are the most earnest in asserting it. The real difficulty with regard to cotton does not lie there. It is never the hope of a future good, however great, that actuates people, when they have immediate evils such as this want of cotton will produce right before their eyes. Nor should I answer any real question by proving that in two years the world will be infinitely benefitted by our war, when what they alone ask is whether meanwhile England will not be ruined. My own belief is that she will be ruined. This next winter will, I fear, be a dreadful one in this country in any case, nor will it be bettered if they make war on us. It is not as if the cotton manufacture alone suffered, but the tariff and the war have between them cut off the whole American trade, export and import, and the consequence has been a very bad season, with a prospect of frightful pressure in the winter. Whole counties will have to be supported by subscription.

This is my idea of the real cotton problem in this country. I have no doubt that the suffering interests will make a violent push to solve it by urging the Government to attack our blockade. But that is merely the last struggle of a drowning man. The Government will not do it, I think, and most Englishmen speak of the idea as preposterous. If they did, it would only complicate matters still more and I doubt whether even then they got their cotton. The winter over, the new era will dawn on us; that cursed monopoly will be broken and with it the whole power of the South; the slave-trade will then be ended and slavery with it, for the negro will be of no use; and we may expect sunnier days and renewed prosperity. This is the only view that I could advocate, and this, a generally acknowledged truth, is at best but small comfort to a starving people [...]

Review Questions

1. How is the American war affecting the British?

2. Why would British entrance into the war fail to make things better?
3. Regardless of the war's outcome, why does Henry Adams see the conflict as beneficial to the abolition of slavery?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. In what way might British dependence on Southern cotton have been avoided?

Henry Adams to Charles Francis Adams Jr., September 28, 1861

Excerpted from *A Cycle of Adams Letters: 1861–1865*, vol. I, p. 48–50

London, September 28, 1861

Times goes precious fast and yet seems to leave little behind it. I have been very busy for the last three weeks but now am at leisure again though I have some ideas of beginning a new tack. Papa got back late last night from a visit to Lord Russell's in Scotland. I must say I think Lord Russell was rather hard in making him take all the journey, but as it could n't well be helped I am glad it has happened, and especially so as it will have an excellent effect on the relations of the two countries. When I last wrote things looked threatening if I recollect right. Since then they have wonderfully cleared away. Lately, except for the Bunch affair and the negotiation business, England has behaved very well. The Southerners were refused recognition and we are no longer uneasy about the blockade. Lord Russell has explained the Mexican business very satisfactorily and it appears that England is trying to check Spain, not to help her. Lord Russell was very open and confidential towards the Chief and showed him confidential despatches proving the truth of the matter with regard to Spain, besides treating him in every way extremely kindly and confidentially. You know that these are state secrets which no one knows out of the immediate circle here, so you must be very careful not to let it out, even to write back here that you know about it, as it might shake confidence in me [...]

Review Questions

1. What two events restore relations between Britain and the United States?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. What does Lord Russell's willingness to show Charles Francis Adams confidential dispatches prove about Charles Francis Adams?

Henry Adams to Charles Francis Adams Jr., October 15, 1861

Excerpted from *A Cycle of Adams Letters: 1861–1865*, vol. I, p. 56–60

London, October 15, 1861

[...] You say that Mr. Seward's hand is not evident in the course of events. I disagree entirely to any such idea. I think it is very evident and so much so that, feeling perfect confidence in him, I have come to the conclusion that our ideas are wrong and that his are right, at least on one question. I am an abolitionist and so, I think, are you, and so, I think, is Mr. Seward; but if he says the time has not yet come; that we must wait till the whole

country has time to make the same advance that we have made within the last six months, till we can all move together with but one mind and one idea; then I say, let us wait. It will come. Let us have order and discipline and firm ranks among the soldiers of the Massachusetts school.

But apart from this, when you say that you do not see the hand of the Secretary of State in the course of events, I tell you plainly that you do not know that whereof you speak. I do assure you, and I do pretend to knowledge on this point, that his direction of the foreign affairs of the nation has been one of very remarkable ability and energy, and to it we are indebted now in no small degree; in a very large degree, rather; to the freedom from external interference which allows us to give our whole strength to this rebellion. Never before for many years have we been so creditably represented in Europe or has the foreign policy of our country commanded more respect. They will tell you so in Paris and they will tell you so here, if you don't go to such authorities as the Times for your information. The high tone and absolute honor of our country have been maintained with energy and lofty dignity, but are we not on good terms still with foreign nations? Have not the threatening clouds that were hanging over our relations with this country a few months since, been cleared away by an influence that no man of common experience would imagine to be accident? And what of Spain? And Mexico? Trust me, when you come to read the history of these days at some future time, you will no longer think that the hand of the Secretary of State has been paralysed or his broad mind lost its breadth, in a time of civil war.

Review Questions

1. On what point does Henry Adams believe Secretary Seward is right? On what point does Henry Adams believe Secretary Seward is wrong?
2. How does Secretary Seward's success in foreign policy benefit the Union in the war?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. Why might the European opinion of the United States have been degraded before Seward's assumption of control of the State Department?

Blog Prompt

In what ways does American foreign policy affect American domestic policy? Cite a modern example.

Henry Adams to Charles Francis Adams Jr., November 30, 1861

Excerpted from *A Cycle of Adams Letters: 1861–1865*, vol. I, p. 75–77

London, November 30, 1861

If I thought the state of things bad last week you may imagine what I think of them now. In fact I consider that we are dished, and that our position is hopeless. If the administration ordered the capture of those men, I am satisfied that our present authorities are very unsuitable persons to conduct a war like this or to remain in the direction of our affairs. It is our ruin. Do not deceive yourself about the position of England. We might have preserved our dignity in many ways without going to war with her, and our party in the Cabinet was always strong enough to maintain peace here and keep down the anti-

blockaders. But now all the fat's in the fire, and I feel like going off and taking up my old German life again as a permanency. It is devilish disagreeable to act the part of Sisyphus especially when it is our own friends who are trying to crush us under the rock.

What part it is reserved to us to play in this very tragical comedy I am utterly unable to tell. The Government has left us in the most awkward and unfair position. They have given no warning that such an act was thought of, and seem almost to have purposely encouraged us to waste our strength in trying to maintain the relations which it was itself intending to destroy. I am half mad with vexation and despair. If papa is ordered home I shall do as Fairfax did, and go into the war with "peace" on my mind and lips.

Our position here is of course very unpleasant just now. We were to have gone to Lord Hatherton's on Monday, but now our visit is put off, and I am not without expectations that a very few weeks may see us either on our way home or on the continent. I think that the New Year will see the end.

This nation means to make war. Do not doubt it. What Seward means is more than I can guess. But if he means war also, or to run as close as he can without touching, then I say that Mr. Seward is the greatest criminal we've had yet.

We have friends here still, but very few. Bright dined with us last night, and is with us, but is evidently hopeless of seeing anything good. Besides, his assistance at such a time as this is evidently a disadvantage to us, for he is now wholly out of power and influence. Our friends are all very much cast down and my friends of the Spectator sent up to me in a dreadful state and asked me to come down to see them, which I did, and they complained bitterly of the position we were now in. I had of course the pleasure of returning the complaint to any extent, but after all this is poor consolation.

Our good father is cool but evidently of the same mind as I am. He has seen Lord Russell but could give him no information, and my Lord did not volunteer any on his side. You will know very soon what you are to expect [...]

Review Questions

1. Why is Henry Adams concerned about the peace between Britain and the United States?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. Why does Henry make reference to Sisyphus? To whom is he alluding?

Charles Francis Adams to Charles Francis Adams Jr., December 12, 1861

A Cycle of Adams Letters: 1861–1865, vol. I, p. 81–82

London, December 12, 1861

It has given us here an indescribably sad feeling to witness the exultation in America over an event which bids fair to be the final calamity in this contest. We wonder that there has been so little of comprehension of the nature of the struggle here in public opinion not to

jump at once to the conclusion that it would be turned against us by such an act. Putting ourselves in the place of Great Britain, where would be the end of the indignation that would be vented against the power committing it? Yet it seems everywhere to have been very coolly taken for granted that because she did outrageous things on the ocean to other powers, she would remain quiet when such things were done to her. A little observation of her past history ought to have shown that she never sees the right until half a century after she has acted wrong. She now admits her error in our revolution, and in the last war. Now she is right in principle and only wrong in point of consistency. Our mistake is that we are donning ourselves in her cast-off suit, when our own is better worth wearing. And all for what? Why to show our spite against two miserable wretches, twenty thousand of whom are not worth a single hair in the head of any of the persons on both sides of the controversy whose lives and happiness are endangered by the quarrel....

Review Questions

1. What complaint does Charles Francis Adams make against the Americans who are celebrating the Trent affair?
2. In what ways is the Union donning Britain's "cast-off suit"?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. Why might people in the Union celebrate the Trent affair as a bloodless victory?

Charles Francis Adams to Charles Francis Adams Jr., December 20, 1861

Excerpted from *A Cycle of Adams Letters: 1861–1865*, vol. I, p. 87–89

London, December 20, 1861

[...] War with the United States seems imminent. It may spread itself all over Europe. Where is the master to direct this storm, if he cannot arrest it? Is it Lord Palmerston or Earl Russell? I trow not. Let any thing happen to Napoleon, and you will see. He is their buckler and their shield.

As to us I fancy you can understand the pleasantness of the position we are occupying in the mean time. The leading newspapers roll out as much fiery lava as Vesuvius is doing, daily. The clubs and the army and the navy and the people in the streets generally are raving for war. On the other side are the religious people and a large number of stock jobbers and traders, together with the radical following of Messrs. Cobden and Bright. The impression is general that Mr. Seward is resolved to insult England until she makes a war. He is the *bête noir*, that frightens them out of all their propertities. It is of no use to deny it and appeal to facts. They quote what he said to the Duke of Newcastle about insulting England as the only sure passport to popular favor in America, and a part of a speech in which he talked of annexing Canada as an offset to the loss of the slave states. This is the evidence that Mr. Seward is an ogre fully resolved to eat all Englishmen raw. Pitiful as is all this nonsense, it is of no trifling consequence in its political effect. Even our friend Mr. Thurlow Weed with all his sagacity is baffled in every attempt to counteract it. And if war finally happens, it will trace to this source one of its most prominent causes.

Of course I feel most anxiously the position of my country, and of those who are enlisted in its cause. So far as I now see the field it is much less alarming than it looked some weeks ago. Many of the causes of apprehension are removed. The government has not authorised the act of Captain Wilkes, neither has it adopted it, as yet. So far, so good. But the British government will not rest satisfied with that position. The policy must be disavowed and the men replaced. Such is my understanding of the substance no matter how gently the sense may be conveyed. Shall we do either? For my part I think justice to our former professions demands it of us. [...] But what my opinion may be is one thing. What the delusion of my countrymen is, is another and very different one. They may regard Messrs. Mason and Slidell as more precious than all their worldly possessions. May be so. For my part I would part with them at a cent apiece.

Review Questions

1. What comments by Secretary Seward cause uproar in England?
2. What is preventing England from declaring war on the Union?
3. What needs to happen for England to remain out of the conflict?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. Who do you think composes the war party in England?
2. Who in England might oppose war?

Charles Francis Adams to Charles Francis Adams Jr., December 27, 1861

Excerpted from *A Cycle of Adams Letters: 1861–1865*, vol. I, p. 90–92

London, December 27, 1861

[...] Apropos of this let me say a word about the notion you still seem to entertain that Mr. Seward means to bring on a war. Thus far I have always maintained that this was a mistake founded on a bad joke of his to the Duke of Newcastle at Governor Morgan's dinner to the Prince of Wales. The Duke has however succeeded in making everybody in authority here believe it. Lord Lyons and Mr. Sumner have helped on the delusion at home. Yet I have no hesitation in my opinion, neither do I find that Mr. Thurlow Weed, with whom I compare notes, entertains any other. He can have a war, is he wants one. He has but to do what the Duke says he told him he meant to do, i.e. *insult the British government* in his answer, and he will have it to his heart's content. In my opinion he will do no such thing, but if I am right, I trust that from that time no more reliance will be placed upon a poor pleasantry uttered after a hospitable entertainment, to a mischief-making guest [...]

Review Questions

1. According to Charles Francis Adams, what should Secretary Seward do in order to prevent war with Great Britain?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. Under what circumstances could the Union (and Seward) want a war with Great Britain?

Charles Francis Adams to Charles Francis Adams Jr., January 10, 1862

A Cycle of Adams Letters: 1861–1865, vol. I, p. 99

London, January 10, 1862

Captain Wilkes has not positively shipwrecked us, but he has come as near to it without succeeding as he could. Thus far the country has been at least saved the danger of setting up military idols. This reconciles me a little to the slowness of our operations. Another consideration is the crushing nature of our expenditure which must stop this war, if something effective does not follow soon. It is idle to talk of putting down the rebellion whilst our power is resisted successfully within a dozen miles of the capital. This idea prevails so much here that it will undoubtedly become the basis of a movement for recognition before long....

The first effect of the surrender of Messrs. Mason and Slidell has been extraordinary. The current which ran against us with such extreme violence six weeks ago now seems to be going with equal fury in our favor. The reaction in the city was very great yesterday, and even the most violent of the presses, the Times and the Post, are for the moment a little tamed. Possibly, if nothing else should intervene to break its force, this favoring gale may carry us through the first half of the session of Parliament, in other words, until the first of May. If by that time we shall have made no decided progress towards a result, we may as well make up our minds to disbelieve in our power to do it at all. Foreign nations will come to that conclusion if we do not...

Review Questions

1. Which events in the United States are encouraging the British to offer recognition to the Confederacy?
2. According to Charles Francis Adams, what must the Union do in order to keep Europe out of the war?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. In what way does the Confederacy's success, or the Union's failure, affect the opinion of people in Europe?

Henry Adams to Charles Francis Adams Jr., January 10, 1862

A Cycle of Adams Letters: 1861–1865, vol. I, p.100

London, January 10, 1862

The news of the surrender of the unhung arrived yesterday, and gave us much satisfaction. It was particularly grateful to me because the ground taken is that which the Chief recommended in an early despatch to the Government, in which he quoted Madison's words. The effect here is good and will help us, but I have little hope that we shall be able to maintain ourselves here much longer. I fear that the meeting of Parliament will be the signal for a grand battle, and March will see us *en route* for somewhere.

Still there is great activity among our friends here in preparing for the struggle, and Thurlow Weed is organising our forces effectively. We shall die hard I think, and England will have little to be proud of. The blockade is the place where the shoe pinches, and the blockade is now very perfect, I should judge. We shall see what they mean to do....

Financially we are dished. There is but one resort, and that is severe direct taxation. It is in this way alone that the expenses of modern wars in Europe have been borne, and we must come to it at last, or repudiate. The latter is out of the question, but the Lord knows.

The Legation is tolerably quiet just now, with little doing. Government has behaved well in the Nashville business, and that vessel is now under our guns and without increased armament. Meanwhile the Sumter has turned up and is making trouble in Spain. I wish to God the Tuscarora could catch her and sink her.

Review Questions

1. In what way is Charles Francis Adams partially responsible for ending the war fever in England?
2. What is Henry's solution to the financial problems brought about by the war?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. Why is the Union's naval blockade so problematic for the British?

Henry Adams to Charles Francis Adams Jr., January 22, 1862

Excerpted from *A Cycle of Adams Letters: 1861–1865*, vol. I, p. 105

London, January 22, 1862

[...] We are sometimes anxious still and are likely to be more so. The truth is, we are now in a corner. There is but one way out of it and that is by a decisive victory. If there's not a great success, and a success *followed up*, within six weeks, we may better give up the game than blunder any more over it. These nations, France probably first, will raise the blockade.

Such is the fact of our position. I am ready for it anyway, but I do say that McClellan must do something within six weeks or we are done. This war has lasted long enough, to my mind.

There is precious little to tell you about here. France has again renewed her proposal to raise the blockade and there has been a discussion, or a battle about it. Prince Albert was strongly for peace with us, and now that he is dead it is understood that the Queen continues to favor his policy. Besides her, the King of Belgium has come over and is pressing earnestly for peace. His great object always is to counteract French influence when it points to war. We have a majority (probably) in the Cabinet of neutrality men, nor do I know whom to call the leader of the war-party in the Ministry. You must not misunderstand Palmerston. He means disunion, but not war unless under special influences [...]

Review Questions

1. Who in Europe supports peace with the Union?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. Why would a Union victory keep France and the rest of Europe from raising the blockade?

Charles Francis Adams to Charles Francis Adams Jr., March 21, 1862*A Cycle of Adams Letters: 1861–1865*, vol. I, p. 122–123

London, March 21, 1862

Nowhere has the condition of the western campaign been productive of better effects than in this country. The change produced in the tone towards the United States is very striking. There will be no overt acts tending to recognition whilst there is a doubt of the issue. It is nevertheless equally true that whatever ability remains to continue the contest is materially aided by the supplies constantly and industriously furnished from here. Every effort to run the blockade is made under British protection. Every manifestation of sympathy with the rebel success springs from British sources. This feeling is not the popular feeling, but it is that of the governing classes. With many honorable exceptions the aristocracy entertain it as well as the commercial interest. So did they in 1774. So did they in 1812. So will they ever, when their narrow views of British interests predominate....

Review Questions

1. What events secure peace with Europe?
2. How is England continuously and covertly supporting the Confederacy?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. According to Charles Francis Adams, why is the ruling class historically willing to impede American interests?

Charles Francis Adams to Charles Francis Adams Jr., April 4, 1862*A Cycle of Adams Letters: 1861–1865*, vol. I, p. 123–124

London April 4, 1862

The late military successes have given us a season of repose. People are changing their notions of the power of the country to meet such a trial, which is attended with quite favorable consequences to us in our position. Our diplomacy is almost in a state of profound calm. Even the favorite idea of a division into two states is less put forward than it was. Yet the interest with which the struggle is witnessed grows deeper and deeper. The battle between the Merrimack and our vessels has been the main talk of the town since the news came, in Parliament, in the clubs, in the city, among the military and naval people. The impression is that it dates the commencement of a new era in warfare, and that Great Britain must consent to begin over again. I think the effect is to diminish the confidence in the result of hostilities with us. In December we were told that we should be swept from the ocean in a moment, and all our ports would be taken. They do not talk so now. So far as this may have an effect to secure peace on both sides it is good....

We are much encouraged now by the series of successes gained, and far more by the marked indications of exhaustion and discouragement in the south. They must be suffering in every way. Never did people pay such a penalty for their madness. And the worst is yet to

come. For emancipation is on its way with slow but certain pace. Well for them if it do not take them unaware.

Review Questions

1. What causes Britain to rethink the possibility of prevailing against the Union?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. What is the “new era in warfare,” and how does Britain need to respond?
2. With regard to the carnage caused by war, why are Southerners suffering more than Northerners?

Blog Prompt

How does war affect the civilian population, particularly when the population lives in close proximity to the armed conflict? Cite a modern example.

Henry Adams to Charles Francis Adams Jr., May 16, 1862

Excerpted from *A Cycle of Adams Letters: 1861–1865*, vol. I, p. 145–146

London, May 16, 1862

[...] Last Sunday afternoon, the day after my letter to you had gone, telling how hard it was to sustain one’s own convictions against the scepticism of a nation, I returned from taking a walk on Rotten Row with my very estimable friend Baron Brinken, and on reaching home, I was considerably astounded at perceiving the Chief in an excited manner dance across the entry and ejaculate, “We’ve got New Orleans.” Philosopher as I am and constant in a just and tenacious virtue, I confess that even I was considerably interested for the moment. So leaving Sir Charles Lyell regarding my abrupt departure through one eye-glass with some apparent astonishment, I took a cab and drove down to Mr. Weed. Meeting him in the street near his hotel, I leaped out of the cab, and each of us simultaneously drew out a telegram which we exchanged. His was Mr. Peabody’s private business telegram; mine was an official one from Seward. We then proceeded together to the telegraph office and sent a despatch to Mr. Dayton in Paris, and finally I went round to the Diplomatic Club and had the pleasure of enunciating my sentiments. Here my own agency ended, but Mr. Weed drank his cup of victory to the dregs. He spread the news in every direction, and finally sat down to dinner at the Reform Club with two sceptical old English friends of our side and had the pleasure of hearing the news-boys outside shout “Rumored capture of New Orleans” in an evening extra, while the news was posted at Brookes’s, and the whole town was in immense excitement as though it were an English defeat.

Indeed the effect of the news here has been greater than anything yet. It has acted like a violent blow in the face of a drunken man. The next morning the Times came out and gave fairly in that it had been mistaken; it had believed Southern accounts and was deceived by them. This morning it has an article still more remarkable and intimates for the first time that it sees little more chance for the South. There is, we think, a preparation for withdrawing their belligerent declaration and acknowledging again the authority of the Federal Government over all the national territory, to be absolute and undisputed. One more victory will bring us up to this, I am confident. That done, I shall consider, not only that the nation has come through the struggle such as no other nation ever heard of, but in a smaller and

personal point of view I shall feel much relieved and pleased at the successful career of the Chief.

Review Questions

1. What event in the war causes the Adamses to celebrate?
2. What possible change in British policy toward the United States is on the horizon as a result of this event?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. Why does the news from America so affect the delegation in England?

Charles Francis Adams to Charles Francis Adams Jr., July 18, 1862

A Cycle of Adams Letters: 1861–1865, vol. I, p. 166

London, July 18, 1862

You can have very little notion of the effect the Richmond news is having here. It has set all the elements of hostility to us in agitation, and they are working to carry the House of Commons off their feet in its debate tonight. To that end a story has been manufactured of an alleged capitulation of General McClellan on the third coming out by the Glasgow that sailed on the fifth, in the face of a later telegram dated the seventh, which reported his address to his army pledging himself to continue the war. Yet the people here are fully ready to credit anything that is not favorable. I have no doubt that the matter is bad enough, but it is not quite to that extent. Yet the consequences are likely to be as unfavorable as if it was....

Review Questions

1. What happens in Richmond that changes Britain's tone toward the Union?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. Why is General McClellan's address to his army so important in Europe?

Henry Adams to Charles Francis Adams Jr., July 19, 1862

A Cycle of Adams Letters: 1861–1865, vol. I, p. 166–168

[London,] Saturday, July 19, 1862

Knowing that you would probably be anxious to hear from us what effect the bad news of June 26 – 30 might have on our position here, I take the last moment to write in order to tell you what I think we are to expect. Certainly it was a violent blow. We suffered several days of very great anxiety, knowing that the current here was rising every hour and running harder against us than at any time since the Trent affair. This reverse called out at once all the latent hostility here, and there was nothing to do but to give way. I shut myself up, went to no more parties and avoided contact with everyone except friends.... The only bright spot in the week was the reception of your letter. As we had all relied on your being safe in the hospital, or if not there, with your regiment which we knew was not engaged,

your letter was quite welcome, as it told us first both of your going in and your coming out. I congratulate you, and apropos to that, I congratulate your general Hunter on his Negro-army letter. We *all* here sustain him and I assure you that the strongest means of holding Europe back is the sight of an effective black army.

Nevertheless our trouble here was extreme. As the week passed it was not diminished. Nor is it now, I fear, permanently so. It arrived however at its culminating point last night. It so happened that last night was the occasion of an expected debate in the Commons on a motion in favor of mediation. We had been busy in preparing for it and had assurances that all was right. But lo and behold, at two o'clock yesterday afternoon in rushes a member of the Commons, and half a dozen alarmists in his rear, with an evening paper whose telegraphic column was headed in big letters, "Capitulation of McClellan's Army. Flight of McClellan in a steamer. Later from America." This astonishing news for a moment made me almost give way. But a single glance at dates showed us that it was an utter swindle, and that we had bulletins from McClellan of two days later than the day of the reported surrender. The next reflexion led us to see that it was intended for the debate of the same evening, and we, who know the seal, recognized the stamp of our old friends the Southern liars, who juggled Georgia out of the Union by telegraph. But the consternation among our friends was incredible and even when they knew it must be false, they still shook and shuddered with terror. Every Englishman believed it, or doubted in a tone that showed he wanted to believe it. As for me, I have come to consider it my whole duty here to keep up the spirits of the community and so did the best I could to laugh the lie off. Luckily its effect on the Commons was very good, for it disposed them to postpone action and tended to quiet them. Palmerston made a good speech, and the motion was not pressed to a division. This morning the Arabia's news has arrived, three days later, which relieves us again for a time of our anxiety, and induces us to believe that the enemy were as much crippled by their victory as we by our defeat.

Thus the pinch has again passed by for the moment and we breathe more freely. But I think I wrote to you some times ago that if July found us still in Virginia, we could no longer escape interference. I think now that it is inevitable. The only delay thus far has been caused by the difficulty in inducing the five great powers to unite, and Russia and Austria to act with England in any sense favorable to the South. That unity cannot much longer fail to be obtainable. England alone or with France will not move, but their idea is that if all the great powers were to unite in offering mediation, they could by their moral influence alone force some result. If the North defied them, a simple recognition of the South by them would, they think, secure her independence. And this belief is probably correct.

It must be now the effort of the North to cast upon the South the responsibility of standing against a settlement. Here will be three means of hampering European attempts: the slavery question, the boundary question, and the Mississippi; and it is the slavery question from which we can derive the greatest strength in this running battle. You see we are stripping and squaring off, to say nothing of sponging, for the next round. If our armies sustain us, we shall win. If not, we shall soon see the limit of our hopes.

Review Questions

1. What does Henry propose will prevent Europe from interfering in the conflict?

2. What course of action is proposed in the House of Commons?
3. How is it proposed that Europe should act toward the United States?
4. According to Henry, what are the three ways to hamper Europe?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. In what way does the Union's success depend entirely on the performance of their army?
2. Why is victory not necessary for the South to win?

Charles Francis Adams to Charles Francis Adams Jr., October 17, 1862

A Cycle of Adams Letters: 1861–1865, vol. I, p. 192

London, October 17, 1862

General McClellan's work during the week ending the 18th has done a good deal to restore our drooping credit here. Most of the knowing ones had already discounted the capture of Washington and the capitulation of the Free States. Some had gone so far as to presume the establishment of Jefferson Davis as the President instead of Lincoln. The last number of the *Edinburgh Review* has a wise prediction that this is to be effected by the joint labors of the "mob" and of "the merchants" of the city of New York. This is the guide of English intelligence of the nature of our struggle. Of course it follows that no sensible effect is produced excepting from hard blows. If General McClellan will only go on and plant a few more of the same kind in his opponent's eyes, I shall be his very humble servant, for it will raise us much in the estimation of all our friends. Mr. Gladstone will cease to express so much admiration of Jefferson Davis, and all other things will begin to flow smoothly again.

Review Questions

1. What rumors about the war are running rampant in England?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. What role does a New York City mob play in influencing Europe to become involved in the war?

Charles Francis Adams to Charles Francis Adams Jr., December 25, 1862

A Cycle of Adams Letters: 1861–1865, vol. I, p. 220–221

Mount Felix, Walton on Thames
December 25, 1862

Public matters remain yet in a profound state of repose, and probably will continue so for another month. The publication made by the Secretary of State of large portions of my Despatches for the past year has rather stirred a hornet's nest in the press, but I fancy it will prove only a nine days' wonder. I have said merely what everybody knows. The great body of the aristocracy and the wealthy commercial classes are anxious to see the United States go to pieces. On the other hand the middle and lower class sympathise with us, more and more as they better comprehend the true nature of the struggle. A good deal of dust was thrown into their eyes at first by the impudent pretense that the tariff was the cause of the war. All that is now over. Even the *Times* has no longer the assurance to repeat that fable. The true

division now begins to make itself perceptible here as elsewhere in Europe—the party of the old and of the new, of vested rights and of well regulated freedom. All equally see in the convulsion in America an era in the history of the world, out of which must come in the end a general recognition of the right of mankind to the produce of their labor and the pursuit of happiness. Across all these considerations come occasionally individual and national interests which pervert the judgment for a time, but the world moves onward taking little note of temporary perturbations, and whatever may betide to us of this generation, the end is sure....

Review Questions

1. How does Charles Francis Adams distinguish the English upper classes from the English lower classes, with specific regard to how these groups think about the American war?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. Why might the English upper and lower classes be separated in opinion?

Charles Francis Adams to Charles Francis Adams Jr., January 23, 1863

Excerpted from *A Cycle of Adams Letters: 1861–1865*, vol. I, p. 235–236

London, January 23, 1863

Our customary midweek intelligence has not arrived, owing I suppose to the violence of the storms delaying the steamers, so that we are now fifteen days back. In the mean time the President's proclamation is doing much for us on this side. That is put in contrast to the paper of Jefferson Davis, much to the advantage of the former. The middle classes generally see and comprehend the existence of a moral question apart from all political disquisitions. The effect is to bring out an expression in popular meetings which is doing something to neutralise the opposite tendency of the governing people. Mr. Seward has printed so largely from my Despatches of last year, that there is now no misunderstanding here of what I think on this matter. I fear that I have forfeited the favor of my aristocratic friends by performing my duty of disclosing their tendencies, but as I have had not unsimilar experiences heretofore at home, perhaps I take it with less uneasiness. There are always great exceptions to be made. And after all, the position of a foreign minister must necessarily be one to inspire caution in making intimacies. My acquaintance is already quite as extensive as I can keep up with [...]

Review Questions

1. What presidential proclamation is “doing much for us on this side?”
2. What is the moral question that drives the Civil War?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. Why is Charles Francis Adams not really harmed by the publishing of his opinions on the aristocracy?

Henry Adams to Charles Francis Adams Jr., January 23, 1863*A Cycle of Adams Letters: 1861–1865*, vol. I, p. 243

London, January 23, 1863

The Emancipation Proclamation has done more for us here than all our former victories and all our diplomacy. It is creating an almost convulsive reaction in our favor all over this country. The *London Times* furious and scolds like a drunken drab. Certain it is, however, that public opinion is very deeply stirred here and finds expression in meetings, addresses to President Lincoln, deputations to us, standing committees to agitate the subject and to affect opinion, and all the other symptoms of a great popular movement peculiarly unpleasant to the upper classes here because it rests altogether on the spontaneous action of the laboring classes and has a pestilent squint at sympathy with republicanism. But the *Times* is on its last legs and has lost its temper. They say it always does lose its temper when it finds such a feeling too strong for it, and its next step will be to come round and try to guide it. We are much encouraged and in high spirits. If only you at home don't have disasters, we will give such a checkmate to the foreign hopes of the rebels as they never yet have had....

Review Questions

1. What evidence does Charles Francis Adams give that English opinion is turning in favor of the Union?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. Why would the *London Times* have been furious about the Emancipation Proclamation?
2. Why would the Emancipation Proclamation be a checkmate to European support of the South?

Henry Adams to Charles Francis Adams Jr., January 27, 1863Excerpted from *A Cycle of Adams Letters: 1861–1865*, vol. I, p. 243–246

London, January 27, 1863

After a fortnight's violent pulling, pushing, threatening, shaking, cursing and coaxing, almost entirely done through private channels, we have at least succeeded in screwing the Government up to what promises to be a respectable position. How steady it will be, I don't know, nor how far they will declare themselves, do I know. But between our Government at home and our active and energetic allies here, we seem to have made progress. I went last night to a meeting of which I shall send you a report; a democratic and socialist meeting, most threatening and dangerous to the established state of things; and assuming a tone and proportions that are quite novel and alarming in this capital. And they met to notify Government that "they would not tolerate" interference against us. I can assure you this sort of movement is as alarming here as a slave insurrection would be in the South, and we have our hands on the springs that can raise or pacify such agitators, at least as regards our own affairs, they making common cause with us. I never quite appreciated the "moral influence" of American democracy, nor the cause that the privileged classes in Europe have to fear us, until I saw how directly it works. At this moment the American

question is organizing a vast mass of the lower orders in direct contact with the wealthy. They go our whole platform and are full of the “rights of man.” The old revolutionary leaven is working steadily in England. You can find millions of people who look up to our institutions as their model and who talk with utter contempt of their own system of Government. Within three months this movement has taken a development that has placed all our enemies on the defensive; has driven Palmerston to sue for peace and Lord Russell to proclaim a limited sympathy. I will not undertake to say where it will stop, but were I an Englishman I should feel nervous. We have strength enough already to shake the very crown on the Queen’s head if we were compelled to employ it all. You are not to suppose that we are intriguing to create trouble. I do not believe that all the intrigue in the world could create one of these great demonstrations of sympathy. But where we have friends, there we shall have support, and those who help us will do it of their own free will. There are few of the thickly populated districts of England where we have not the germs of an organisation that may easily become democratic as it is already anti-slavery. With such a curb on the upper classes, I think they will do little more harm to us.

The conduct of the affairs of that great republic which though wounded itself almost desperately, can yet threaten to tear down the rulers of the civilised world, by merely assuming her place at the head of the march of democracy, is something to look upon. I wonder whether we shall be forced to call upon the brothers of the great fraternity to come in all lands to the assistance and protection of its head. There are lively times, oh, Hannibal.

Review Questions

1. What section of the English population is supporting the Union and why?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. What is meant by the “moral influence” of American democracy?

Henry Adams to Charles Francis Adams Jr., January 30, 1863

A Cycle of Adams Letters: 1861–1865, vol. I, p. 251–252

London, January 30, 1863

Politically things go on swimmingly here. The anti-slavery feeling of the country is coming out stronger than we ever expected, and all the English politicians have fairly been thrown over by their people. There was a meeting last night at Exeter Hall which is likely to create a revolution, or rather to carry on a complete revolution in public opinion which was begun by the great Manchester Meeting on the 31st December. Last night’s meeting was something tremendous, unheard of since the days of reform. The cry was “Emancipation and reunion” and the spirit was dangerously in sympathy with republicanism. The Strand was blocked up in front of Exeter Hall by those who couldn’t get in, and speeches were made in the street as well as in another hall opened to accommodate a part of the surplus. As for enthusiasm, my friend Tom Brown of Rugby school-days, who was one of the speakers, had to stop repeatedly and beg the people not to cheer so much. Every allusion to the South was followed by groaning, hisses and howls, and the enthusiasm for Lincoln and for everything connected with the North was immense. The effect of such a display will be very great, and I

think we may expect from Lancashire on the arrival of the George Griswold, a response that will make some noise.

Next week Parliament will meet. Of course it will bring hot water, but the sentiment of the country will not tolerate any interference with us. I breathe more easily about this than ever. My main anxiety is about the Alabama case, which has been the subject of the sharpest kind of notes between the Chief and Lord Russell. As these notes will probably now be published, I can say that in my opinion my Lord has been dreadfully used up, and if you don't howl with delight when you read the Chief's note to him of 30th December, you won't do what I did. But our cue is still friendship, and we don't want to irritate. The strong outside pressure that is now aroused to act on this Government will, I hope, help us to carry through all we want in time and with patience.

Review Questions

1. What causes Henry's anxiety, particularly in the midst of such popular support?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. Why does the Emancipation Proclamation cause such a strong outcry from the people of England?

Henry Adams to Charles Francis Adams Jr., July 23, 1863

Excerpted from *A Cycle of Adams Letters: 1861–1865*, vol. II, p. 58–60

[London,] July 23, 1863

I positively tremble to think of receiving any more news from America since the batch that we received last Sunday. Why can't we sink the steamers till some more good news comes? It is like an easterly storm after a glorious June day, this returning to the gloomy chronicle of varying successes and disasters, after exulting in the grand excitement of such triumphs as you sent us on the 4th. For once there was *no* drawback, unless I except anxiety about you. I wanted to hug the army of the Potomac. I wanted to get the whole of the army of Vicksburg drunk at my own expense. I wanted to fight some small man and lick him. Had I had a single friend in London capable of rising to the dignity of the occasion, I don't know what mightn't have happened. But mediocrity prevailed and I passed the day in base repose.

It was on Sunday morning as I came down to breakfast that I saw a telegram from the Department announcing the fall of Vicksburg. Now, to appreciate the value of this, you must know that the one thing upon which the London press and the English people have been so positive as not to tolerate contradiction, was the impossibility of capturing Vicksburg. Nothing could induce them to believe that Grant's army was not in extreme danger of having itself to capitulate. The Times of Saturday, down to the last moment, declared that the siege of Vicksburg grew more and more hopeless every day. Even now, it refuses, after receiving all the details, to admit the fact, and only says that Northern advices report it, but it is not yet confirmed. Nothing could exceed the energy with which

everybody in England has reprobated the wicked waste of life that must be caused by the siege of this place during the sickly season, and ridiculed the idea of its capture. And now the announcement was just as though a bucket of iced-water were thrown into their faces. They couldn't and wouldn't believe it. All their settled opinions were overthrown, and they were left dangling in the air. You never heard such a cackling as was kept up here on Sunday and Monday, and you can't imagine how spiteful and vicious they all were [...].

It is now conceded at once that all idea of intervention is at an end. The war is to continue indefinitely, so far as Europe is concerned, and the only remaining chance of collision is in the case of the ironclads. We are looking after them with considerable energy, and I think we shall settle them [...]

Review Questions

1. What Union triumphs are reported on July 4, 1863?]
2. Who is responsible for these triumphs, and how do these triumphs benefit the Union's ultimate victory?
3. What is the remaining issue that threatens to bring Europe and the United States into conflict?

Charles Francis Adams to Charles Francis Adams Jr., July 31, 1863

A Cycle of Adams Letters: 1861–1865, vol. II, p. 65–66

London, July 31, 1863

It is intensely painful in the midst of such great prosperity here to read the shocking details of slaughter and destruction in our newspapers. Still more annoying is it to think how by the folly of these rogues we are playing into the hands of the malevolent in Europe. The privileged classes all over Europe rejoice in the thoughts of the ruin of the great experiment of popular government. I yet trust they count without their host. No thanks, however, to the madmen who try to work this mischief. The penalty we are paying for the great error of our ancestors is a most tremendous one. All I can pray for is that we do so once for all. To permit our posterity to run the risk of repeating it for the same fault on our part would be criminal indeed.

The London Times last Monday graciously allowed the people of England to believe that Vicksburg had actually fallen. The notion that General Lee was in possession of Washington and Baltimore is not quite so strong as it was, but I am not sure that it has been dissipated yet by any positive denial in that press. There was a general sense of the happening of some lamentable disaster here, the nature and extent of which had not been fully defined. The clearest evidence of this was found in the stock market, where a panic took place among the holders of the rebel loan. It fell from three per cent discount to seventeen, and has not stopped yet. I should not be surprised if some bankruptcies were to follow. People here must pay something for their pro-slavery sympathies. What a pity that the sum of their losses could not have been applied to the emancipation of the slaves! In that case England would have maintained her character for philanthropy, which has gone down, as it is, quite as far and as fast as the rebel loan....

Review Questions

1. What battle is the source of the “shocking details of slaughter and destruction?”
2. What evidence is there that the English doubt the South will ultimately win?

Critical Thinking Questions

3. Who besides Charles Francis Adams refers to the ruin of the experiment of popular government as a result of the unnamed battle?