

[Translated from L'Opinion Nationale.]

FRANCE, MEXICO AND THE UNITED STATES.

The following article on the relations of France with Mexico and her possible future relations with the Federal and Confederate governments is too interesting to consign to our waste basket. *The Opinion Nationale* is the organ of Prince Napoleon:

We are about to find ourselves placed in Mexico, in a situation perfectly analogous to that which we have made for ourselves at Rome, between the liberals, who vainly ask us to go forward, and the reactionists, whom we refuse to follow in their backward course. The clergy applaud us to-day at Mexico just as the black party applauded us at Rome in 1849. But if Marshal Forey continues to speak of liberty of religious worship, if he refuses to restore the property of the convents, if he permits himself to resist the Archbishop of Mexico, he must expect to see the party which had so warmly acclaimed us treat us soon as we were treated at Rome, by the Merodis and the Antonellis. And then, no matter how little the situation may be complicated, we may calculate on General Bazaine, who is charged with the maintenance of public tranquility, writing here that fifteen thousand men is too small a force for him, and demanding reinforcements.

We do not yet know what the government of Mexico will be, whether it will be monarchical or republican, nor particularly on what broad shoulders we are going to place the heavy burden of rehabilitating a bankrupt nation. In fact, what they are a little deficient in everywhere, but at Mexico more than anywhere else, is capable men. It will be for us to organize the army, the finances, public education, highways, and the administration. We will find ourselves compelled, by the dearth of materials, to do everything by ourselves. We will have to administer a great empire; we will be responsible for its destinies, and if success is to redound to our glory it must be admitted that, by a fair return, its failures will be imputed to us. A considerable share of our attention, of our surveillance, will have to be devoted to Mexico; and hence will come embarrassments, difficulties and complications, the responsibility of which we will be no longer free to decline.

In vain shall we ask ourselves whether it is useful or advantageous for France to go so far to seek grave cares—to neglect its internal affairs, its European work, for the sake of undertaking education at a remote point, and of unnecessarily charging ourselves with desperate cares. The answer will be that it is too late, that we are engaged, and that the honor of the flag does not permit us to abandon the work commenced. This prospect is so much the less encouraging, as it is plain that, besides questions of internal organization—always very grave and very complicated—Mexico is destined within a very few years, perhaps months, to raise for us grave foreign difficulties with the United States, and to draw us, perhaps, into an absurd and most deplorable strife.

It is a curious and characteristic but uncontested fact, that in France, at the present day, no one knows exactly why we have gone to Mexico. It is simply a piece of obstinacy that has grown serious by the very obstacles it has encountered. Is it a vast project maturely weighed, to give to France an American India, to be governed and exploited as England governs and exploits Asiatic India? No one can say with certainty. But certain indications permit the supposition that this enterprise had, in the idea that conceived it, a certain connection, difficult to define, with the events that are passing in North America.

Every one has remarked the solicitude, unexpected enough, which the French Government has evinced for the Southern Confederacy, and its oft-repeated attempts upon the English Government, fortunately repelled by the latter, to give a united recognition to the slaveholding Republic of which Mr. Jefferson Davis is the President. Public opinion in France has not understood the reason for this preference. In principle, the South is founded upon slavery—an institution that is immoral and profoundly opposed to our ideas and manners. It is the South that has commenced the rupture with the North. Undoubtedly, in the point of view of the production of cotton, the South can interest us. But that question interests England still more than us, and yet she has not wished, up to this time, to recognize the South; and it is she who has stopped the impatient ardor of the French Government in that direction.

On the other hand, and admitting that the South may form a separate State, and that the recognition of France may aid her in doing so, it is certain that our presence in Mexico will be still more disagreeable to her than it can be to the Republic of the North. In fact, the slaveholding South has only one chance of living and of resisting the hostile brethren from whom it seeks to separate; and that is, to expand and propagate around it its domestic institution. Slavery, restricted, will be secretly undermined or violently overthrown by the North. The South can live only by assuming the offensive. It has long recognized that fact; and its efforts to acquire or conquer Cuba, Nicaragua and the small Central American Republics, and the absorption of Texas, already consummated, show clearly enough that the South comprehends the necessity that weighs upon it and that

drives it to conquest and to the propaganda of slavery.

If, therefore, the South should succeed in consummating its separation, it is not doubtful that it would regard with the greatest disfavor the French flag floating over the soil of Mexico, and protecting it from its avowed covetousness. Our Mexican establishment will then have a dangerous, threatening vicinate. So it is one of not the least astonishments provoked by this expedition, that the French Government should persist in seeking to induce England to recognize with it the Southern Republic, whose attacks the French flag, if it remains in Mexico, will inevitably have to repel. If, then, as is believed, and as facts appear to indicate, there is a connection between our expedition to Mexico and the policy pursued in respect to the Southern Confederacy, it must be acknowledged that that mysterious connection escapes all our explanations. The only point that remains evident is, that if we remain at Mexico, and if the South succeeds, it will resume its projects of conquests, that have been suspended by the civil war, and we shall have to repel an inevitable invasion.

If, on the contrary, the South succumb and the great Republic be reconstructed, we cannot expect any better fortune. It will not be, indeed, for the purpose of spreading slavery, which it will have abolished at home, that it will menace our transatlantic pupils, but rather for the purpose of repelling European influence, of maintaining intact the more or less authentic Monroe doctrine, and, perhaps, also, of giving employment to the Generals and the five or six hundred thousand soldiers who have contracted the habits of war, and whom the civil war will have left without employment.

We do not dread war when it is useful, when it is justified by the success of a great cause, when the blood shed is for the redemption of a great injustice, and the price of a great step toward the normal reconstitution of nations. But really to provoke a certain war with North America—certain in both hypotheses, whether of separation or reconstruction—and all for the vain glory of weaning an old colony which our diplomats have mistaken for a young nation, would appear to us so deplorable, so senseless, so perilous, so opposed to the interests, instincts, and aptitudes of our country, that it is not without profound apprehension that we see our government plunge, without care, and, as it were, in a fit of distraction, into this fatal course. At this moment a whole swarm of contractors is buzzing around it. Nothing is spoken of but railroads and canals to be built, mines of gold and silver to be worked. But, alas! "all that glitters is not gold;" and if the government is wise, it will hasten to profit by the temporary pacification of Mexico by promptly constructing there the best government possible, and bringing back our troops and our flag.

Let it give advice, let it lend skillful men, if it has any to spare, but let it not muffle itself up in a guardianship of which the present generation would not see the end. Above all, let it not be seduced by the fallacious hope of recovering the expenses of the expedition; otherwise it will soon have expended a thousand millions to gain back three hundred millions. If these three hundred millions are lost, so much the worse. Let us pass them to the account of profit and loss, and let us not engage blindfold in an unknown way, at the end of which is to be seen only a certain war with North America.

Let us bring back our troops to Europe; they will not be at any loss for employment; and if Mexico falls back again into disorder let not France be drawn into a solidarity which nothing justifies, nor be paralyzed by a transatlantic Algeria, which she would have to protect against enterprising and formidable neighbors.

AN ENGLISH VIEW OF THE CONFEDERATE CAUSE.

The *London Daily News* from its stand point takes the following view of the recent Southern reverses:

The most ardent friends of Secession are admitting that the project of establishing a separate government in the South never was so gloomy as now. Even the *Times* seems half inclined to sound the retreat, and to seek refuge in the Federal lines. The period has nearly arrived for resorting to the well-known expedient of publishing contradictory articles in contiguous columns, with the consoling certainty that some at least of the views advocated will turn out tolerably correct. The riots in New York will serve to distract public attention for a few days; but unless we greatly mistake the character of the events which have lately occurred in America, the failure is not due to any temporary difficulty, but to permanent causes. And, therefore, no time should be lost by those who have hitherto supported the South in this country in placing themselves where they may see things in their true light.

It is a fact universally admitted that the Southern Rebellion has been admirably managed. From the time when the first gun was fired against Fort Sumter until the present moment the very ablest men in the South have been at the head of affairs. No one denies the remarkable ability of Jefferson Davis and his colleagues, or that the military and naval officers selected by him have amply justified the wisdom of his selection. The plans of the Confederates have been most sagaciously formed, and the best use has been made of

such resources as they could lay their hands upon. On the other hand, the Northern government have been guilty of grievous mistakes. In the beginning they had no serious belief in the reality of a gigantic rebellion. An army was to be created, and the officers who were to command were without experience.

No one who looks back upon the manner in which the war has been conducted by the North can fail to admit that there has been the grossest mismanagement of great resources and the most unfortunate selection of officers to command the troops. The natural results of incompetency followed. Armies have been defeated—the country has been invaded—and the capture of important points has been delayed. But the Northern people, in spite of everything, persevered. The result now is that their men are commanded by such men as Grant, Rosecrans and Meade, all of whom have proved their capacity, and that instead of suffering defeat or being compelled to stand fast, the armies of the North are constantly advancing. But how is this? The Southern armies are still commanded by Johnston, Beauregard and Jefferson Davis. The lines which they have to defend are more restricted, and therefore they are in a better position for rapid concentrations, while the Northerners are further removed from their base, and therefore more exposed to be attacked separately. Nevertheless, we find that almost on the same day, and that the 4th of July, the whole Confederate line, from the Potomac, on the east coast, to the Mississippi has been compelled to fall back. By no inglorious ruse, by no sudden surprise, but by months of warning as to where the attack was to be made, has this calamity fallen upon the South.

The same generals and the same statesmen who planned the rebellion, and whose ability, perseverance and gallantry have extorted the admiration of their enemies, are still at the head of affairs. And yet they have failed to arrest the North—the men who are said to be merely fighting for an idea, or for the vain ambition of extending empire. How is it that the arms of the South have thus suddenly become paralyzed? Had it been possible, does any reasonable man suppose that Gen. Johnston would not have relieved Vicksburg or Port Hudson? How was it that Bragg should have chosen the same moment to retreat before Rosecrans, and thus place the chief line of communication between the East and the West in the hands of the North?

How was it that at the same moment also Beauregard should have found it impossible to prevent the landing of the Federals on the islands near Charleston? How is it, finally, that at one point at least the Confederates, under their able General Lee, should not have succeeded in defeating the army of Meade, inferior in numbers and inferior in discipline? If the past history of the civil war proves anything, it proves that so long as the affairs of the South are conducted by Jefferson Davis and his friends, failure, if failure comes, cannot be due to any want of ability or of the knowledge how to make the best use of resources. The weapon may break in the hand of the South, but so long as it can be wielded it will be wielded with the most consummate skill.

But the simple truth is, that the weapon has broken—the resources are exhausted. And the ability of the southern leaders is the conclusive proof that such is the fact. *Reculer pour mieux sauter* [to run back for a good jump] is an excellent maxim, but it has no application now.

It has often been said by those who had most profoundly considered the peculiar characteristics of the rival parties in America, that the break down of the Confederacy would not be gradual but sudden. It would be the failure of thoroughly able men, who thoroughly understood their own plans, and had perfect command of their own resources. They would fail, not because they had taken a false step, but because they had no means to carry on the struggle. The ablest General in the world may be compelled to surrender because he cannot obtain men, food, or ammunition; and the ablest he is the more sudden and unexpected should be his capitulation. It is thus with the Southern government.

So long as they had the means of recruiting their armies, they stood their ground against their adversaries—nay, by skillful management, they seemed to multiply their numbers. But now that the fighting population is exhausted, they are compelled to yield along the whole line. But if it be true that the resources of the South have failed, it is vain to expect any permanent revival of success. It is of course possible that the North may still suffer partial defeats. But there is no doubt that if they persevere as they have hitherto done, they must, before very long, achieve a permanent victory and dictate their own terms.

[From the Richmond Whig, Sept. 4.]

INTERESTING FROM THE CONFEDERATE STATES.

PLANS FOR FUTURE FIGHTING.

We agree with the *Mississippian* that the true policy for our armies is, and has been from the inception of hostilities, to concentrate—to mass their forces—and never fight except when something substantial is to be gained. President Davis seemed to realize this great truth in his message to Congress just after the fall of Fort Donelson. In that message he said the Confederacy had undertaken more than it was able to accomplish,

and yet, strange as it appears, the policy of the war was still unchanged. Our armies remained scattered. They were not massed.—They have never relinquished any point of defence except as they were driven from it by the enemy's bayonets of starvation. We have undertaken to defend every approach to our vast domain. Our forces have been scattered along our whole frontier, and as a matter of course weak points were to be found by the wily foe. He could mass his forces and overwhelm the Confederates at any given point. Thus have we fought and suffered, thus have we paid dearly for the experience we have gained, and thus it is that so many battles have been lost, and so many roads opened to the invaders. It is not yet too late, however, to abandon a policy which actual trial has proved to be erroneous. We can yet mass our armies, and draw wisdom from the example of Washington, whose tactics worked out the great problem of the first Revolution. When too weak to fight we can retreat, and by having all our forces in two grand corps our skillful generals can so manoeuvre them as to thwart a foe vastly superior. The day of defeat will have passed away, when our veteran armies are hurled in solid masses against the foe.

[From the Savannah (Ga.) News, Sept. 2.]

WHO COMPOSE THE SUBMISSION PARTY AT THE SOUTH.

That there are submissionists amongst us, remarks the *Milledgeville Union*, all now see. They are banding together to form a political Union. Who compose this party or league? First and foremost the men who have never wanted the South to succeed. These are mostly born at the North, or of who have relatives in that section. Next comes the speculator, who has got rich out of the sufferings of our people, and who has bought property with his ill-gotten gains, which property he hopes to save by swearing allegiance to Lincoln when it is put in danger. The next class (in shame and sorrow we say it) is composed of men who are between forty-five and fifty years of age and who fear that they may yet be called to the field. They may have sons in the army—they may have had their sons butchered by the hated foe, but to keep at home themselves they are ready to dip their fingers in the heart's blood of an only son, and write traitor on his pale cold forehead. If we are not right, we are wrong. If we are not right in this war, we are all traitors. The man, therefore, who is ready to submit to Lincoln confesses himself guilty of treason, and deserves a halter.

ROBERT TOOMBS ON RECONSTRUCTION.

We find the following letter from General Robert Toombs in the last number of the *Sumter Republican*:

WASHINGTON, Ga., Aug. 17, '63:

MY DEAR SIR—Your letter of the 15th inst., asking my authority to contradict the report that "I am in favor of reconstruction," was received this evening. I can conceive no extremity to which my country could be reduced in which I would for a single moment entertain any proposition for any union with the North on any terms whatever. When all is lost, I prefer to unite with the thousands of our countrymen who have found honorable deaths, if not graves, on the battle field. Use this letter as you please. Very truly, your friend, &c., R. TOOMBS.

DR. A. BEES, Americus, Ga.

[From the Savannah (Ga.) News, Sept. 2.]

EMPLOYMENT OF NEGROES IN THE CONFEDERATE ARMY.

A joint committee of the Alabama Legislature, just adjourned, reported a resolution in favor of the proposition to employ slaves in the military service of the Confederate States, which proposition, we perceive, is favored by many of the presses of Mississippi and Alabama. After discussion in the Alabama House the resolution was adopted by a vote of sixty eight yeas to twelve nays, after striking out the words "military" before service, and "soldiers" at the end of the resolution.—The resolution was amended and reads as follows:

That it is the duty of Congress to provide by law for the employment in the service of the Confederate States of America, in such situations and in such numbers as may be found absolutely necessary, the able bodied slaves of the country, whether as pioneers, sappers and miners, cooks, nurses and teamsters.

In this form we can see no objection to the resolution.

EUROPEAN INTERVENTION IN AMERICAN AFFAIRS—ITS CONSEQUENCES.

The French Revolution, in the last century, was the commencement of the struggle which intelligence and a spirit of progress undertook against the blind encroachments of despotism upon the rights of mankind. As a first effort, it was necessarily crude and uncertain, and when it had attained success it fell from the mere fact that the people were unable to appreciate the inestimable benefits and advantages of self-government. After having successfully combated all Europe, France fell into the arms of the Corsican adventurer, Napoleon, merely because she was fearful of the future, and, having gained her liberty, knew not how to use it. When the republic of France became an empire, the despots of Europe breathed more lightly. They felt that for the time being a great danger, menacing their continuance of power—nay,