

1862, when the same discussion continued before you, after the withdrawal of England and Spain.

Our honorable colleague, M. David, has told us that England never participated in this expedition but with reluctance; that she was well pleased to leave the burden of it to France and Spain and reap the fruits herself.

If this is so, I derive from this concession of my honorable opponent the proof, that I just sought, of the exaggeration of the pretended violences committed against resident foreigners in Mexico; and if that which has been said was true, England would never have shown, in regard to her own subjects, that strange disdain of their lives and property.

As to Spain, every one will acknowledge with me that, from this point of view, she had interests conformable to ours. Yet discord slipped in among the allies. These are, M. David has told you, secondary facts. I ask him a thousand pardons; these are, on the contrary, capital facts, not only because they leave us alone exposed to all the results of this hazardous expedition, but also because they throw a light extremely precious on the real motives which should be set forth in opposition to the apparent motives which alone the Chamber has known.

It appears from all the official documents published, that, when the plenipotentiaries met at La Spledad, the chargé d'affaires of France brought forward an ultimatum against which the chargés d'affaires of England and Spain protested; and they immediately declared that they had come, not to establish such or such a government, not to oppose such or such an individual, but to obtain serious guarantees and reparation of grievances.

Permit me, gentlemen, to say here what undoubtedly has already occurred to your minds, that this scheme, so brilliantly set off by the eloquence of him to whom I reply—that is to say, the scheme of a government inaugurated for the greater glory and the greater advantage of France—should not cause us to forget the material elements of the question. I suppose that, in fact, France entertained this view in the very beginning; I suppose that she concealed it from the eyes of the Chamber; and this point is incontestable, that, at least to accomplish it worthily, must she have been ruled by questions of principle and not by questions of person.

You tell us that you went to attack Juarez. I reply that you went to inaugurate General Almonte; you have made yourselves the champions of an individual; you had in your train the pernicious remnants of the Mexican exiles, who, deserting the true principles of nationality, appealed to the foreigner to conquer back for them the power they had lost. Here is the explanation of this moral revolt in Mexico. In all that the honorable M. David has said with regard to the elements of dissolution there is much truth. It must be acknowledged that, when a country is delivered up for many years to an anarchy, so to speak, chronic, it seems very near its dissolution; but, as my friend M. Picard said, there is a way of reuniting immediately those wills divided by miserable ambition; they can be reunited in one common sentiment, the love of country.

Does it not belong to France to awake this sentiment? Can she not take advantage of it? Consult all those who know Mexico; they will tell you that if the Spaniards were detested, the French were regarded with affection. I go so far as to assert that if the French had announced at first that they would not interfere in any way with the internal politics of the country, that they came to re-establish order, that it was a matter of little consequence to them that the presidential chair should be occupied by such or such a one, the road to Mexico would have been open to them. In place of this, they present themselves with an ultimatum, in which they say to Juarez, the choice of the national suffrage, "Depart; you are a monster and the enemy of the human race." Should we be surprised that Mexican pride revolted; that from all sides they rushed to arms; and that this people, who was supposed to have fallen into complete dissolution, resisted this French expedition? thanks certainly, I doubt not, to the advantages of a material situation, but also to prove that it wished to defend the sacred soil of the country against the invasion which threatened it.

They told Juarez to vacate his place; and there are two ways of declaring this sad truth to a government—either to say so directly, or to inform it of it by presenting an ultimatum impossible to be executed. This is what happened, and this is precisely why the ministers of England and Spain resisted this pretension of our minister. And here I cannot avoid remarking with what deplorable levity, to use no severer expression, this affair was conducted.

What was the importance of the debts due to us by Mexico as regulated by treaty? I have said, gentlemen, that Mexico was our debtor, according to treaty signed, for 750,000 piastres. There were other claims, but they were conditional; the amount did not reach 5,000,000 of francs.

What does our chargé d'affaires do? Gentlemen, read the first article of his ultimatum: "Mexico engages to pay to France the sum of 12,000,000 of piastres, at which is estimated the whole of the French claim." Sixty millions of francs! If in private affairs, gentle-

men, a similar process were employed, what qualification would you apply to those who had recourse to it?

Well, the minister himself was not informed of this claim; he was ignorant of it when he was advised of it by the protests of the allied powers. Behold, gentlemen, in what reserved, yet firm, terms he observes to his chargé d'affaires that perhaps he had gone too far. "The figure at which the department has been forced to value our claims did not reach that fixed by your first article."

What! Gentlemen, our chargé d'affaires, in a matter so important, acted without an understanding with his minister. A blank was given for 750,000 piastres, and by a shameful overcharge pretensions are so far raised as to demand 60,000,000 of francs.

The minister is not informed of it, and he is under the necessity, when addressing the ambassador of France at London, to acknowledge that in fact the thing is pushed very much too far. "In writing to M. Dubois de Saligny," says the same minister, "in the sense of the preceding developments, I have, moreover, left him at liberty to use further the latitude allowed him by my first instructions to modify his demands."

To modify his demands! And it is France that speaks—France that has an army at her back, that seems to have but a word to pronounce to triumph over this petty people; she demands 60,000,000, when there are due only 750,000 piastres, and perhaps 5,000,000. I shall not dwell upon this subject, gentlemen; it affects your sentiments of probity too forcibly not to be understood by you.

I might say as much, and yet more forcibly, of another article of the ultimatum, which is designated as No. 3. It is utterly inexplicable; it should draw categorical explanations from the government which has hitherto kept silence on the subject; and if I have any reproach to make to the commission, it is that they have not previously called for them. Already, indeed, gentlemen, the questions of last year had put them on the way; they knew that it was a rotten affair, and that the thing should at all events be cleared up.

Here is article 3d: "Mexico shall be bound to the entire, loyal and immediate execution of the contract concluded in the month of February, 1859, between the Mexican government and the Jecker house."

Now, what is the importance of this contract? 15,000,000 of piastres or 75,000,000 of francs; and it was required that Mexico, in the state of distress in which it was, should succumb under the weight of our armies or pay 60,000,000 at first and 75,000,000 afterwards, that is, 135,000,000 francs.

Such were the demands made. It was in a military way that Mexico was addressed; and if obedience was not rendered to these demands, war was to be declared. It is the first time, in my knowledge at least, that in a diplomatic treaty, in an ultimatum, in a summons addressed by an armed people to one whom it can invade, that there are thus found stipulated guarantees of reimbursement for an affair purely private, and I add, for an affair that was known at the time by those residing in Mexico as a shameful transaction.

Assuredly the responsibility cannot attach to the minister of foreign affairs; but if his honor is entirely acquitted in this regard, have I not the right to accuse his prudence? Was he permitted to ignore the Jecker affair? Did it not make noise enough in Mexico? When there was question of this departure for Mexico, everything was done with such carelessness that they ignored the men, the things, the realities with which they were to come in contact. Here, however, is the position assumed by the minister of foreign affairs, and you will see in what terms he expresses himself on this point:

"As to what especially concerns article 3, relatively to the Jecker affair, there is evidently a distinction to be made in this case between what directly concerns our interests and what is foreign to it. When General Miramon issued the decree which brought on his contract with the Jecker house, the communications of the legation having stated that foreign commerce derived considerable advantage from the financial measure facilitated by that house to the Mexican government, it was natural that we should regard it as of great utility to hinder, as much as possible, the revocation of this measure and of the operations which facilitated it. It is with this view that the instructions of the department have invited you, as you have already taken the initiative, to sustain the claims and maintain the complaints provoked on this question by the conduct of the government of Juarez. It would now, however, appear from the opposition with which you have met on the part of Sir Charles Wyke to your demands in respect to this affair, that no advantage, they say, would accrue to foreign commerce from the contract made with the Jecker house, but that this latter only would be exclusively benefited by the accomplishment of this contract. I do not sufficiently understand the state of the case, but I call your attention to the importance of distinguishing well in this affair between what may really involve the interests which it is our duty to defend, and what may concern others of a very different character.

"The actual government cannot pretend to deprive our countrymen of advantages assured to them by a regular measure adopted by the administration of General Miramon, for the only reason that that measure emanated from an enemy; but we, on our part,

would have no foundation in reason were we to wish to impose obligations on the actual government that did not flow essentially from governmental responsibility."

Ah, gentlemen, last year I heard the minister without portfolio repeat with complacency, "When we are a great people, when we are a great government, when we direct great affairs, we should also be a vigilant minister." I say so too; and it was not permitted thus to involve negotiations on uncertainties, on suppositions, on numbers which the least examination causes to vanish and perhaps crumble under the reprobation of the public conscience. What! the minister is not instructed; he is ignorant. At the smallest objection made by the representative of England, he stops short and says that it is possible that the government of Miramon has done a thing that was not entirely indifferent to foreign commerce.

But if all these things exist you ought to have known them; you are minister in order to know them; it was your duty to obtain information. War is not a play left to the caprices of a vain ambition; when people engage in it, when they send their fleets beyond the seas, when they deprive their country of her children and her money, we should know what they wish to do and what they wish to demand; and we should not, at the very first claim, immediately recoil as the minister of foreign affairs has done, uncertain as he was about the pretensions of his representative.

But, gentlemen, this is not enough, and it is not only on the ignorance of the minister of foreign affairs that I rely to characterize this deplorable affair as I should; it is on its own nature, and it behooves you to understand it thoroughly. These 75,000,000 that Jecker claims were, the representative of England asserted, a manifest robbery in regard to the Mexican public and government. Who, in fact, was Jecker? He was, as you have been told, a Swiss banker; he arrived poor in Mexico, and in twenty years has made a fortune of more than three millions, which, I may mention it in passing, proves that foreign commerce is not entirely abandoned to plunderers. [Laughter.] In possession of a fortune so considerable, he has plunged into great industrial schemes; he has embarked in those enterprises, objects of the dreams and the hopes of the speculators of other times as of the speculators of to-day, which sometimes hide behind diplomacy to acquire the confidence of the public. I refer to partnerships in common; Jecker engulfed considerable capital in them, and in 1859 his affairs became much embarrassed.

Beside him was another person who was not less so; I refer to General Miramon. At the end of his resources, having pillaged even the churches, as our honorable colleague, M. David, very well observed, (for this party which they call ultra-clerical, be sure, does not belie its name; and when it wishes to coin money with religion it does not spare it,) General Miramon, with empty coffers, turns to Jecker who can offer him only similar ones. But there was the public to replenish the one and the other; and it was then that they made that wonderful scheme, and that they said to one another, "If Jecker is authorized by the government to make a great loan, the public will come into it; the Mexican public (it is a little French in this respect) [laughter] will believe the fine promises that will be made to them, and when they will be told that they will derive a handsome emolument from it they will bring their capital. But there was not question only of capital. If they had authorized Jecker to issue fifteen millions in paper, and if they had thought that he would find fifteen millions of specie, they would have committed a grave error, and these gentlemen were incapable of that. [Laughter.] All who are acquainted with Mexico know to perfection that it is flooded with false money. The successive governments have wished to leave a souvenir behind them, and that souvenir is bankruptcy. They have all emitted bills of credit with which they have flooded the country, and which, to be sure, they forgot to pay when they left power. [Renewed laughter.]

There were, especially, the Peza bills, issued in 1856, if I am not mistaken, but the date is of little importance; what I am sure of is, that they circulated among the Mexican people enormously depreciated. Those who took them at 7 per cent. were considered rash; these bills sold only for 6 per cent. of their nominal value. Well, it was arranged between General Miramon and the Jecker house that the Jecker house should issue fifteen millions of paper to be guaranteed by the government. The government guaranteed its reimbursement at the end of five years by means of annuities which I need not explain; it guaranteed, moreover, the payment of the interest semi-annually, and the Jecker house was commissioned for this operation.

But the Mexican government, as I have had the honor of saying, did not expect to receive fifteen millions; far from it. It was said that the Peza bills would be received in payment at their nominal value, provided they were willing, on these bills, to pay 25 per cent. in specie. These 25 per cents, chemically disengaged (I hope the Chamber will allow me this expression) from all these *scoria* of stock-jobbing, formed, in reality, the net residue which was to return into the treasury of Mexico.

However, as Jecker is the associate of Miramon, Miramon will not come off best. [Laughter.] The net profit was to be 3,750,000 piastres to the Jecker house, which being

commissioned for this operation, had allowed itself a commission of 20 per cent., that is, 750,000 piastres; and as it was in its counting-rooms that the semi-annual interest was to be paid, it had very prudently asked the person with whom it treated to let the money remain in its hands as a guarantee of the debt. So that Jecker first deducted 750,000 piastres for commission, and afterwards 2,250,000 piastres for guarantee; whence it followed that the residue, which really entered the coffers of the Mexican government, was only 750,000 piastres. And if you please to take notice that the Mexican government represented by Miramon borrowed 15,000,000 of piastres, you will see that it borrowed at 90 per cent. [Laughter.]

You think we are at the end? Ah! it is because you know not the usages of traffickers in Mexico. See how matters were carried on:

It has been said that the foreign merchants took a considerable number of these bills. I have here the *exposé* of the operation, and see what it states. I have made an exact estimate of the bills taken by the public, and the public were yet much too confiding, for they took about 471,275 piastres; as to the surplus, it remained in the hands of Jecker, who was unable to negotiate it, that is, fourteen millions and a fraction of a million.

I have forgotten to give the Chamber, and I ask pardon for it, but I am not as much at my ease here as at the palace. [Laughter.] I have forgotten to give the dates of the operation. This operation took place in the month of February, 1859; it was at that time that Jecker issued a part of those bills and in the course of the year 1860.

Did Jecker place in the hands of the Mexican government the 750,000 piastres for which he was accountable? No. See what he had the ingenuity to make Miramon accept. I said ingenuity; I am wrong; usurers everywhere resemble each other, and it is not only in Mexico that children are compelled to receive things of which they have the least need. [Laughter.] Miramon was to receive 1,490,414 piastres. Here is what he did receive: The public paid in money 52,541 piastres and 56 fractions. Jecker paid 566,386 piastres and 27 fractions, which in reality makes Jecker to have paid in specie on these 1,490,414 piastres only 618,927 piastres. He paid in afterwards, in bills issued by Zuloaga, 342,000 piastres; in Peza bills, 30,000 piastres; in Jecker bills, 24,750 piastres; to the order of sundries on the customs, 100,000 piastres; in equipments, 70,000 piastres; in various bills receivable, 6,750 piastres and 56 fractions; in reimbursement of the Grosso debt, 298,000 piastres; sum total, 1,490,428 piastres and 39 fractions. This Grosso, whose reimbursement is here put into account as payment for 298,000 piastres, is a nephew of Miramon. Miramon had conceded to him the exclusive privilege of clothing the Mexican troops, which, as our soldiers must be by this time convinced, is an operation costing very little to him who is charged with it. [General laughter.] This Grosso had the ingenuity to present a bill for payment of 298,000 piastres, and if the investigations which have been sent me are correct, the Mexican government has been certainly robbed of two-thirds.

It is by means of all these deductions that Jecker succeeded in charging the Mexican government with all these sums on which he paid in, in reality, only 750,000 piastres. It follows from this, that having disbursed in all 1,000,000 of piastres, in reality he retained 1,500,000, so that instead of being a creditor he should be accounted a debtor. And here is the honest capitalist in whose favor our minister interferes, for whom our ultimatum is going, perhaps, to shed the blood of the French soldiers and the Mexican soldiers; here is the reason of our intervention; here are the lessons of morality and civilization that France is going to give the world. [Expressions of dissent from many benches.]

And as a final fact, I shall add the following: It has been said, and repeated at different times in the papers, that it was the fall of Miramon that caused the failure of Jecker. Nothing more untrue. Jecker failed in the month of May, 1860. I have the record of the proceedings of the meeting held by his creditors in September, 1860, and it was in December, 1861, that Miramon was overthrown.

Gentlemen, Jecker's bills were admitted in his failure and bought at a low price. Is Jecker the keeper of them? Has he caused them to pass into the hands of third parties? Should we, in this respect, consider as furnishing information worthy of being brought before the Chamber all the data in our hands? You all know to what I allude. We have received letters emanating from members of the Jecker family, and intercepted. From these letters it would appear that Jecker flattered himself, very unreasonably, no doubt, and calumniously, that he would find (among the high personages and functionaries of France) a support which, certainly, he has never found. As for me, I am much better pleased to say that such letters cannot be mentioned here. I could have wished that the Moniteur explained itself, and that in presence of a fact so public, and which was of a nature to alarm the conscience of all honest people, it gave them a complete denial. Much more so; and it is the only fact that I wish to retain, for it is unfortunately testified by an act of the French administration, because in one of these letters, which bore the date of August 31, 1862, the correspondent informs Jecker, as a precious advantage gained, of the publication in the Bulletin des Lois of his act of naturalization.

The fact is true, and, in my opinion, it is inexplicable. How? It is in the progress of our debates, after it had been revealed that the Jecker debts concealed a veritable rascality, that Jecker is thus picked up by the administration and made a French citizen! Can we not, from this, conclude that it is an assistance given to this rotten claim? Happily, gentlemen, the developments made in this Chamber are before the world, and it will be impossible for diplomacy to obtain public sanction for such a proceeding. But, in fine, do not the honest public desire to have all this thing cleared up in a categorical manner? When I point out, in this deplorable affair, unpardonable consequences, demands which cannot be justified, this war so rashly undertaken, those ultimatums which are belied by those who ought to know them and maintain them; and when at the end of this demonstration I find the French nation offering shelter to this man who has never ceased to be a Mexican and a miserable agitator, I have a strong right, I think, to call to these facts all your attention, your entire consideration, and to ask that the government would be pleased to dispel the sad clouds that hang over the probity of its agents.

This is what I have to say in regard to this article 3 of the ultimatum, and you understand that it cannot be, especially in a French assembly, considered as secondary. Everything that touches honor, everything that touches dignity, everything that would be stigmatized in private life, everything that would be stricken down by the law, everything that would be condemned by the magistrate, cannot be let pass with impunity and admitted in public life. And now must we be astonished that this ultimatum caused England to withdraw? Must we be astonished that Spain was unwilling to accept the responsibility of it?

Do not forget—and this is also one of the characteristic traits of this deplorable enterprise—that the chargé d'affaires of France raised the pretension that each of the powers should produce its own ultimatum and its own valuation of pecuniary claims, without the other belligerent powers being allowed to discuss them, so that each one was mistress of the situation; for it sufficed, for example, for England to claim a thousand millions to render the war fatally necessary.

It is, then, on this question of money, in regard to which the government can no longer maintain the discussion which it abandons, a circumstance which bears down the responsibility of its agent; it is on this question that the bickering arises between the three powers and that war is resolved on.

Here, gentlemen, you understand I must not speak but with extreme reserve. It is not my part to say how, in a military point of view, history will judge, not the soldiers and generals who have displayed on the spot all the bravery, all the skill, all the ardor, all the resolution, that are ever found in the French armies, but those who have ordered this expedition, those who have not provided for it the materials, the means necessary for its prompt success. I desire, gentlemen, to leave all these faults in the shade. [Demonstrations in the Chamber.]

A VOICE. Leave nothing in the shade.

M. JULES FAVRE. They afflict me; they contribute no way to the solution which we seek. What we seek is a prompt termination, without any diminution of our dignity, of the war in which we are engaged; for to pretend now, after all the explanations into which I have entered, that this war is conformable with our principles, would be to deny what is evident. These principles, gentlemen, are paraded on all occasions by the minister; he everywhere repeats that the government which he serves has sprung from universal suffrage, and that this is a rule which he intends to respect among all neighboring nations.

Here is what he said on this point in your session of March 13, 1861: "The principle of non-intervention being thus laid down, there was yet, on the point of general policy, another reason which imperiously ordered us to respect it. We could not, after having proclaimed at home, as the basis of our government, national sovereignty and the suffrage of the country, fail to respect it among others. The Emperor has been elected by the people; he reigns and he glories in it, according to the national will; and you would wish him, beyond our frontiers, to employ the force confided to him by that national will, in repressing neighboring nations, in repressing their aspirations, and snatching from their hands their titles to sovereignty, thereby deny his own legitimacy!"

These, gentlemen, are the words of M. Billault. I ask him, are they ironical? Were they uttered merely to call forth our legitimate applause? Were they not the expression of the minister's political conscience? If I assume this last supposition, I say to him, By what right are you in Mexico? You have gone there to avenge national interests? In this purpose I follow you; but if these interests are avenged on the soil itself of Mexico, if at Orizaba, that is, in a salubrious position, we are offered guarantees, what good is it to overturn the government of Juarez? Is it against Juarez that you intended this war? Do you wish to overthrow him at any cost? Permit me to recall to you your own words. This government, against which you precipitate your legions, was a shadow—a breath of air; it was enough for you to appear, and it would be destroyed. Well, it has resisted you; it has strengthened itself by what is most generous in the world—that is, by the blood shed by our soldiers.

Is not this enough? Do you wish to continue this cruel expedition? Do you wish, through a false point of honor, to force men thus to massacre each other in order to arrive at nothing; in order to arrive at a result which will confound your policy, I fear not to assert it, for you pursue a phantasm when you propose to raise on the sand a solid edifice not to be overturned by coming events.

You are then in opposition with justice. You did not tell the whole truth before the Chamber when you were interrogated, and you are now obliged to complete it. In vain do you take refuge, as my honorable friend M. Picard told you, behind the brilliant sophisms of a policy very seductive to some minds. You wish, it is said, to resist north America, and you do not see that you call her in! You are going to establish a point in Southern America that will become the battle-field whereon the United States and Europe will meet.

Must we yield to all your fancies? Must we find ourselves in a struggle with the north and fight beside the south? Would you thus constrain us to espouse all the quarrels of one people with another? Is this your policy? As for me, I protest against it in the name of principle, in the name of the law of nations. I say that there is no possibility for us to attack a people, who, by maintaining their nationality, by offering us satisfactory guarantees, have sufficiently honored themselves that we should not drive them contemptuously from our courts without being willing to hear them, and that we should not receive them but at the point of our bayonets.

If we have not justice on our side, gentlemen, what must we say of the final consequence of this enterprise? For it is the end, in fine, that must be regarded in all things; and when one is in a political position, when one disposes of all the forces of France, it should not be involved in a blind affair in which its dignity or its interests might have to suffer.

Last year, though well aware that in the presence of a body such as this that does me the honor to listen to me I must carefully avoid all that could wound the feeling of national honor, I deemed myself authorized to ask the immediate suspension of an expedition unfortunately undertaken, and which could in no way cause us to consider that we had experienced a check, because our soldiers, in insufficient numbers, had broken against walls of granite. I believe that I gave you sage advice, and if it had been followed thousands of precious lives, ingloriously decimated by disease, would have been preserved. Now you persist, and you wish at all hazards, enlarging the circle of your policy, ambitious of military glory, you wish your flag to wave over the city of Mexico.

Surely, gentlemen, if France wills it, she will succeed, nothing can deter her; and when our generous children meet an obstacle, they are so prodigal of the existence which God has given them that nothing can resist them.

But should not our hearts be moved at it? Can we coolly regard these human hecatombs offered to that fantastic, confused divinity, which has never been defined by the ministers? [Interruptions and cries of disapprobation.] Can we consent to have thousands of families plunged in grief for the sterile glory of reaching the Mexican capital?

Now, gentlemen, suppose you are at the city of Mexico, what are you going to do then? You say that you will overturn the government of Juarez! Undoubtedly. But what will you do then? I hear the honorable M. David immediately cry out, "The city of Mexico is the heart of the nation; there all its military resources are concentrated." But the honorable M. David, who knows so well the history and the geography of Mexico, will permit me to reply to him with the following two facts for consideration: Mexico, he knows, has been incessantly rent by civil war, and the city of Mexico has been the sterile stake which the different pretenders conquered in turn, notwithstanding which they never possessed more than an ephemeral and limited power.

And as to the geography—but, gentlemen, only those who know it not can believe that the conquest of the city of Mexico necessarily carries along with it the conquest of Mexico. The city of Mexico is situated 69 leagues from the coast, from Vera Cruz. Do you know what is the greatest extent of Mexico in its utmost length? It is 950 leagues; and in these 950 leagues to the northwest there are rich and populous provinces with important cities.

I will mention some: Guanajuato has 41,000 inhabitants; it is 253 kilometres to the northwest of Mexico, and the whole State has more than 520,000 inhabitants. Do you wish to proceed further? Traverse 450 kilometres, and you find the city of Guadalajara with 60,000 inhabitants. You have then Valladolid with 18,000; you have the State of Xalisco with 800,000, and others which I shall not mention, for fear of mistake, for I do not possess the same amount of information as the honorable M. David, and mine, I acknowledge, is of very recent date. Yet it is guaranteed by all the books of geography, which know perhaps more than all of us, and which we can consult.

Well, when the French shall reach the city of Mexico, they will establish a government, I suppose; it may be Almonte, it may be the Archduke Maximilian, who is, perhaps, yet

kept in reserve in spite of all asseverations to the contrary; it may be, perhaps, any other prince of Germany, for in this respect the fertility of Germany is inexhaustible. [Laughter.]

But when this German prince shall have been established, what will you do? You must support him. Juarez with his legions, with his partisans, (if not Juarez, some other representative of nationality) will retire into the provinces that remain free. Will you follow him? After having traversed sixty-nine leagues to reach the city of Mexico, will you traverse nine hundred more to come up with him who will resist you? We are at Orizaba; we have made twenty-two leagues; we have already spent more than one hundred and four millions without counting what we know nothing of, which makes five millions a league. [Demonstrations in the Chamber.] At this cost all the treasures of France would not suffice. [Interruptions. Marks of disapprobation.] And what would be the end? To regenerate Mexico, to impose a stable government on that unfortunate people? But it cannot be stable except on condition that you support it by your arms. Consult experience.

In 1848 the United States waged war with Mexico. The United States bordered upon Mexico; they had all the facilities for sending men and munitions of war. Well, notwithstanding this, the United States spent one hundred millions of dollars, and the war lasted two years.

I acknowledge, gentlemen, and it is a confession which I desire to make to the honor of France, that war costs less with us than in America; yet, whatever this concession be worth, we must acknowledge that a war, two thousand leagues from one's country, necessitates enormous sacrifices; that to defend our rights we need not place ourselves in unacceptable conditions. What you say now of the honor of your flag you will be obliged to say afterwards; the first fault will draw you into a second one, and you will find yourselves under an impossibility of withdrawing. This will be another Roman occupation, without the glory of having maintained a great principle. You will not then have the right to say that it is in the interest of the Catholic world, but only in the interests of the Mexicans, that you will spend fifty millions a year, and that you will send 30,000 men annually, of whom a great number will be cut down by the murderous effect of the climate.

This is a line of policy with which I can not agree; and when I remain convinced that this expedition has been undertaken only on the faith of lying communications, [disapprobation,] that your representatives abroad have imposed unacceptable conditions which have brought on the rupture between us, England, and Spain; when it is in opposition to the rights of the Mexicans, and the interests of France, that this deplorable war is prolonged, I can but entreat the Chamber to use the right which appertains to it to manifest its will respectfully and firmly, and to disengage, as I do solemnly by this protest, its responsibility from that of the government. [Obstreperous excitement.]

His excellency M. BILLAULT, minister without portfolio, rises to speak.

NUMEROUS VOICES. To-morrow! To-morrow!

THE PRESIDENT. The minister without portfolio has the floor.

His excellency the MINISTER. Gentlemen, the lateness of the hour compels me to ask the Chamber to adjourn the discussion till to-morrow; but I make, in presence of the Chamber, the engagement to refute thoroughly all the accusations brought against the policy of France. [Good, very good.]

M. JULES FAVRE. On condition that I may reply.

THE PRESIDENT. The continuation of the discussion is deferred till to-morrow.

The Chamber adjourned at 6 o'clock.

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SESSION OF SATURDAY, February 7.

His excellency the Duke of Morny, president, in the chair.

The session was opened at 2 o'clock. Baron J. David, one of the secretaries, read the minutes of the session of yesterday; the minutes were adopted.

THE PRESIDENT. I lay before the Chamber a letter from M. Arnaud requesting leave of absence on account of ill health. There is no opposition? The leave is granted. Does any one desire to present a report?

M. CHABANON. I have the honor to present a report on the bill relative to an extraordinary impost by the department of Gard.

THE PRESIDENT. The report will be printed and distributed. The order of the day is the continuation of the discussion on the address.

(The ministerial benches were occupied by their excellencies MM. Baroche, minister, president of the council of state; Billault, Magne, ministers without portfolio; De Parieu, vice-president of the council of state; General Allard, Boudet, Vuillefroy, Boinvilliers, and Vitry, chairmen of committees in the council of state.)

THE PRESIDENT. The deliberation continues on section third, and on the amendment proposed to this section by M. Jules Favre and several other members.

His excellency M. BILLAULT, minister without portfolio. Gentlemen, as I enter upon the discussion of the amendment submitted to your deliberation, I cannot pass over in silence the first impression made upon me by reading it. In the parliamentary governments from which we have adopted the address and its political debates, it is a traditional custom that the language destined to be heard by the sovereign should always bear the impress of respectful deference [Good, good.] The courtesy of the words does not hinder their sincerity, nor, if needs be, their firmness.

I hear frequent mention of liberty as it is in England. It would be well to consult the English practice on this point; I do not know that it would be easy to find in it any phrase borrowed from the harshness manifested by certain amendments submitted to your attention. [Renewed marks of approbation.]

I will draw from this reflection but one consequence: it is that the extreme liberty of form evidences, whatever may be said, the great liberty existing in fact. [Good, good.]

The policy which France pursues in Mexico, which our soldiers are now defending in the face of the enemy, has been the object of accusations which I yesterday promised the Chamber to refute to-day. I will trace step by step the causes which have induced the expedition, the incidents for which it has been sought to calumniate it; it will not be the fault of the explicitness of my words if each and every fact is not clearly explained to the Chamber. [Good.]

In the amendment submitted to you the legitimate causes of the expedition now commenced are denied. I proceed to enumerate them anew in brief. Is it denied that against the government of Juarez we had to complain of three treaties obligatory upon it, and all three by it violated, the treaty of 1853, that of 1859, that of 1861? Is it denied that these three treaties stipulated reparation for the outrages, the murders, the pillagings, the robberies of which our fellow-countrymen have been the victims? Is it denied that the Mexican custom-house revenues were assigned, in part, for the payment of these reparations? Is it denied that the government of Juarez, breaking these three treaties, has proclaimed the forced suspension of them, and has laid hands on the funds collected for carrying them into effect? Is it denied that, under the government of Juarez, the French population has been incessantly the victim of brutal violences, odious spoliations, robberies—ill treatment of every kind? Is this denied? That government established itself in the city of Mexico towards the end of 1860; we immediately accredited our minister; in the commencement of 1861 he arrived there with the most kindly intentions. Consigning all former wrongs to oblivion, we were disposed loyally to second the efforts of the new government to re-establish, if that were possible, a little order in the country. It has required the continuance, the constant accumulation of acts of violence and wrong, to induce us first to withdraw our kindly feelings, and then to feel the necessity of an efficacious military demonstration.

The impression was sought to be made yesterday that the wrongs of which we complain were not the act of the government of Juarez, but were the act of preceding governments. But read all the despatches of 1861, and especially those of June, July, August, September, October, and November, to the moment when our minister, by order of the French government, was forced to leave that deplorable country; there is not one that does not attest, on the part of that government, the violation of plighted faith; not one which does not attest robberies, assassinations, attacks of every kind upon our resident countrymen. This disorderly state of affairs is not attested only by French assertions. You believe more in the affirmations of the ministers of England and Spain than in those of the minister of your own country? Be it so. [Good, good.] Well, Sir Charles Wyke wrote to his government, on the 27th of May, 1861, that is, at the time when the tyranny of Juarez held sway in the city of Mexico; he wrote as follows:

“The congress, instead of giving the government sufficient force to put an end to the horrible disorders that reign in all parts of the country, occupies itself with disputes on different theories of the pretended government and ultra-liberal principles. During this time the respectable part of the population is left without defence against the attacks of the robbers and assassins who swarm on the highways and in the streets of the capital. The constitutional government cannot maintain its authority in the various States of the confederation, which, in fact, are perfectly independent; so that the same causes which divided the confederation of Central America, and which are at work here, will probably produce the same results.

“The only hope of an advantageous change that I can see is in the small conservative party which may attain to power before all is lost, and which can save its country from the ruin which threatens it.

“From the moment that we shall make known our determination no longer to permit English subjects to be robbed and assassinated with impunity we will be respected. All sensible Mexicans will approve a measure, the necessity of which they are the first to recog-

nize, in order to put an end to the excesses which, every day and every hour, are committed, under a government as corrupt as it is powerless to maintain order and to effect the execution of its own laws."

On the 28th of October he wrote again: "The experience of each day tends to prove how utterly absurd it is to seek to govern this country with the limited faculties accorded to the executive power by the present ultra-liberal constitution. I see no hope of amelioration but in the advent of a foreign intervention, or in the formation of a reasonable government, composed of the principal men of the conservative party, who, for the present, are devoid of influence, and fear to stir unless with material assistance from without."

These facts stated by our agents were evident to all the world. It is true that to acquit Juarez of them, these facts are attributed to brigandage, and it is added that brigandage is endemic in that unfortunate country. We shall probably hear on Monday, gentlemen, something on Neapolitan brigandage, severe words, and they will be well founded, but I ask how, in the face of this severity towards acts not directed against our fellow-countrymen, there is found such an abundance of indulgence for Mexican brigandage of which our citizens are the victims. [Good, good.] The government of Juarez is not only guilty for its impotence, its corruption, as the minister of England says; it is not only culpable of being unable or unwilling to prevent the brigandages committed about it; it is not only guilty of letting the brigands that surround it go unpunished; it is guilty of making of them colonels, generals, friends, confidants. [That's so; that's so; good, good.] It is, moreover, personally guilty of the direct violation of all the engagements into which it has entered.

Again, I ask, is it bound by treaties with us, treaties subscribed by its predecessors, treaties subscribed by itself? Has it not violated these treaties? Has it not forcibly seized for itself the sums collected for us, and which those treaties had assigned to us?

Here are the facts; they are incontestable. In the face of these violations and of these violences, is there one man in this assembly who does not feel the necessity for France to enforce respect for the treaties made with her and with citizens who glory in being Frenchmen? There was once in the world a people whose members had to say but one word, "I am a Roman citizen," to insure universal respect. There is another to-day which, in every quarter of the world, enforces with equal energy respect for its countrymen; acts of the greatest energy are familiar to it in this regard, and it has just very recently given a lively proof of it in the waters of Brazil. I admire its vigorous patriotism; but you will not take it ill that the government of France should imitate it, and cause its countrymen also to be respected as much as British citizens are respected. [Enthusiastic approbation.]

The cause of our offended honor, of our treaties violated, of our funds carried off, the cause of our fellow-citizens harassed, pillaged, assassinated—these causes cannot be abandoned by a government conscious of its obligations, and whose first duty it is to make its country respected.

You seek to make these causes so legitimate be forgotten by evoking I know not what scandal; of which it is hoped the mists, more or less obscure, will shade from the eyes of prejudiced public opinion all the sincerity of purpose, all the justice of the resolutions of the government. But these mists will soon be dissipated. What it imports me from the beginning to state well is, that in the face of the acts of the government of Juarez, there is no people so feeble, so timid, so pacifically inclined, that would not deem itself necessitated to have recourse to force to maintain its disregarded rights.

Is not this opinion of France, gentlemen, also that of England? Has not England judged, as we have done, that the measure was full? Has she not recalled her minister? Has she not with us signed a treaty for action in common? Has not the sentiment of England been also that of Spain? Has not Spain as well as England made common cause with us? Has she not sent her troops upon Mexican soil? Has she not judged, equally with us, that it was for her honor, that it was for the urgent interest of her citizens to resort to this great and last resort of nations, the employment of force, when their rights are violated? There is undoubtedly no occasion to accuse either England or Spain of this pretended desire to enthrone a foreign prince, or of any Jecker debt whatever to enforce. Yet the English and the Spanish have judged as well as we, for the same reasons that we have, the violation of treaties and the vexations to which their citizens have been subjected, that the occasion for the employment of force was presented, and that it was necessary to use it.

I insist on these facts, because it is important to establish well that the motives which have decided us would have decided any nation, however little desirous of making itself respected in the world, and that three great nations, identical in their complaints, have been equally so in their resolution to act.

The employment of force being found necessary, and being resolved on, what have been the steps taken by the Emperor's government in consequence? It has been asserted that its conduct has been adventurous, rash. I shall presume to show that it has been prudent, wise, and circumspect. In the first place, it had an understanding with the powers which

had the same interests as France. It thus avoided all cause for jealousy, difficulty, and embarrassment, and the three powers, in unison, regulated the conditions of their action. France did not even take, in the beginning, the principal part in the demonstration. The proportion of the forces had been agreed upon. Spain, whom so many memories recall into those countries, whom the most important interests in the very Gulf of Mexico command to be strong and respected, Spain had found in the traditions of her policy and the good will of ours towards her the reasons for playing the principal part, and having numerous *corps d'armée*. England, whose power is chiefly maritime, gave the assistance of her fleets. And as for us, as resolved as the Spanish, but in less number, and leaving to Spain the honor of the principal situation, we sent originally but 2,500 men.

Thus, then, driven unto the last intrenchments of her honor, France, having come to an understanding with the great powers, having the same interests as they, and regulating with common accord the concurrence of each, she who has been accustomed to take the chief parts took only the second. Assuredly, in such circumstances, she was neither rash nor adventurous; she was sensible and politic. [Very good; very good.]

Indeed, there could not well be any great degree of temerity in the fact that three powers, among the principal of the world, should proceed to demand of a savage and tyrannical government to yield at length to reason and equity. There could be nothing very venturesome in this that, preceded by Spain, followed by England, we should undertake to uphold our rights and our claims in Mexico. How, under these circumstances, can the French government be accused of having imprudently and with levity sported with the blood and treasures of its country?

But there has been brought forward another serious imputation which it behooves us to clear up. When, for the first time, in the month of March of last year, the Mexican question was brought forward in this assembly, certain explanations were given, and recalling them yesterday, the eloquent orator to whom I reply has offered us a strange dilemma: "Either you have deceived the Chamber," said he to us, "or you did not know all."

Has he well weighed the import of such words? To deceive the Chamber! If the Emperor's ministers were capable of such an infamous proceeding they should have been impeached. [Good, good.] I am not aware that the rectitude of my political life has given any one the right to throw such an imputation on my character. [No, no; good, good.]

But we might not have known all. Do you clearly understand the meaning of this? This tends, on the one side, to bring into discredit with this assembly the authoritative declarations of the government, to ruin its just authority, to destroy the faith which you have in it; it tends, on the other hand, to throw back upon him who honors us with his confidence and his instructions such insinuations as, I am sure, you would not accept. [Good, good.]

We know what we ought to have known; we said what we ought to have said. Recall to mind the facts.

I know well that, from the very first day, the efforts of the opposition have been directed to drown the popularity of a necessary chastisement in the unpopularity of the gratuitous foundation of a foreign throne. It was requisite for this purpose to substitute for the reminiscence of the violences of which our fellow-countrymen have been the object, for the reminiscence of treaties violated, the prejudice of an enterprise in which all motives of national interest would have been effaced; it was necessary to endeavor to persuade France that it was demanded of her to sacrifice her children, to expend her treasures, solely to found a throne for an archduke of Austria. But never, as you know well, has this accessory and conditional scheme, subordinate to the wishes of the Mexican people, been either the exclusive motive or purpose of the expedition undertaken.

In this discussion the honorable orator to whom I reply put forth, in effect, the assertion that France was disinterested in the affair, that entire satisfaction had been assured to her, and that the expedition was undertaken with the sole view of erecting a throne in Mexico and seating on it a foreign prince. He cited certain indications from officers who had declared it. We replied that we went to Mexico to avenge our honor, to avenge our fellow-countrymen, to compel the execution of treaties, to obtain the reparation due to us, which, whatever he may say to the contrary, Juarez was unwilling to accord to us. And then we added: "If the Mexicans, weary of the tyranny from which they suffer still more than we do, possess yet any germ of energy, if they have not been completely enervated by the forty years of anarchy and tyranny which weigh upon them, if they desire to repress all those revolutionary and counter-revolutionary hordes which harass and oppress them, profiting by the occasion which we are going to offer them, if they wish to endeavor to found a regular and reasonable government, they can reckon on our whole moral support; we will applaud their efforts, we will prosecute with our best wishes the re-edification of the social edifice in their unhappy country. We indicated plainly, as the first step in our policy, the desire to avenge the honor of France, the blood of her children, and to obtain reparation for all injuries done; and then, as a second step, in the interest also of the guarantees which we had the right to demand, the reorganization by the Mexicans them-

selves of a regular, responsible government, capable of respecting plighted faith. If Mexico can give herself and us this fundamental guarantee she will have, I repeat, our moral support, our approbation, our applause, and we shall be happy to have given her the occasion for the resurrection of a great and beautiful country, plunged in misery for so many years. Here is our reply. [Good.]

In what have we concealed the ideas of the government? Read all the proclamations that from the first day to the present moment have emanated from the French government. When I spoke in the month of March last you had before your eyes the instructions given by our minister of foreign affairs; they were clear, plain, precise. In the first place, our interests; in the second place, the desire for the organization of a real, effectual Mexican government. The Emperor, in his memorable letter to General De Lorencez, wrote those noble words which you have applauded: "It is against my interests, my origin, and my principles to impose any government whatever on the Mexican people; let them choose in full liberty the form that suits them." Afterwards General Forey made the same declarations; and I myself, in the month of June last, declared to you, as the last possible consequence of the line of conduct which we intended to pursue: "We appeal to the Mexican people, and if that people, free to vote as it pleases, decides even for the government of Juarez, well, be it so; let its wish be accomplished."

How, then, can we have deceived the Chamber? How have we ever concealed both the principal purpose and the conditional hypotheses? If, in these contingencies, Mexico happened to desire a monarchy, its possibilities have not remained unprovided for. Thus we have arranged everything in its proper place. We have not given a contingent hypothesis precedence of our own interests, for when a policy is pursued in the name of one's own country, it is by the interest of one's own country that we must commence. [Good, good.]

The expedition being thus resolved upon, its object being determined, the ulterior hypothesis of a foreign monarchy being reduced to its just value, the accords of the three powers, the measures for execution, and the military concurrence being regulated, what had we to do? The instructions, with which you are acquainted, specified clearly the course to be pursued. In these instructions of the 12th of November, if I remember right, it was said: "You will renew your ultimatum"—we had already made several, all without result—"you will renew your ultimatum, and then, the ultimatum being presented, you will not permit yourself to be diverted by delays and evasive promises. If the government of Juarez evacuates Vera Cruz," as it has done, "if it seeks to establish a void around you, if it seeks to draw you by artifices more or less skilful into the loss of precious time, you will avoid falling into this snare, and immediately take the most vigorous measures."

There were, gentlemen, grave reasons for recommending this active and resolute attitude. Our troops were arriving in Mexico in the month of January; we had before us, as a suitable season for transportation and war, January, February, March, and perhaps a few days of April. We knew perfectly that if at that period things were not consummated the tyranny of Juarez would receive a redoubtable and almost invincible auxiliary, the black vomit. We knew very well that it was necessary, in those few words, to characterize justly the cunning of that government as well as its violences, and to succeed in imposing upon it the solution of the question; there was no time to be lost. Behold under what inspirations the expedition set out and arrived at its destination!

The honorable orator to whom I reply has recalled the words which I uttered in the month of March, and in which I expressed my impression that our troops had already occupied the city of Mexico; and he added that the words were ahead of the soldiers. The soldiers would have been as quick as the words if the plan of the Emperor's government had been followed out. The Mexican government, at that period a prey to the most complete anarchy, without any effectual means, without any resources of consequence, offered no kind of resistance, and if, without being stopped by vain delays, the Spanish and French troops had marched upon the city of Mexico, they would have arrived there quicker than my words. [Good, good.]

See what a humane prudence had foreseen in France; it had calculated that a *corps d'armée* of about 12,000 men, supported by fleets girding the sea-coast, and having three useful months before them to bring an anarchical and disorganized government to a sense of reason, could, without striking a blow, or by the mere force of its courage, rapidly reach the city of Mexico. How has it happened that such prognostications have not been realized? How has it happened that this expedition, which the most far-sighted prudence had planned, both as to diplomatic agreement and military effectivity and means of execution, how has it happened, I say, that this expedition has momentarily but so unexpectedly miscarried? It is well to recall it to the Chamber. On the soil of Mexico the management of the affair was necessarily intrusted to the three plenipotentiaries, and there was manifested from the very first days a singular divergence of their respective opinions.

France had proclaimed, Spain and England had recognized with her, that the govern-

ment of Juarez was a government without faith, without consistency, without guarantees; that it was impossible to treat seriously with it. The experience of many years, and especially of the last year, demonstrated that Mexican governments promised and never kept their promises. The three powers had recognized that force alone could master such a condition of things, and yet their representatives, having scarcely landed on the soil of Mexico, commence by recognizing the very government which had rendered itself unworthy of recognition, and by negotiating with it, when all negotiation had been recognized as useless, and all engagement on its part as illusory and superfluous. The treaty of La Soledad opens with this singular declaration, which I recall to the attention of the Chamber:

*"Preliminaries agreed upon between the Count of Reus and the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Mexico."*

"1st. Admitting that the constitutional government which at present directs the affairs of Mexico has manifested to the commissioners of the allied powers that it has no need whatever of the assistance so kindly offered to the Mexican people, as having at its own disposal sufficient elements of force and public opinion to maintain itself against all intestine revolt, the allies, therefore, deem it their duty to enter upon the way of treaties for the purpose of drawing up the claims which they have to make in the name of their respective nations."

Thus our troops depart to combat Juarez, to impose on him by force our terms of satisfaction; our troops depart knowing that no faith can be placed in his promises; they go there to compel him to justice, and the first act of our representatives is to accept his ironical acknowledgments for a concurrence of which, he says, he has no need in order to maintain himself, and to enter into negotiations with him. Was that the policy of France? Was that in accordance with the instructions which had been given? Was that the policy prearranged with our allies? And that very same treaty of La Soledad, which recognized the government that our expedition purposed to combat, which accepted the faith of those whom we attacked as perjurers, that treaty adjourned to the 15th of April the opening of negotiations; that is, if they did not come to an agreement, and if the negotiations did not give necessary guarantees, the time for effective military action was passed, the season of rains and fevers was come, the roads were impassable, sickness decimated the soldiers, and war became impossible. And you are astonished when a conduct so dissimilar to that prescribed was adopted; you are astonished that the enterprise has not had the fortunate and rapid solution that it ought to have, and you throw the responsibility of it on those whose contrary prescriptions had regulated all with prudence and wisdom enough to bring things to a speedy and happy conclusion. [Good, good.]

Such is the true state of the case. The Emperor's government, as soon as it learned this strange magnanimity, seeing that the war would afterwards become impossible, and that there would result a prolonged and pernicious sojourn of our troops in the country, pronounced, in the *Moniteur*, a formal sentence of disapprobation on that unfortunate treaty, and by new despatches reminded those to whom it had given its first instructions that they had not gone there to negotiate uselessly with a perjured government, but to impose on it promptly, by its own full consent or by force, the will of our country. [Good, good.]

These new instructions reminded our representatives of the necessity of proceeding energetically, and of profiting by the little space of useful time yet remaining. And it was then that occurred that profoundly unexpected decision of Spain, withdrawing her troops, with the approbation and at the suggestion of the minister of England.

I have not to discuss that determination now. At Madrid, eminent men, speaking in view of the interests of their country, such as Mon, Bermudez de Castro, Concha, have explained it clearly and completely. As for us, it little matters now. [Good, good.] Only remark this well: by that unexpected determination France has remained alone, passing suddenly from the second place to the first. She has remained, with a handful of men, in the midst of a country in which they had allowed time to tyranny and its aids to prepare themselves, to fortify themselves, to frighten some and arouse others. [Good.]

She has remained there, in the face of the unhealthy season which was advancing—in the face of the vomito advancing with it. She has remained there; and I ask this assembly if she could recoil? [No, no.] And if she had retired, what would have been the consequences? Disgrace, in the first place, and our flag lowered in the eyes of the world. But what beside? Whilst we pursued this energetic and courageous policy, what advantages have accrued to those who have followed the opposite policy? [Good, good.] Last year I read from this desk a letter, in which a minister of Mexico, M. Doblado, congratulating General Prim on his chivalrous conduct, wrote to him: "We are going to regulate all these great affairs in half an hour; come, and in a few minutes we will have the glory of reconciling Spain and Mexico."