

General Prim, as it seems, did not succeed in treating; but he sent his secretary to the city of Mexico, and that secretary, in a letter since made public, stated two things—one, the deep feeling of anger and despair of the Spaniards, abandoned in the capital of Mexico; the other, that the treaty was impossible, Juarez introducing, as the first condition, that Spain should pay the expenses of the war. [Laughter.] whilst, as to him, he did not recognize himself as at war with that power. [Renewed laughter.] Would you have counselled the government of your country to accept such conclusions? [Numerous voices—No, no.]

His excellency the MINISTER. The minister of England strongly approved the course of the Spanish plenipotentiary. After having written to his government that he was about to leave Mexico and proceed to the Bermudas, in order not to give umbrage to France, and not to give occasion to think that he opposed her, he determined, however, to repair to the city of Mexico. [Laughter.]

A VOICE. In the English style.

His excellency the MINISTER. He has obtained a treaty. But what kind of treaty? It was easy to make promises; they have also been made to us, many of them, and they have always been violated. The difficulty was not to make Juarez promise; the difficulty was to make him keep his promise. What was to be done? Sir Charles Wyke accepted as a guarantee the money which should be furnished by the United States; and in case the United States should not furnish any, and should be unwilling to ratify the treaty by which a part of the Mexican territory was pledged to them, he obtained the substitution of England in the concessions which the United States would have nothing to do with. [Laughter.]

I doubt whether such schemes as these would have been desirable to France; neither have they met with the sanction of the British government. It has not been thought proper, by accepting the money of the United States, thus tacitly to sanction this consecutive and progressive occupation of Mexico, pursued as a policy by the United States for twenty years, and which the government of Juarez only seeks to favor. [Good.] The British government refused its ratification.

Between the three courses of conduct you can judge which has been the most profitable, which has been most honorable. Spain has withdrawn her troops, the principal nucleus of the force which was to combat Juarez; the army of Spain has been re-embarked. In acknowledgment, they have plainly refused to reimburse her for the expenses of the war. [Renewed laughter.] England, with that firmness which she knows so well how to use in order to make herself respected, and which you will not take it ill that others should also practice as she does, [good, good,] England seems to have obtained a little more; but she has refused to consent to those schemes of policy which involved her against her views, and, so to speak, the final result has been negative. As for us, it is true we have remained alone, small in number, with a handful of brave men; thanks to the time lost, we have had to combat storms, fever, and Mexican bullets, but they have not inspired us with fear, and we have remained in Mexico. [Lively marks of approbation.] Under the influence of these unforeseen events we have been necessitated to lose the first military season, and endure that of rains; but the second military season is come at last, and this time there is neither desertion of allies nor parliamentary attacks to hinder us from profiting by it to insure the triumph of our flag. [Bravo, bravo.]

Behold, then, the state of the case very clearly. We might have imitated those who withdrew, but that our retreat, sad for our glory, would not have brought us, as them, any profit.

Do you find, then, as has been asserted, that this conduct is rash, adventurous, foolish? Is there, then, in all this, as was said the other day, anything dark? This is clear as the light of day. [Yes, yes; that is true.] The French government planned everything with wisdom and prudence. An unforeseen divergence, followed by a re-embarkment yet more unforeseen, has rendered the immediate success of the expedition impossible; but that which was deferred will not be lost. I know that to this rupture of the armistice of Orizaba it has been sought to assign motives which distort its character. I know that, instead of recognizing the resolute, politic line of national conduct, traced out by all our despatches, all our instructions, some persons have preferred to suppose other motives, and to endeavor to create scandal. [That's so; good.] I shall not examine whether this manner of discussing the affairs of our country, when our soldiers are in face of the enemy, is very opportune. [Good, good.] I shall not examine whether it is not one of those occasions when patriotism ought at least defer the critical investigation of the opposition. [Renewed marks of approbation.] They have thought that, in spite of the military situation, they might endeavor to throw over the motives of the expedition impressions of blame and disfavor. They have thought that they might endeavor to reduce to what they call the interest of a rotten debt the cause for which the soldiers of France are at this moment combatting. I should prefer to be excused from discussing this question at the present time; but when honor is in question we must never shrink, whatever may happen. [Good, good.] I pro-

ceed, then, to examine closely whether this calumny of the Jecker debt has had any influence whatever on the conduct of the Mexican expedition.

Some persons wish to see in the expedition but two causes: a throne, which was but a secondary contingency, and the Jecker debt, of which certainly the government have scarcely thought when the expedition was decided on. But let us specify the facts. When, at the arrival of our troops in Mexico, it was requisite to establish in the ultimatum the amount of debts due us, to the total extent of our claims, as examined and reported by our consuls, the minister of England opposed a theory which, yesterday, found a supporter quite unexpected to me within this assembly. [Good.]

Sir Charles Wyke pretended that only such claims should be admitted into the ultimatum as were already liquidated by previous treaties. What! Our last treaty is of the beginning of 1861. Since that, ill-treatment of every kind, all sorts of outrages, robberies, onerous and vexatious impositions, have weighed down our fellow-citizens, and we, armed to avenge them, armed to make their rights respected, and indemnify them for their losses, we should not comprise in our demands all the sums and all the reparations due to us. To what purpose, then, is the expedition? Our right was not only to compel respect for treaties and payment for the debts regulated by them, but at the same time to effect reparation of all the injuries caused since to our fellow-countrymen. Therefore, through our minister to Mexico, through our consuls at Vera Cruz, Tampico, and other places, we have caused to be made out a schedule of the sums due to our fellow-citizens.

The honorable speaker to whom I reply is astonished at these numbers: twelve millions of piastres, sixty millions of francs! He finds this amount excessive. He estimates, as it seems, at a very low value the blood of our fellow-citizens, and the vexations of which they have been the victims. [Lively marks of assent from the Chamber.] The kindness which he seems to entertain towards the government of Juarez ought not, however, make him forget that there is a government which concerns us more nearly, and that this government is that of France. [Renewed approbation.] He contests the amount of these debts. Has he, then, had in his hand all the data requisite to estimate them properly? He produced many of them, but of the kind which the Mexican government might have, and I doubt whether the Mexican minister of finance possesses more than he. [Laughter.] He has made up in the greatest detail the account of the various payments made into the Mexican treasury. It would not have been bad likewise to make out the account of the outrages suffered by our fellow-citizens, and of the sums examined and settled by our consuls. [Good.]

He has told you that we regulated them with a good deal of stupidity. The expression is harsh. Just before, he accused us of having deceived the Chamber, or, of having been kept in premeditated ignorance; now he accuses the government of stupidity! We are not, I confess, accustomed to such language, [good,] and if this language goes to the extreme limit of the rights of the opposition, we may be allowed, and it will be easy for us, at least, to reply to it.

Who could best appreciate the injuries done to our fellow-citizens on the soil of Mexico, if not those who witnessed them, and who were charged by their country to attend to them and state them? When a French citizen abroad is oppressed by any person whatever, to whom does he address himself? To his consul or to his minister. When he has to make proof of the injuries which he has received, who makes the official statement of them, his consul or his minister? When he has a claim against a foreign government that has violated his rights, who is his intermediary agent, his consul or his minister? Who, then, could know better than they the facts, the grievances, the character of the persons, the value of the injuries done, and fix the amount of them legitimately and fairly? Do you know the amount of documents accumulated in the archives of the legation at Mexico, and in the archives of our consuls at Vera Cruz, Tampico, and elsewhere? They were counted almost by thousands, so fruitful and active in their misdeeds are the brigands of Mexico. And there was there such a mass of claims that, to make out the official report of them in bureaucratic style, all the consular *personnel* could not suffice. For all these grievances the sum of twelve millions of piastres was fairly and conscientiously fixed. It was done by men best acquainted with the matter. And what would you wish the minister of foreign affairs to do here? Would you wish him to have all the documents, all the complaints, sent from Mexico, Vera Cruz, Tampico? And how would he have estimated them? Had he the witnesses at hand; those who had seen the robbery, the assassination, the burning; those who could attest the facts and determine the valuation? Were there not natural commissioners on the spot in the persons of the functionaries themselves who represented France? Moreover, recall to mind, since you are so anxious for the interests of our enemies, that it was proposed to submit to a complete and definite liquidation all the main points in demand comprised in the ultimatum. Is not this always the way in which these things are done? Each time that an indemnity is imposed on a country by force, is it not settled in gross, then distributed by a commission, which examines the titles of each one, and allows to each according

to his rights? [Good, good.] This is what we have always offered—always understood. And, really, Mexico had no risk to run herein. It was impossible to impose on her payments in ready money. It was necessary to grant her numerous years of delay, and accept long and successive payments on her custom-house and other revenues, and the commissions would have plenty of time to verify anew and to liquidate all these debts; and if a reduction should be made on the amount, to give Mexico the benefit of it without doing any injustice. And, in truth, how is it possible to present France as seeking to speculate on claims made against an insolvent people? How does it happen that people have such feeble confidence in the representatives of the government of their country, in their sagacity, in their honor, that, without proof, without examination, without documents, they should proceed to accuse them of having overcharged the amount of reparations due? And for whose interest is this pretended overcharging? The whole was demanded exclusively for our countrymen, and for no one else than those who could justify and establish their right.

There was, I know, a protest made by Sir Charles Wyke against the amount of our claims. We have not thought proper in this respect to be reciprocal. In the arrangements made by England with Mexico, as in all those made with other nations, for the reparation of injuries done to her subjects, she does not seem to be accustomed to fall below what was legitimately due to her. [Approbative laughter.] There are before the world numerous examples on this point—the Pritchards, the Pacificos, and many others. I cannot blame the British government for making the balance, if needs be, incline on the side of its countrymen. It is well, thinks it to itself, that the world should be intimately persuaded that an English citizen is not to be touched with impunity.

Well, gentlemen, that which England puts in practice I consider wise, worthy, patriotic, politic for us to practice also. [Good, good.]

To sum up in brief, with regard to the amount of claims, the honorable gentleman to whom I reply was not informed, and we are. Moreover, no injustice was possible, for liquidation was offered, legitimate, conscientious, and fair liquidation. But in addition, gentlemen, remark that the British government itself has repudiated the pretensions of her representative, and acknowledged, on our calling attention to the subject, that none of the plenipotentiaries had any control over the amount of the claims of his colleagues, and this is the doctrine always put in force by England. When we accompanied her to China, when our flags floated there together and were even planted on the walls of Peking, there were likewise indemnities to provide for and exact; England preserved her freedom of action, as we did ours. The facts, therefore, are in conformity with principles, and no novelty is practiced in this respect. [Approbation in the Chamber.] But I am aware that out of the mass of these legitimate claims some have wished particularly to bring forward one on which they hoped skilfully to rivet the attention of France and of the Chamber, and thereby cause all the rest to be forgotten. By means of the Jecker debt, they have striven to agitate the minds and excite the indignation of the public and make them suppose I know not what shameful imputations. These imputations, also, it is necessary to refute.

[Good, good. Numerous voices: Rest awhile, rest awhile.]

(The Chamber takes a recess for a quarter of an hour. On assembling again the president announces that the minister without portfolio is entitled to the floor for the continuation of his speech.)

M. BILLAULT, minister without portfolio. It will be easy for me, gentlemen, to show that the Jecker debt has had no influence whatever either in the declaration of war or in the rupture of the armistice of La Soledad. But that would not suffice for me; and it is necessary that, although it has had absolutely no influence on the course of events, this debt should itself be well known.

There is one thing which strikes me and makes me grieve for my country, [movement of attention:] it is the levity with which the most unseemly calumny alleged is willingly accepted as true. [Good, good.] It seems that the enunciation or imputation of any lamentable fact, made especially against persons in elevated station, is one of those strokes of good luck which make the joy and the satisfaction of every one. [Good, good.] And yet, in the end, when we look each other face to face, we know well what sentiment of honor animates us. We know well that we should respect each other reciprocally, and that it is for no one's interest to bespatter his neighbor to-day with mire which will fall back on himself to-morrow. [Good.] Yet the people of France, so wonderful in their intellectual vivacity, are so constituted that the slightest insinuation of this kind goes on, grows big, and makes its way; and then, when the truth comes, it finds the minds of men either prejudiced or indifferent, and of that which they have accepted to-day they will not deign to hear the refutation to-morrow, or to think at all some days from hence. Governments are spared still less than individuals; but on them more than on any one it is incumbent to wage inexorable war with calumny. Honor is the life of the individual, but it is still more so the life of governments. [Good.] And in France a government

that would not be jealous to excess of its honor would not long govern its country. [Enthusiastic and repeated applause.] So, then, let us enter on the facts plainly.

It has been said, or at least we can conclude from what has been said, that in the Jecker affair there were some, I know not what, financial schemes of which the secret allurements might have influenced the determination of the government. What interest could the government have in this affair? How has it been produced? What advantages could flow from it? M. Jecker was a rich banker of the city of Mexico; born in France, at Porentruy, when Porentruy was part of a French department, he was classed at the French legation as French himself. He was connected with all works of French beneficence in the city of Mexico. [Interruption from the bench of M. Julius Favre.] I understand your interruption, and I doubt not but that the investigations and informations transmitted to you from Mexico by the friends of M. Juarez are hostile to M. Jecker; the men who despoil another, who throw him into prison, who drag him more than a hundred leagues under the deadly climate of Mexico in order to immure him in a murderous locality, whilst awaiting his expulsion, these men do not regard one calumny more or less. [Good, good.] We have been for some months inundated with Mexican calumnies; we have seen in circulation anonymous writings, anonymous papers, odious imputations of all kinds, furtively making their way by means of an indefatigable propaganda; it is the friends of our enemies in Mexico who thus send into France their correspondence and their poison. [Renewed and ardent approbation.] I understand that, when a person has the misfortune of having more faith in the assertions of Juarez and his friends than in those of the government of one's own country and in those of one's own fellow-citizens whom long years of honor have invested with public consideration, he accepts all imputations; but permit me to adopt a contrary course; permit me to believe rather in men of honor whom I know than in men whom I know not, or rather whom I know too well for their misdeeds. [Good.] M. Jecker, then, was the confidential depositary of nearly all the funds of the French colony, the depositary of all the funds of the French benevolent institutions, and he was not himself unconcerned in these benevolent associations. His brother, who had left him a part of his fortune, had bequeathed 100,000 francs to the hospitals of Paris and 200,000 francs to the Academy of Sciences. I do not mention this to throw any interest on M. Jecker; that is of little consequence to me; but what is of consequence to me is that it should be known that he was no less worthy of interest than others, and that if his character of Frenchman was disputable, the French engaged in consequence of their contract with the Mexican government, and who had their interests involved, had no less right to the protection of their country.

And what was the contract? Let us see. The regular government of Mexico under Miramon—and I say the regular government because it was at Mexico recognized by all the European powers, and they had their representatives near it—the government of Mexico, in 1859, fifteen months before the assistance of the United States rendered the overthrow of Miramon possible to Juarez, that government made a loan; this loan was negotiated at the nominal figure of fifteen millions of dollars with the Jecker house.

It has been asserted that the Jecker house, in its negotiation of this loan, imposed most onerous and usurious conditions. It is not my duty, in any way whatever, to justify the means of credit employed by successive governments at Mexico, and when the minister of England calculates at 12 per cent. the interest on the debts due to his countrymen, I acknowledge that high rates of interest are familiar to that country; I acknowledge, likewise, that a banker who has the boldness to lend to the government in a country in which fifty governments have succeeded each other in the space of forty years, such a banker is naturally induced to impose high terms.

I admit, then, that Miramon, on the one side, and Jecker, on the other, made a loan of which the conditions were very onerous to the Mexican nation, but that is not the question.

In order to attract the public into the scheme, the fifteen millions of Jecker bills were, by decree of the President of the Mexican republic, declared admissible, as a fifth part, in the payment of custom-house duties on all merchandise imported into Mexico. Now, as in consequence of the enormous depreciation of all Mexican securities, far from being negotiated at par, the Jecker bills were negotiated at a discount of from 70 to 75 per cent. of their nominal value, it was an advantage to pay 100 francs to the custom-house of the Mexican government in a paper currency bought at 25 or 30 francs. Consequently, all French and other merchants, who had to import into Mexico goods subject to duty, hastened to buy these bills in order to enjoy that advantage, and to pay 25 francs instead of 100 francs on the exorbitant duties imposed on foreign articles of commerce. Every Frenchman or other foreigner who, having goods to import, had bought these notes to pay the duties, was interested in having them continue to be received conformably with the engagement made; those same Frenchmen or foreigners who had further importations to make were also interested in the maintenance of that arrangement, since it was for them quite an important reduction of duties.

You see plainly, then, French or foreigner, commerce was seriously interested to have the Mexican government, which had treated with Jecker, carry into effect in regard to third persons, holders of these bills, the agreements to which it had subscribed.

This obligation was by so much the more binding on the Mexican government, as it had officially brought to the knowledge of all the foreign legations the stipulations of the contract which it had made with Jecker, and it showed that this was a diminution of duties to which it thus consented, and the sixth article of its decree of January 30, 1860, was to this effect: "As a guarantee of the execution of the preceding decree and of the decree of the 29th of October last, the supreme government will transmit copies of them to friendly legations, in order that they may inform in the ordinary way the subjects of their respective governments of the favor accorded to them by the government of the republic, and thereby give them the assurance that the present decree will be strictly executed."

It was on the faith of these promises made to the diplomatic body itself that these notes attained circulation and that foreigners received them. Had we any interest in compelling respect, as far as regarded the French holders of those notes, to the promise made to the public? [Yes, yes; that's evident. Good.] Had we any interest also in the maintenance of that agreement during the five years assigned for its duration, inasmuch as it caused a diminution of payment in the duties which our traders paid? (Yes, yes. Very good.) Had we any interest in causing to be respected, as to the present, and in maintaining, as to the future, a state of affairs which mitigated the custom-house duties on our merchandise? [Good, good.] This is the first point.

There is a second one. M. Jecker, having suffered, in the agitations of the country, a stroke which compromised his solvency, assigned some of these notes in guarantee of sums which he had received in deposit from various establishments of French benevolence. Had we any interest to have those notes respected, which were the guarantee of a French institution? [Yes, yes.] In fine, M. Jecker, the banker of nearly all the French residents in Mexico, (his house was considered as French,) had among our countrymen numerous creditors; the active principal of that house likewise depended on those notes. Had we any interest in preventing this active principal from being reduced to nothing by an act of the dictatorial will of Juarez? [Yes, yes; that's plain.] French interests, then, in this affair, were very plain and very evident.

As to M. Jecker, he made an arrangement with the Mexican government which the honorable gentleman who last spoke finds onerous, and against which he defends the government of Juarez. Be it so; Juarez will thank him for this favor. [Laughter.]

But what wrong has the French government done on this point? Accusations are brought against it, and there are some expressions which cannot be let pass.

Some persons have spoken of speculators concealing themselves behind diplomacy. Indeed, people are as fruitful in grave accusations as they are powerless to prove them. A while ago, the government had deceived the Chamber; it had conducted matters with the most deplorable stupidity; and now, behold, we have cloudy glimpses of speculators hiding behind diplomacy. Let us speak plainly; that means, in good French, that diplomacy has been willing to serve the illegal interests of anonymous speculators. [That's so.] Well, I give to this assertion the most solemn and the most categorical lie. [Good, good.]

That there be about the government, that there be about Juarez, people dabbling in the base depths of their private interests, I know nothing of the thing, and would not be astonished at it. Do we not see, even in this country of honor and loyalty named France, in presence of a government that keeps no measures with improbity, do we not see too often in some miserable stock-jobbing operations men boast of efficacious intrigues and potent influences, in order to obtain results from others which in reality they will never obtain. [Good, good.]

As for me, when I had the honor of being minister of the interior, I received vague denunciations of this kind quite frequently; and of those who made them I demanded, in the name of Heaven and of my country's honor, to give me the least indication, the least trace, by which I might be able to verify the facts which they denounced to me and render full and entire redress. [Good, good.] My adjurations were fruitless, and I saw the accusations, when confronted with a perspicuous and energetic interrogatory, fade away and vanish as a miserable vapor. It will be the same here, gentlemen. [Good.]

Much has been said about the seventy-five millions of the Jecker affair. Seventy-five millions! What a magnificent pasturage! What an attractive spoil for the speculators that are supposed to lurk behind diplomacy! Here is, indeed, a mirage to seduce the vulgar; but this spoil which you invent does not exist.

The seventy-five millions spoken of were in Jecker bills, negotiable at Mexico—negotiable at the depressed rate usual with the currencies of that government; that is, at a discount of about 75 per cent. on their nominal value, and acceptable only in payment of custom-house

duties, without ever being otherwise redeemable by the Mexican treasury. A part of them has thus returned—I know not how much, and I would gladly ask the honorable gentleman, who knows the figures so well; as to the rest, they are either partly in the hands of the merchants who procured them for the payment of duties, or held in trust by the creditors of Jecker, or thrust into his own hands as he was seized, arrested, transported, imprisoned on the shores of the Pacific, dying, perhaps, at this moment from the effects of the brutal expulsion and the forced journey which he has been compelled to undergo, but yet required to account, under the decree for the sequestration of his effects, solvent or insolvent. What possible speculations could there be in France on such notes under such circumstances? What is the possible magnificent affair capable of corrupting our diplomacy and our government? Mention it, and be specific in your accusations. [Good, good.]

Now, gentlemen, that you know the facts, one word on the action of the government in regard to that debt.

On the 31st of December, 1860, at the moment when Juarez obtained possession of the city of Mexico and overthrew Miramon, the rumor was circulated that the Jecker contract would no longer be carried out, and a considerable number of French merchants addressed a petition to the minister of France, in which they, with good reason, observed that the Jecker notes had been issued under the faith of engagements entered into by the state, and of assurances given to the legations, and that the advantages thus assured in commerce ought to be respected.

Whilst at Mexico the French, who were interested in the matter, drew up this remonstrance; at Paris other French merchants, equally numerous and honorable, themselves engaged in commerce with Mexico, and aware that the destruction of these bills of credit would entail severe losses on their own affairs, addressed themselves to the minister of foreign affairs of France in order to make the same observations to him. Under these circumstances what ought our government to do? Frenchmen in France, Frenchmen abroad, on the faith of a government recognized by France, had accepted notes of that state as payable at the custom-house. Was it not a strict duty to make representations to the new master of Mexico and to remind him that the engagements of the preceding government ought to be kept? The French minister wrote, in consequence, on the 6th of March, 1861, to our representative in Mexico; we were yet at that period on terms of friendship with M. Juarez; we were willing to hope still that his government would procure a little more security and order for foreigners living in the country.

So, what happened? The minister of President Juarez, M. Zarco, having entered into negotiations on this point with our minister at Mexico, objected the poverty of the republic, and the fact that the engagement had been made by their enemy to sustain the civil war. But we answered him, "The engagement was made by a government *de facto* existing, recognized, having our minister accredited near it. Governments that succeed each other are responsible for the pecuniary engagements of their predecessors." [Approbation.] That is a fundamental principle which we cannot permit to be ignored; it is the principle on which public credit and public faith repose in the engagements of nations. And M. Zarco, in the despatches which I have already had occasion to cite last year, recognized the principle, recognized the obligation of his government. Permit me to read to you on this subject one only of his letters.

He wrote on the 4th of May, 1861, to M. de Saligny: "My dear sir: I am obliged to you for the confidential explanations which, by your letter of the day before yesterday, you have been pleased to add to your note relative to the Jecker question, and also because you have taken into consideration the difficulties and the embarrassments by which my government is surrounded, and all that is most painful to it in the responsibility for the fatal heritage of the faction commanded by Miramon.

"I am, likewise, much obliged to you for the efforts that you have made to induce M. Jecker to make some concessions. In reply to your letter, I have the honor to inform you that, as soon as the question of principle involved shall be satisfactorily decided, the details of execution will be easily arranged, according to the means of the government and its powers on certain points, and taking, moreover, into consideration the propositions of M. Jecker, contained in your letter."

Here, then, behold the negotiation entered on, the basis accepted, serious hopes held out by the government of Juarez, and the duty of the French government fulfilled. This had no connexion with the Mexican war, which broke out only at a later period. Well, such being the state of affairs, when the war did break out, when the French were, in every way, more and more violently treated, when they were plundered, imprisoned, expelled, should the French government, in making out the long inventory of the ignored rights of its citizens, not mention in its ultimatum that agreement of which the enemy's government itself had recognized the principle?

And what, after all, was demanded of the Mexican government? Was it seventy-five millions in ready money? By no means; indeed, it was asked only to continue to execute

fairly the engagements entered into by its predecessor—that is, to receive at the custom-houses, in payment of a fifth part of the duties, the notes that had been issued under that condition by the preceding government.

Once again: there is no trace here of any pretended speculation. Recall to mind, moreover, what a spirit of benevolent equity presided over the establishment of all these claims; permit me to remind you in what terms M. de Saligny himself expressed himself at the time of estimating the various debts. He had, with advice, made out a report of them as conscientiously as possible; he gave their details, then he added, in his despatch of January 20, 1862:

“If your excellency thinks proper to adopt my views on this subject, (the liquidation of the debts,) I would propose to refer all questions relative to our claims to a commission, composed of his Majesty’s consul at Vera Cruz, the secretary of the imperial legation, and a merchant. This scheme would, among other advantages, in my eyes, have that of relieving the responsibility of the Emperor’s minister—a responsibility more weighty and more dangerous in Mexico than any where else, and to place his person above the recriminations and attacks of calumny.”

And yet, on the question of the Jecker contract, it was not, I repeat, in the case at all to ask a dollar of the government of Juarez, it was not in the case that it should pay out the smallest sum; there was question merely that it should maintain the decree admitting the notes created by its predecessor in payment of custom-house duties; and yet the question being thus placed, the Emperor’s government does not the less accept the propositions of M. de Saligny, and in several despatches it expresses the desire that all the debts due to France should be liquidated by a commission, that nothing should be paid out of the Mexican funds but what might be legally due from it, what might be regularly verified.

Such are the facts; and yet you were told yesterday, “Behold what examples of fairness France is going to give the New World.” I confess that such words pronounced in this assembly have deeply grieved me. What! People in Mexico, on the authority of what is said here, may make a like imputation on the honor of our nation! They can say, “It is not we who accuse it of injustice and disregard of right; it is its own citizens; it is among its own citizens—men eminent for their talents, and elevated by the public vote to the representation of the country.”

Indeed, when the facts are reduced to what you know now, those words, in my opinion, were very unjust and much to be regretted. [Approbation.]

I forgot one detail which I must not pass over. [Louder, louder.]

They spoke yesterday of some correspondence or other intercepted and published at Mexico, then numerous copies sent to Paris. The government of Mexico has sent many papers to Paris, many prints, many accusations of every kind. I thought that the calumnies against the government of France had their principal laboratories in certain neighboring countries. I see now that another laboratory, a powerful and active focus, is established beyond the seas. Hatred against the Emperor’s government inspires certain ultra democrats with a fertility of accusations and calumnies inexhaustible. I shall not deign to make any further allusion to this pretended document seized by a hostile government, intercepted by it, printed by it, sent by its care through the world, without anything to testify its value or its authenticity.

I shall confine myself to reminding you that it is testified by our diplomatic documents that the party of Juarez has used all its efforts to sweep the whole French colony into this torrent of calumny, and that the great majority of this colony, in their indignation, have energetically protested.

You have in the documents distributed among you the legal protests our countrymen declare, in spite of the menaces of Juarez that they wish to absolve the French colony from the responsibility of these odious manoeuvres. [Good.]

Let us then put aside all these calumnies, and let us return to the Mexican expedition, for the Jecker affair was but an odious veil that was endeavored to be thrown over it. That affair, you see, henceforth is of no account in the expedition. It is of no greater account in the rupture of the preliminaries of La Soledad. That rupture dates from the month of April, and, as early as the month of January, the difficulty arising from the valuation of the debts had been deferred by the plenipotentiaries by common consent until the solution was given by their respective governments. Moreover, in the very first stages of the difficulties, our minister had formally obtained leave to discard this debt for the time being, which General Prim approved, and which the English plenipotentiary, after having seemed to agree to it, finished by rejecting.

Yet M. de Saligny ceased not to repeat, “Well, let us defer the Jecker debt; let us not insert it in the ultimatum; let us not speak of it; we will afterwards see what is to be done with it.”

Let it not be said, then, that the Jecker debt, comprised in the French ultimatum in the month of January, has had any kind of influence on the conduct of the plenipotentiaries in the month of April. It had none for two reasons: the first, because M. de Saligny himself

offered to defer it; the second, because the difficulty of that ultimatum, being referred to the examination of the governments, in no way hindered collective diplomatic action during the two months that followed.

Here, then, gentlemen, are the two things for which it was sought to complicate, darken, distort, calumniate the expedition to Mexico: the enthroning, as the sole, or at least principal end of an Austrian prince on the one side, and a pretended, shameful speculation on the Jecker notes, on the other. Behold them reduced to their just value. [Approbation.]

I forgot one final word. Yesterday they indicated as a special favor of the French government the precipitate insertion in the Bulletin des Lois of the naturalization of M. Jecker.

This precipitation, gentlemen, is presented in these terms: the decree of naturalization is of the 26th of March, and the excessive favor obtained by the petitioner is that the decree of the 26th of March was inserted in the Bulletin des Lois of the 31st of August, after five months!

I shall delay no longer on this point. I shall not examine what advantage Jecker could have in causing himself to be naturalized a Frenchman—he who was born in France in 1812; nor how his naturalization could cover, to a certain extent, his own interests at the same time as those of other Frenchmen. Let him be naturalized to-day, to-morrow, or six months hence; that makes no change whatever in the affair or in the injustice of the imputations. [Marks of assent.]

Now—and remark well what I say—it is not only the Mexican expedition that is attacked in the amendment submitted to you; it is the whole policy of France; it is the general policy which you have approved, which you have received with acclamation, in which you have been intimately associated. It is in the name of a programme opposed and violently opposed to yours that the authors of the amendment present themselves.

Yesterday you heard strange words; you were asked, “Who are you, and what are your names?”

The government to which these words were addressed is that which eight millions of votes have founded. [Good, good.] It is that which a legislative body, nominated by the same number of votes, has supported for ten years, with its devotedness and its vote. [Good, good.] This government, of which you ask what it is and what is its name, is all France. [Good, good.] She it is who, by means of her sovereign and her deputies, defends her honor in that New World and upholds her interests there. [Good, good.]

Oh, I know well that the authors of the amendment cannot be of the opinion of this Chamber on the great things done by the Emperor with its concurrence; I know well that there is not one glorious expedition to which they have not refused their support. [That’s so; that’s true.] I know well that for five years there is not an appropriation against which they have not voted. But that is no reason why the policy of the Emperor and of this Chamber should be thus treated. They qualify it as hazardous, rash. Let us say one word, in passing, with regard to the general scope of this policy; it is not only in reference to the vote on the amendment that this appears to me desirable: beyond this discussion, beyond the limits of this session, there will be rendered a solemn judgment on the policy of the country—a judgment not on your persons but on your votes—a judgment which will include the great acts in which you have shared. Now, it is not well for France, it is not well for Europe, it is not well for any one to let this great epoch be calumniated. [Good.]

The policy which France has pursued, which they dare to call rash and adventurous expeditions, is not one of those fanciful policies that a sovereign can follow one day and abandon the next, according to his caprices, and to the detriment of his country. There are, in a great nation reckoning fourteen centuries of existence, there are traditions, there are positions taken, there are necessities imposed, and it does not depend upon a government nor on its caprice to neglect the permanent interests of its country; these national and traditional interests the government can neither ignore nor forget. [Very good.] And the greatness of its ability, its renown, and its glory—that of those who associate themselves with its course and sustain it with their vote, are proportionate to the degree in which it knows how to uphold them and render them triumphant. Let us see, then, whether they are found in these expeditions styled rash and adventurous.

There are throughout, and especially in the east, considerable rivalries, difficult situations, easily inflammable, on which Europe has her eyes perpetually fixed. There are there some of those political combinations of which the hopes of settlement are often deferred, but never abandoned. It is there in order to restrain the different influences and resume our own that we made our great Crimean expedition; we have conquered there the prestige of our ascendancy; we have re-established in the world that position which, heretofore, for a moment depressed, has been, to the great joy, to the just pride of France, raised again with renewed splendor. [Ardent manifestations of assent from the Chamber.]

When, after this grand result obtained, our victorious fleet and army traversed the Black sea, we could, with legitimate satisfaction, compare this triumph to our isolation in 1840. [Very good.] Compare this glory to that check; compare this predominance to that inferiority. [Good, good.]

We had nearer home, in Italy, time-honored interests; a neighboring power had, little by little, by force, and by the skill of her policy, made her influence predominant over the whole Italian peninsula. A small corner alone yet remained; but soon her standard threatened to be planted at the foot of the Alps. There was there a traditional rivalry, and so the necessity for our country to withdraw Italy from an influence singularly favored against us by the treaties of 1815. At a given day we crossed the Alps, and in two months the influence which centuries of open or hidden struggle had not succeeded in shaking disappeared from the soil of Italy. [Good, good.] Compare this glorious result with the occupation, but also with the evacuation, of Ancona.

Thousands of leagues from France, in the extreme east, there is a country where formerly great possessions belonged to us, where the French name was once powerful and glorious; but all this splendor had been effaced; some feeble reminiscences survived, nourishing some regrets for the past, but no hope in the future. Well, in accord with the power which so long had been our rival, we have penetrated into the heart of China to plant at the same time the symbol of the faith which we protect, and to open a world to our commerce: we have caused to be recognized there anew the glorious banner of France and the power of her arm. The east has resumed its ancient deference towards us; we have seen within our walls the ambassadors of Siam and Japan; between Singapore and China an immense and magnificent possession takes, under our flag, a rapid march towards a brilliant future; our packets proceed, henceforth, to furrow those seas; in face of Aden, at the mouth of the Red sea, they will find, likewise, under the flag of France a point of repose and for taking in supplies; Russia, in the northern part of the orient, gives to her influence and her possessions a series of magnificent developments; England, in the centre of Asia, has one of the most splendid seats of her power; we can, by the side of these two rival and armed powers, contemplate, without much regret, the results obtained by us and fearlessly compare them with the negative results formerly obtained by the diplomatic promenade of M. de Lagrénée. [Approbative laughter.]

Here are some of the great features of this policy of France which has been so fiercely attacked; here are the luminous beacons by which the patriotism of our fellow-citizens will recognize the deputies who have voted for that policy. [Enthusiastic approbation.]

By the side of these great interests we had others also in Mexico; and it was not merely the obligation of enforcing respect for our countrymen and our rights; there, also, great political vistas are open to clear-sighted eyes; diverse interests come in contact, and it is not opportune to neglect them. [Very good.] But to avenge our rights ignored by a tyrannical government and to raise the Mexican nation, if possible, were, also, works of sound policy.

And it is at the moment when our arms seek to realize this policy that some dare within this assembly to characterize the enterprise confided to the courage of our soldiers as rash, adventurous, and inspired by detestable motives.

Under the circumstances I consider these words deplorable: happily, in opposition to the five isolated names which are subscribed to them, all France will arise—[Yes, yes]—jealous of her glory, jealous of the honor of her flag, careful of the protection which she owes to her children.

You, gentlemen, you are, by the millions of suffrages that you represent, the real organs here of the sentiments of the country. It is your part to decide solemnly on what has been said. The words, the sad words which you have heard, are going to pass the Atlantic rapidly; and, I say it with grief, they will gladden, on the soil of America, all the enemies of the renown of France. [Good, good.] Well, gentlemen, let the same vessel that carries them, carry, likewise, the protest of an entire nation. [Bravo, bravo.]

Proclaim, let us all proclaim together, in the name of the Emperor and of the people indissolubly united in a patriotic solidarity, let us proclaim that the war which we wage with Mexico is just and fair. [Yes, yes; very good, very good.]

Our soldiers go there to sustain our honor, to punish perjury, to avenge the blood of our fellow-citizens, to avenge the extortions of which they have been the victims. They go, as the Emperor has well said, to prove once more that there is in this world no country so distant that an attempt on the honor of France may remain unpunished there. [Repeated and more animated marks of assent.] May they, incidentally, if they can, scatter some seeds of order and liberty in that unhappy country, crushed down by fifty years of tyranny and brigandage.

But when, after having fulfilled their duty loyally, bravely, to the glory of their country, when they return to their country I can assert, and you with me, that they will be followed by the benedictions of those thousands of Frenchmen scattered over the surface of the New World, and to whom they shall have restored security; and on the shores of their native land they will be received by the unanimous acclamations of a whole people sincerely grateful for the fatigues which they shall have braved, for the blood which they shall have spilled for the honor of France and the maintenance of her good rights. [Bravo, bravo. General acclamations. Three cheers follow the speech of his excellency the minister.]

M. JULES FAVRE. I claim the floor.

NUMEROUS VOICES. No, no. Enough, enough. Let us vote.

A MEMBER. That's not fair; let him reply to the minister.

The PRESIDENT. No written regulation gives to a member of the opposition the right to reply to a minister, but it is a traditional right. At present, whatever be the impatience of the Chamber, the government and the men who surround it have been so shamefully calumniated in this affair, that, in my opinion, what is most proper is to permit a reply. [General marks of assent; good, good.]

M. JULES FAVRE. Gentlemen, the expressions by which our honorable president has accorded me the floor present a double aspect. He has invoked a traditional usage which is not reproduced by any written text, and he has added that the men of the government had been calumniated, and that it was fair to permit a rejoinder. This last impeachment cannot reach those who fulfil their duty here. [Exclamations.]

A VOICE. Why not? We fulfil ours also.

M. JULES FAVRE. And as to me, if there was, in what Mr. President has said, anything whatever personal to myself, I would protest most earnestly against an insinuation of that nature. I have invoked facts, I have submitted them to the judgment of the Chamber. The minister has made a reply; I ask permission of the Chamber to make a few brief observations.

These observations, gentlemen, are necessary in order to specify the real state of the case, and to allow you, after becoming acquainted with each of the elements of this great debate, to resolve it with entire intelligence. And, as you may understand, I have no intention of replying to that part of the discourse of the minister without portfolio, in which, in accordance with an ancient and well known system of action, employed by the supporters of the government against the members of the opposition, he told you that those who criticised the acts of the administration were factious. [Animated reclamations.]

SEVERAL VOICES. That was not said.

M. JULES FAVRE. And that it behooved us, above all, to believe in the loyalty of its intentions, in the sincerity of its declarations, and in the justness of its views. I have said, gentlemen, similar proceedings are familiar to him who now has recourse to them, but they can have no sort of influence on your minds. [Murmurs of disapprobation.] It is of the truth of facts that there is question. These facts I endeavored, in yesterday's session, to point out precisely, with the assistance of the diplomatic documents laid before us, and it is especially relying on these documents that I characterized, as I deemed it my duty to do, the Mexican expedition in its purpose and in its consequences.

I said, as regards its purpose, that it had been concealed from the Chamber. I said that when last year the cabinet explained the intentions of the government in regard to this expedition, not only it exclusively entrenched itself behind this great and national reason of the reparation of the grievances of our countrymen, but also it energetically denied all kind of participation in any design involving a foreign prince. I do not wish to quote in this regard the texts that may at this moment be before your eyes; you know them, and you know that, when I interrogated the cabinet on this point, the cabinet replied in the most positive manner that those who had really believed such reports had been convinced that they were calumnious, that they had no foundation in reality. And at the very moment when the minister spoke, he might have had in his hands the despatch of the minister of foreign affairs, avowing that overtures had been made to the Archduke Maximilian, and that these overtures were accepted. [Interruption.]

Allow me, gentlemen. There is, then, in this regard nothing whatever, I will not say refuted, but shaken, in the assertions which I made in the session of yesterday and in the judgment which I passed.

Now, when the minister, striving to distort and misplace the question, [animated reclamations,] repeats to you that the expedition has been exclusively undertaken in order to avenge the honor and security of our countrymen, when the minister imputes to the government, of which they have gone to demand this satisfaction, the responsibility of all the previous acts, I take the liberty to remind him of two things: the first, that Juárez did not enter the city of Mexico until the end of December, 1860, and that most of the acts on account of which our reclamations have been addressed are anterior to that date; and the second, which is no less important, that the same men who may have been guilty of those acts of violence, of those murders, of those assassinations, of those pillagings, are precisely those whom we now shelter under our flag, who march beside our soldiers. [Denials.]

You deny it, gentlemen. [Yes, yes.] Listen on this point to the despatch just awhile ago placed before your eyes by the minister, though only in part. I refer to that which bears the date of October 28, 1861, and which was sent by Sir Charles Wyke to his government. The minister read to you that part of the despatch in which it is said that the experience of every day tends to show the impossibility of establishing a regular and stable government in Mexico, but he did not read the following:

"Marquez is at some leagues from the capital with 3,000 or 4,000 men; he has pillaged lately about \$50,000 from the mine of Real del Monte, a mine in which English capitalists are largely interested."

And it is precisely Marquez, Marquez covered with European blood, Marquez who has been at times noted for his ferocity in his military executions, it is he who has come to the French camp, and who has been received by our generals. It is he who, at this very hour, with Almonte, with all the persons of the reactionary government, figures among those considered as our allies.

I have, then, the right to say that not only the purpose of the Mexican war was not that indicated by the minister, [reclamations,] but also that when they impute to Juarez all the acts inducing this war, all the acts of pillage which are but the consequences of the disorders. [Increasing noise and tumult.] You do not wish to let me speak.

SOME VOICES. Yes, yes.

M. JULES FAVRE I have to reply, and I ask the Chamber permission to do so in a few words, to what the minister has said concerning the ultimatum which I have described as having been one of the causes of the rupture of the negotiations.

I have reproached our diplomatic agents with having acted without precise instructions, and with having sent to the Mexican government a note containing demands of an intolerable nature. On this point, has the minister's reply been able to satisfy your consciences?

NUMEROUS VOICES. Yes, yes.

M. JULES FAVRE If it is so, it is, I believe, because you do not know the whole truth. [So! so!]

I said, in effect, that when the ultimatum was drawn up, the claims for money to be made by the French government on the Mexican government had been inflated in a manner extremely grievous. [Murmurs]

A VOICE. Let him speak.

M. JULES FAVRE I added that the French minister had acted in the matter without having previously the approbation of the head of his government. I supported this argument by reading the diplomatic despatches, with which you are acquainted.

The minister replies to me that there never has been an ultimatum for 12,000,000 of piastres—that is, 60,000,000 of francs—and that the possibility was always reserved of having the claims examined by a commission of merchants. The minister is mistaken, gentlemen, and he is mistaken for these two reasons, which are equally explicit:

First. Because in diplomatic language the word *ultimatum* signifies a demand in which there is nothing to be retrenched; it is necessary to accept it or to prepare for battle; and when 12,000,000 of piastres were demanded as an ultimatum, it was 12,000,000 of piastres to be paid down.

The second reason, gentlemen, and which is not less explicit, but which has, I cannot explain why, escaped the sagacity of the minister, is, that in the very article in which there is question of those 12,000,000 piastres, certain debts are reserved to be taken into consideration by commissions. See, in effect, how this reserve is conceived. After setting down as an ultimatum the payment of 12,000,000 of piastres, it continues: "Saving the exceptions stipulated in articles 2 and 4, below. As far as concerns matters that have happened since the 31st of July last, and for which an express reservation is made, the amount of the claims against Mexico to which they may give rise will be afterwards settled by the plenipotentiaries of France." [Increasing tumult and murmurs.]

So the 12,000,000 of piastres are an ultimatum; it is a debt which must be immediately paid, under penalty of a declaration of war; and as for other debts, they will be the object of a future liquidation.

I had the right, then, gentlemen, to reproach the government with having thus made a means of war. [Oh! oh! renewed interruption]

As far as concerns the Jecker bills, the minister has offered explanations very ingenious, undoubtedly, yet containing extremely important concessions, which must necessarily alarm your consciences.

The minister reproaches me with having made use of documents sent by the government of Mexico.

There was, it seems to me, a very simple means of preventing such an inconvenience; it was to furnish the committee on the address with all the documents at the disposal of the minister; for when the minister asserts his ignorance of the details of this Jecker debt, he asserts a fact which, for my part, I have considerable difficulty in believing. [Murmurs of disapprobation.]

It is impossible that the minister should not have in his hands all the data relative to this affair. He has said himself, and he was right, that it was of such a nature as to throw a disagreeable obscurity over our negotiations.

SEVERAL VOICES. He did not say that.

M. JULES FAVRE. Why did he not furnish all the information in regard to it? [Increas-

ing disorder.] The examination of that affair might have had an opposite result; he has made none, and thereby he gives us the right—what do I say? he makes it a duty for us to institute all possible investigations. From the investigations which we have caused to be made, it appears—and this is atrocious—that the usurious rate at which the loan of 1859 was effected has been kept concealed. The minister has been compelled to acknowledge —[To the vote; to the vote. Long interruption.] You are not willing that people should speak to you about these things; France will judge, and I will remain silent.

(M. Jules Favre sits down.)

SEVERAL VOICES. Speak; speak.

SOME MEMBERS. No; enough, enough; to the vote.

The PRESIDENT. I cannot hinder the Chamber from testifying impatience. I ask M. Jules Favre whether he desires to continue or whether he yields the floor.

M. JULES FAVRE, rising. It is impossible for one as fatigued as I am, after the session of yesterday, to be able to struggle against systematic interruptions [no, no.] which have no other intention than to disturb me in the expression of my ideas. [Numerous reclamations.]

SEVERAL VOICES. Speak; speak.

The PRESIDENT. Allow me. I desire merely to protest against the accusation which you make against the Chamber. Yesterday the Chamber listened to you with such attention that you cannot accuse it of designedly interrupting you to-day. It is only very natural that a question which has engaged its attention for two days should weary it to a certain extent. [Yes, yes.] I cannot, on this point, direct the sentiments of an Assembly. I ask you again whether you wish to continue your speech or whether you yield the floor. [Speak; speak]

M. JULES FAVRE. I understand very well the fatigue of the Assembly, and I ask a thousand pardons for prolonging it; I ask it to believe that mine is still greater; but this is a question of business, not a question of feelings. [Denials, confusion and disorder.] You see that I cannot speak, since at the least word you interrupt me. [No, no; speak. Silence is restored.]

I was saying, gentlemen, when I was interrupted in my explanations, that the minister was unable to conceal the disastrous terms on which the Jecker loan was negotiated; only, by explanations deeply skilful, he has presented this affair before you as possibly having in some way a direct influence on the whole commerce of Mexico; and in this way only, he tells you, France ought to sustain it.

If it were so, gentlemen, if negotiations had been commenced under such conditions, we would never have, in this regard, the slightest observation to make to the government. But the facts as well as the documents completely resist the minister's interpretation.

Documents, gentlemen; what is the question? A contract entered into between the Jecker house and the Mexican government, a contract which makes the Mexican government liable for a sum of 15,000,000 of piastres, if Jecker proves that the notes have passed out of his hands or that he has furnished them in currency. I thought I showed in yesterday's session that he had furnished all the receipts expected of him by the Mexican government. I presented figures on this point which, it seems to me, deserved the trouble of refutation. Nothing has been said in this regard; and if my reasoning stands, what is the consequence? It is that all the holders of the notes of Jecker, on closing accounts, have a right to obtain of the Mexican government the nominal value of these bills. [No, no.]

You say no, and I say yes. And do you know the means which I would propose to clear up this affair completely? It would be that, from now to the discussion of the Budget, the minister would please to communicate to the committee on the budget the Jecker documents as well as the others, in order that there may not be either surprise or doubt possible—in order that every one may see clearly into this affair, and know what has been, in reality, the part of each one concerned in the transaction.

As far as concerns our agents, whom we are accused of calumniating, permit me to make this observation, which has certainly struck you: the conduct of the government towards them has been very singular. I do not reproach it with having, in the beginning, blindly relied upon their communications; but, as soon as they were invested with its full powers, what did they do? They made a use of them which has been here declared contrary to the interests of the country; for the signatures of these agents are found subscribed to the treaty of La Soledad, which has been disavowed. Well, whatever praise the government may decree to itself, and whatever the complacency with which it speaks of its own acts, I ask the Chamber if it is reasonable, if it is just, if it is prudent, to keep agents at such a distance who have thus compromised the interests of France. They have been invested with sovereign powers; what use have they made of them? I have proved that in the ultimatum, so far as concerns the question of the twelve millions and the Jecker bills, they have acted with a want of reflection, blamed not only by the opposition but by the minister of foreign affairs; for the article 3, which has become the subject of discussion between the minister and myself, does not at all admit, as the minister just asserted, of any liquidation whatever of the Jecker debt. It is perfectly clear, and it contains the