

shall confine myself to saying that it was remarkably decried in Mexico, and that, when it was necessary, for a debt universally recognized as usurious, to add seventy-five millions to the two hundred millions which were demanded, in truth, everybody recoiled. [Murmurs in the assembly.]

I confine myself to saying that the thing was decried; if it had a good reputation, the commissioners of the government have only to say so.

His excellency M. ROUHER, minister of state. Nobody interrupts you.

M. THIERS. In the state of embarrassment in which they were, they decided to refer the question to the three European governments. This was accordingly done, and they confined themselves to sending to the city of Mexico an ultimatum which could not be either precise or peremptory, because they could not actually say what they demanded. But yet it was laid down as a principle that they had not come to conquer, nor to revolutionize, but to obtain justice. Three officers of the three governments were sent to the capital; they were received with remarkable cordiality; the greatest regard was manifested for them, and they were told that if, in fact, the European governments had come to obtain justice, Mexico was ready to render it to them; and, in fact, they repealed that famous law of July 17, on account of which we had broken off relations, and which had enacted that the execution of the foreign agreements should be deferred for two years.

The three officers were, therefore, sent back to their commanders, who had sent them, with the announcement that General Doblado, who is one of the most prominent men in Mexico, and who, we are assured, would be a distinguished man in any country, would repair to the Mexican headquarters, in order to treat with the French, English, and Spanish plenipotentiaries. Such was the answer sent from the city of Mexico to Vera Cruz.

General Prim, who saw the number of the sick increase every day, said to Admiral Jurien de la Gravière, and to all the representatives of the allied powers: "But we will receive no answer from Europe for two months, and we cannot remain at Vera Cruz without seeing our armies totally swept away; (it was then verging towards the month of February.) We must obtain other places for encampment." Every one was of this opinion. They could not certainly have brought into the field, at that moment, more than 6,000 men. Mexico had 15,000. This difference of number was nothing very alarming for European troops; but the Mexicans, whose military qualities we have had occasion to see are not at all contemptible, were posted in very strong positions; and, moreover, in the confidence in which people were that at the first apparition of the European troops all Mexico would rise, Admiral Jurien de la Gravière had received no military supplies.

No means was at hand to transport a cannon, an ambulance, or a commissary wagon. It was impossible, therefore, to carry on any military operations at the moment, and to take by force the positions held by the Mexicans. They negotiated, therefore, with the Mexican general, Doblado. General Prim was intrusted with the management of the affair; he declared that, if what he wished was not done, he would break through the Mexican army, and General Doblado ended by conceding the following conditions: It was stipulated that our three small corps should be received at Orizaba—that is, at an elevated position where there was no danger of the usual diseases of the coast; that provisions and locations wherein to establish hospitals should be given to them; but that, on the other hand, if there was a failure to agree in the negotiations to be opened, the positions given us in good faith should be restored. This condition could not have been resisted; it was accepted.

General Doblado made another condition. Since you do not come to conquer, said he, why not allow the Mexican flag to wave beside the Spanish, English, and French flags, now waving over Vera Cruz? That the flags of the three nations should be there is natural enough, since their forces are there; but the Mexican flag should be found there also.

General Prim, who, notwithstanding, was not a man of very pacific temper, also accepted this proposition. There was a third demand made by General Doblado which was peremptorily rejected. That general desired to have the custom-house, which was in the hands of the allies, restored to Mexico. A very decided refusal was given to this proposition.

This is the celebrated treaty of La Soledad, which has been considered as dishonorable. Is that so, gentlemen? [Interruption.] I would like to know what my opponents would have done, in a similar case, when there were no military supplies at hand, when they had not yet taken possession of Orizaba, and when they had come to negotiate. There was nothing very dishonorable, indeed, in making such stipulations—that is to say, in asking and receiving healthy locations for encampment on condition of surrendering them again if there was a failure to agree; it seems to me, I repeat, that there was nothing dishonorable in that: anyhow, it was that treaty that saved our three little *corps d'armée*, for they would have surely perished by the pestilence if left at Vera Cruz.

M. GRANIER DE CASSAGNAC. They would not have remained there.

M. THIERS. They would not have remained there! and where would they have gone?

His excellency M. ROUHER. They would have gone to the city of Mexico.

M. JUBINAL. They had only oxen to drag the cannon.

M. the PRESIDENT. I request the different members not to interrupt the speaker.

M. THIERS. I defend here the honor of a brave French officer, whom apparently the Emperor honors with his esteem, since he has attached him to his person. He was one of the signers of that treaty. For me, I am glad to do him illustrious honor here; I am convinced that he did not compromise the honor of France in saving our soldiers.

If there were guilty parties here, do you know where they would be? They would be among those who thought it sufficient to send a few thousand men to Vera Cruz to have all Mexico uprising. [Approbation on some benches.]

When through error our soldiers have been endangered, and a brave officer saves them without compromising the dignity of our flag, I think we ought to be just towards him, and not treat men so lightly who have been placed in embarrassing circumstances.

A VOICE. Nobody is attacking him.

M. THIERS. When they obtained those locations for encampment, the Mexicans said: "Well, you have received the locations which you desired; now we must negotiate."

But answers were expected from Europe, and they were told that no negotiations could be had before the answers arrived. The answers could not arrive before the 15th of April. They agreed to adjourn to the 15th of April.

The despatches of the allied agents, addressed to the three governments in Europe, had found those governments more wedded than ever to their own ideas. Thus the English showed themselves more obstinately bent than ever to occupy only the ports of Vera Cruz and Tampico. Spain, who no longer saw any chances for herself, had given her entire adhesion to the English plan. As for us, we were more persuaded than ever that the Mexican exiles were right.

The Mexican exiles of the monarchical party had resorted to Austria. They had seen Prince Maximilian. That prince had given them a kind of consent. Then they returned to Paris, and embarked for Vera Cruz.

The French government had added 4,500 men to the expedition, and had given them for their commander a very brave and very distinguished man, General Lorencez.

At the head of the exiles of whom I have spoken, who left Europe to return to Vera Cruz, was General Almonte. The part which he has played, and which he now plays, explains what his dispositions must have been and the mission which he received. When he arrived at Vera Cruz, he published the fact that he had received a commission to re-establish the monarchical system in favor of an Austrian prince. The English plenipotentiary, Mr. Wyke, who was always exact in following his instructions, asked him in what government's name he spoke, and he added that it was not certainly in the name of the English government, for he had received instructions quite to the contrary. General Prim addressed him the same question, and said to him: "Assuredly, you do not come in the name of the Spanish government, for I have instructions here quite different from what you announce." General Almonte declared that he had the confidence of the French government, and that he came to re-establish monarchy in Mexico in favor of an Austrian prince.

This immediately gave rise to a very serious question. We had come to Mexico to negotiate, and we had, in fact, accepted the position of people who negotiated; we had obtained better quarters on this plea; and it was evident that our position was becoming a false one when, after having proclaimed ourselves as ready to negotiate, we received into our ranks an exile, a very respectable man assuredly, but one who proclaimed his intention of effecting a revolution.

M. GLAIS BIZOIN. As respectable as General Moreau. [Interruptions.]

The PRESIDENT. I request the members not to interrupt, and I pray the speaker not to reply to those who do interrupt, because that encourages them, and then discussion is no longer possible.

M. THIERS. I thank the president, and shall follow his advice as well as I can; but I would be glad if those interrupting would follow it also. [Approbative laughter.]

Well, the English and Spanish negotiators said to Admiral Jurien de la Gravière: "Our position is becoming entirely false." Admiral Jurien de la Gravière replied: "That is true; but I am a man of honor, and I am going to evacuate the positions that have been given to us."

This was the declaration of an honorable man, of a man who worthily represented France. [Several voices: Good!] But the English and Spanish plenipotentiaries immediately said to him: "But that is a declaration of war!" Admiral Jurien made no reply, and invariably said: "I am going to retire."

It became too evident that the representatives of France had received special orders, and that those orders were favorable to General Almonte—that is, to the ideas which he represented. They asked for a conference at Orizaba. It took place there on the 9th of April, and I regret, gentlemen, that the French government, in its publications in its yellow book, has not published the proceedings of the conference of Orizaba. These proceedings,

it is said, were drawn up by the French legation. Perhaps it is because it is written in French that this conjecture has been made; but it matters little; it is signed by the French legation and by the three negotiators.

It is therefore perfectly authentic. I shall not read it; but if it had been printed, I would have been dispensed from making this long recital to you, and you would have been dispensed from hearing it; for that perfectly authentic conference, supported by the signatures of all the plenipotentiaries, offers the most complete and striking view of the state of affairs.

Here is the discussion that ensued; I proceed to resume it in a few words. The English and Spanish plenipotentiaries say: "We have all assumed the attitude of people coming to negotiate; how can we take that of people having in their camp a leader of insurrection?" The French negotiators, Messrs. Jurien de la Gravière and De Saligny, declared that it was true. M. de Saligny did not pretend to conceal the fact that, as for him, he had never wished to negotiate with Juarez, and that he had always been of opinion that a monarchy, Austrian or other, should be substituted for that of Juarez. M. Jurien de la Gravière made no such declaration, but he said that he had orders, that General Almonte had the confidence of his government, and that they could not compel him to leave the ranks of the French army. I must say that no one demanded of us, and that no one would have insulted us so far as to demand, that General Almonte should be delivered over to the Mexican army. No, no; it was demanded only that he should be treated as General Miramon had been—that is, excluded, if not from Vera Cruz, at least from the French camp. Our representatives declared that they were commissioned to interpret the treaty of the 31st of October and the treaty of La Soledad as they did; that what they owed to honor was to retire, to render up the positions temporarily allowed them; but that they could do no more. As to the impossibility of treating with Juarez, they replied to them: "You say that there is no security in treating with the government of President Juarez; but why not make the trial of treating with him, since we are now at the 9th of April, and we have appointed to meet, on the 15th, the representatives of that government, of whom the principal is a very distinguished man, General Doblado? Let us wait till the 15th; we will then see whether we can come to an understanding with them or not." Our representatives declared that they could not do so; and, in fact, Admiral Jurien de la Gravière abandoned the positions which had been lent to him.

From this time forward the English declared that they were going to re-embark in their vessels; the Spaniards declared that, in conformity with their instructions, they withdrew likewise; and we remained alone in the country. We remained there with the evident resolution—in the presence of what is passing now, it is no longer possible to throw a doubt upon it—we remained there with the resolution of founding a monarchy in Mexico in favor of an Austrian prince.

You know what has occurred since. Thanks to the very slight information given to us by the representatives of the conservative party in Mexico, we attacked Puebla. General Lorencez attacked it bravely, and he was wonderfully seconded by his soldiers, who conducted themselves heroically. (I beg the Honorable M. Beauverger's permission to use this expression, which he likes not from our lips, but which we willingly use.)

M. DE BEAUVERGER. I accept the expression with the greatest pleasure.

M. THIERS. They conducted themselves heroically. But if they did not succeed, it was not their fault, nor the fault of the general who commanded them. The blame was laid upon those who had informed us so badly, and on the next day there was but a general outcry of indignation through the army against those who had so inopportunistically drawn us before Puebla.

We retired to Orizaba, and a whole year was required to repair what happened at Puebla. The brave Marshal Forey has repaired that check; we have been victorious; we ought to be; no one doubted it; we entered the city of Mexico.

This, gentlemen, is an exact recital of events. I refer to the documents at hand that I have neither altered nor distorted a single fact, and that this recital is the truth itself.

I resume the account of facts, and I specify them with the utmost precision.

It was on account of the delay in carrying into effect the agreement signed with the government of Juarez—an agreement which had accepted, as they used to say in the middle ages, *the price of blood*, and converted our claims into an indemnity in money—it was on account of the delay in the execution of that agreement that we broke off relations. But in adopting the English plan it was no fault to break off relations, for by taking possession of Tampico and Vera Cruz, they could have occupied those two sources of the Mexican revenue until perfect payment should be effected. For this plan, so simple, which was the English and Spanish plan, we have substituted the plan of founding a monarchy in Mexico. This is the truth and cannot be contested; it is as clear as noonday. [Assent on several benches.]

Now, gentlemen, I ask your pardon for having detained you so long; [no, no; speak

on;] but it is not possible to clear up affairs so complicated without entering into details, and I think I have given you only indispensable details. Now I come to the practical question.

They tell us, "We are in Mexico; how shall we get out of it?" I confess it; this is the practical question: How shall we get out of it?

France ought to emerge from all difficulties with honor, and without detriment to her interests. But let me tell you one thing: when people have placed themselves in a false position—and it is a somewhat false position, to be at a distance of 3,000 leagues from our own shores, with 40,000 French and a part of our navy—when people have placed themselves in a position which can be called false, if they can extricate themselves from it with honor unimpaired and interests safe, must we be intractable if our self-love suffers somewhat? for to pretend to extricate from a false position both honor and interest and self-love in safety is too much; Providence is not so indulgent as that towards those who have committed [Various manifestations.]

What are the means of extricating ourselves with honor and interests safe? My God! The means are very simple. If it were necessary to treat as vanquished—oh, never! but to treat as conquerors is by no means dishonorable. The next day after the entrance into the city of Mexico, when we were conquerors, who hindered us from treating with the government of Juarez, which we had vanquished? What was there more simple, then, than to treat with that government?

I will be asked, "How? Treat with President Juarez!" But when we are conquerors, when those whom we have conquered are at the same time the strongest party in the country, (I am going to give you the proofs of this,) and when, moreover, that party, after all, demands nothing very unreasonable, why refuse to treat with it?

The proofs that it is the strongest party are these: Here is General Bazaine, who to great military talents joins much tact, as we are assured—I have not the honor of knowing him—and much political ability—what is he doing? He is occupied, you see, at this moment, in making a species of revolution, and inclining from the party of the old *régime*, as I have named it, towards the party of the new *régime*.

He has, in fact, consented to separate from the archbishop of Mexico on the great question of the national property; for the question which was agitated was this: Should the entire proceedings commenced about the national property be suspended or not? If they were suspended, that would signify that there was a desire to reconsider the sale of the national property; if they were not suspended, it would signify that the sale was confirmed. Well, no; those proceedings were not suspended. We acknowledged, therefore, ourselves, through the ablest, the wisest of our representatives, General Bazaine, that the liberal party, which others call revolutionary—we have agreed to take no account of these appellations—that this party is the strongest, and that, moreover, it is not unreasonable, since we are doing exactly what it wishes. Was it not, then, I ask, the simplest thing in the world to treat with that party—that is to say, with its chief, President Juarez?

And, after having treated with him, gentlemen, the question was settled, because at the very instant we could have withdrawn, it being well understood that we would retain Tampico and Vera Cruz, as the English and Spaniards wished to do, in order to hold them as pledges, and to insure the execution of the treaty made with us. Then the thirteen or fourteen millions a month would not have been inscribed in your budget; you would not have 40,000 men beyond the seas; and this great question which occupies you, which troubles you, this great question of the detainment of our troops in Mexico would have been resolved.

I will be told, "But it would have been very disagreeable, after having announced to the world that we were going to establish a monarchy in Mexico, that we would be able to treat with a prince, to renounce that monarchy and that prince, and to treat simply with Juarez."

Gentlemen, that is what I call a sacrifice of self-love. But I assert that, when we treat with a vanquished enemy, under the conditions of which you are aware, when honor is safe, we can rise above all these petty considerations of self-love. The essential point is that honor should be unblemished.

But, gentlemen, in order to judge of the propriety of a course of action to be adopted, we must not only examine it in itself; we must judge it from another point of view—we must judge it by comparison with the contrary course. Now, do not judge this resolution to treat with Juarez by itself only; judge it by comparison with another resolution, that of founding a monarchy in Mexico.

I shall endeavor not to detain you too long; but we must examine this thing as serious men. I ask pardon for using this expression; but I do not take as a serious matter this consideration of the Latin races opposed to the Anglo-Saxon races. No, this is not serious. Let us speak like statesmen. I ask you, gentlemen, is it a matter of common sense, in the present state of the universe, to think of establishing on our own account, at our own

expense and on our own responsibility, a monarchy in Mexico? Truly I said to you at the beginning, my reason is confounded when I think of such an undertaking.

Let us examine, coolly, what is likely to happen. How long will you remain there? We are told that the foreign legion will be recruited, that a Mexican corps will be formed, and that we can then withdraw. But when will this be accomplished?

Some time ago we were told with great seriousness that the French debt would be paid from the resources of Mexico; now we are told with the same seriousness that, when the foreign legion and the Mexican troops shall have been recruited, we will be able to withdraw. Permit me to answer this assertion and remind you of what has passed.

We entered the city of Mexico, if I am not mistaken, on the 17th of May. Some time afterwards the rainy season began. You know that it lasts four months. We were obliged to remain quiet during all that time. Then when the rains ceased we had to take the field, and in October we commenced to make what has been wittily called an electioneering tour in favor of Prince Maximilian. [Laughter and divers manifestations.]

We commenced operations only in November, and we are probably engaged in them now. The Prince, who is announced, will not certainly reach Mexico before the month of April, for they say that he will not set out before March. He will therefore arrive in April, and he will scarcely have time before the rainy season to receive the felicitations of his subjects; for I have no doubt he will be well received. Do you remember that a new prince has ever been otherwise received anywhere? I, for my part, remember nothing of the kind. [Laughter.] He will have scarcely received the congratulations of his subjects before the rainy season will commence. We must remain quiet again; troops cannot be moved except in September or October. You will yet be obliged to protect him for some time. So you are certain, in following this plan, to remain in Mexico during the whole of the year 1864. And I set aside the expenses; I will speak of them presently; but anyhow we stay in Mexico with our whole army for the whole year 1864. Certainly this will be denied, but it is true notwithstanding; we are there for the whole of 1864, and I shall thank Heaven if we can get out of it in 1865. I shall be told: "We will recruit the troops destined for the Prince." I should be glad of it; but, in any case, the matter cannot be effected immediately, and you cannot withdraw your troops all at once; you will be obliged to withdraw them by degrees. Believe me, there is no exaggeration in what I say. You will stay in Mexico for several years, whatever you do. Now, in the actual state of the world, is it a wise resolution to remain in that position with 40,000 men beyond the seas, and when the seas might cease to be free?

Now let us also take into consideration the question of finance. Undoubtedly we are great financiers at the present day; we are rich enough to treat questions of finance with disdain. Well, gentlemen, I have adhered to the narrow ideas of former times, and I entreat you to allow me to speak briefly of the question of finances.

And to commence, how is this question of finances to be resolved? As we have heretofore done, we will pay everybody. You pay the French army now; you will have to pay the Mexican army, and I do not intend to reproach the government for so doing; it could not be otherwise; it would be absurd if it were.

In what condition will the Prince find himself on his arrival there? He will not have a dollar in his treasury. The largest part of the revenue of Mexico passes through the custom-houses. These custom-houses, gentlemen, are under sequestration now, and while we act as garnishees for our allies, the English and Spanish will receive the greatest part of these revenues. This must be the case; I blame no person for it; I blame only the state of affairs; men I blame for their obstinate persistence in such a course. So, at this moment, the Mexican government has the greatest part of its revenue sequestered by the occupation of its two custom-houses of Tampico and Vera Cruz. Moreover, also, in extending ourselves to San Luis Potosi, we were told yesterday, with a most cavalier-like disregard of geography, that we occupy two-thirds or three-fourths of the country.

M. JULES FAVRE. They said seven-eighths.

M. THIERS. Ah! that is still better. The truth is that we do not occupy the twentieth part of it, not the twentieth part. It is true that we occupy some very populous provinces; but assuredly out of eight millions of people we have no more than two millions under our authority. I do not say that the Prince may not work wonders hereafter; that he may not succeed in occupying all Mexico; I should be glad if he did. I speak of the present; of the engagement which we make in remaining in Mexico. What revenues will he have? None. Then we are truly, I shall say, too honest to draw him from his family and his country [laughter] to leave him in Mexico under the impossibility of paying his own army. It will be necessary to pay everything in the beginning, and that will amount to much more than twelve millions a month.

But now I am reminded of the loans. Gentlemen, we must do ourselves justice; if loans are easily made for France, as we can convince ourselves every day—a circumstance which we regard with satisfaction not on account of the loans themselves, but on account

of the public opulence which permits them to be made, which is very different [various noises]—do you think that Mexico can borrow as easily as we do? If you wished to give your guarantee it would be very soon effected; you could borrow for Mexico whatever you wished. But I imagine we are not going to be asked to pass a guarantee for a loan. We, the members of the opposition, are few in number in this assembly, but on the day that such a demand should be made I should not be astonished to find ourselves much more numerous. You will not therefore ask us to guarantee any loan. When Mexico shall ask for three or four hundred millions that will be necessary for her, do you think that she will get them? I shall enter into no details; but Mexico, you know, has very heavy debts. It has its internal debt; it does not pay it. It has its debt due to us; we do not ask it to pay it; we will allow time for that. But it has its external debt, and that we cannot treat lightly, for the debtor is a hard one, England. And you know that this external debt is about 300 millions. There are, besides, claimants from other nations, on whose account the war has been undertaken, and who claim 200 millions among them all. And apparently we have not gone to Mexico to have the unfortunate persons, whose rights we undertook to defend, lose their indemnity.

Well, we must collect three or four hundred millions to commence with. It is said that the Prince can obtain that sum. I have never had the honor of being near enough to him to appreciate his qualifications; I doubt not that they are very great; everybody says that he is a very estimable and engaging prince. It will not be too much to have all his talents to succeed; it would be necessary for him to have as much as his father-in-law, and that is saying much, to enable him to succeed, in a few years, in restoring order in Mexico, or in persuading the capitalists of Europe to lend him three or four hundred millions.

It might be perhaps, as I said, a very disagreeable course to treat with that Indian, Juarez; but, if you adopt the contrary course, there you are reduced to remain in Mexico for one year, two years, I do not know how long, and you are condemned during that time to pay everything. You see that I do not darken the picture; for if that happens in Mexico which has happened in Dominica, where, after the most brilliant reception extended to the Spanish authority, they have passed in a year or two to a fierce war; if that happens which has happened at Santo Domingo, the embarrassment would be great. But I lay aside these sinister auguries; I suppose that the Prince will succeed; so be it. Yet we are engaged by our policy to remain for one year, two years, three years, I know not how long, beyond the seas, and in the mean time we are obliged to pay everything. I confess, gentlemen, although our young colleague has highly admired this business, that I cannot prevail upon myself to admire it. [Interruption and various movements.]

M. le Baron de BEAUVERRER. The young colleague asks to be heard.

M. THIERS. Now, have these creations of new states succeeded so well with us that we should be tempted often to renew the experiment? Can it be, perchance, that what is passing on the banks of the Danube, or in Greece, is very encouraging for the founders of new monarchies? Certainly, if there ever was a justifiable establishment, it was that of Greece. This carries me back, and carries all of us back who have reached my age, to the recollections of our youth. You know with what enthusiasm I shall say all mankind demanded the establishment of the kingdom of Greece; it was necessary to rescue those unfortunate Greeks from the sabre of the Turks. You remember the frightful massacres which we witnessed at that period.

There was a reason, not more respectable than this one, but I shall say more influential with statesmen; it was that if they had not thought to pacify Greece, the eastern question, that formidable question which, some day, if it ever comes up again, will cause so much blood to flow, the eastern question would have arisen immediately; and they acted wisely when they created the kingdom of Greece, both on principles of humanity and on principles of public policy. And then it was not really very troublesome. Which were the powers that concurred? Russia, England, France, the three powers that enveloped Greece with their navy, and covered her in some manner by their armies. That could not have been very troublesome; and at that period, when people were not yet accustomed to grand financial schemes, the money required was not very considerable; it was twenty millions for each of the three powers that co-operated in that affair. There was no danger, therefore, not much expense, and an absolute necessity. More reasons could not be combined. No regret, therefore, could be entertained for the erection of the kingdom of Greece.

And yet, has all this so well succeeded? After a reign of some years the Greeks have sent King Otho back to you. He had done no harm; he was not possessed of much ability; he interpreted the constitutional system in a certain way which did not prove successful for him, and at last he has been sent back to Europe, which had given him to Greece.

And immediately the Greeks were told: "Well, gentlemen, as you please; your king does not suit you; well, we will give you another." [General merriment.] Another was

sought out and found. Here, gentlemen, I must say that I admire the wisdom which our government has manifested on this occasion. It left to England the task of finding a king, and that was not easy. England addressed herself to that Danish line, now so rudely shaken; she detached a scion from it, and of it made a king of Greece. England added to this a sacrifice which will appear to her, when she reflects upon it, more serious at bottom than it did at the first moment; she ceded the Ionian islands, and, what is more important than the Ionian islands, the fortress of Corfu.

Well, England, who sought out this king and conducted him by the hand, who made such sacrifices as these for Greece, is much more unpopular there now than we are, who did not interfere at all. [Approbative laughter.] Well, gentlemen, is it a very tempting business to proceed to erect states outside of one's own country? You are attempting a Greece at the distance of three thousand leagues from France. And with what support? When we established Greece we had the support of England and Russia, and the good wishes of all the world; I can assert that it was the general desire. Well, here we are establishing a monarchy in Mexico; with whose good wishes? It would be very embarrassing to answer. Ah! I will tell you: yes, you will have the somewhat sarcastic good wishes of England—the English papers will give you the proof of it—you will have the sarcastic good wishes of England, on one condition, and that is that the custom-houses of Tampico and Vera Cruz shall serve principally to pay her, and that you will come in last when the accounts have to be settled. [Various manifestations.] On this condition, I am convinced, she will be well disposed; she will tell you, from time to time, that she is delighted to find you yet in Mexico, as she often repeats in her newspapers. But, with the exception of this raillery, discourteous enough, perhaps, she will not at all inconvenience you in what you may do in Mexico.

But, after England, there is the Anglo-Saxon race, of which so much is said, and of which we must take proper account. Well, the United States now respect and flatter you; for it would depend on you to decide the question if France pronounced for either one of the two parties, and she will do well not to do so. For my part, I entreat her not to do so, and I strongly approve the course of the government in maintaining neutrality. [Several voices: Good!] If France declared for one of the parties the question would be decided, for all depends on her. Well, it is not very astonishing that the United States now respect you. It seems to me certain even that if you caused Prince Maximilian to pass by way of New York, the interests of the north would insure him a good reception. I grant it. But can any man seriously believe that when this civil war shall have been terminated—the termination of which we should desire, should ask of Heaven, not only in the interest of humanity, but in the interest and in the name of all Europe—can any one believe, I say, that the United States, who have proved to us on other occasions that their memories are short, will remember the careful impartiality which you have maintained? And do you believe that if you effect anything serious in Mexico they will aid you in completing it? I doubt it.

In the first place, without any interference on their part, that will happen which happened in regard to the Havana. They declared, in regard to the Havana, that they would not interfere in the matter; I am aware even that they did not interfere much, and yet all the adventurers of the southern States of America threw themselves on the Havana.

Well, you will certainly have some fifty thousand or one hundred thousand adventurers out of employment at the end of this deplorable war. Where do you wish them to go? They will only have to cross the Rio del Norte to enter Mexico. And for whom will they go? For us? Is that possible? No, no one can believe that. You see, therefore, that you have a Greece at the distance of three thousand leagues, with the coldness of England, with the inevitable hostility, sooner or later, if not of the northern States of America, at least of all the men in their service, who will find their occupation gone when the war is finished. [Cries of good! good! from several benches.]

Well, I confess it is in vain that I regard the question under all its phases; I cannot yet find a serious motive for such an enterprise. Ah! it is true that we are told, "Mexico is such a fine country; it is the finest country in the world! Read the descriptions given of it. You will find there immense resources, which will indemnify you for all your sacrifices."

Gentlemen, for a long time I have examined that question; I have had the honor of being several times minister of foreign affairs, and it was my duty to consider the question. I have considered it seriously since, and I am astonished at what is circulated in this respect.

Mexico is very rich! Well, the celebrated Humboldt, when he visited it, destroyed many illusions in reference to it. Mexico had, at the end of the last century, a colossal reputation for wealth, and this is easily explained. Spain produced for herself alone, by her colonies, nine-tenths of all the precious metals scattered throughout the world. Now, all these metals were thought to come from Mexico alone. For this reason Mexico, under the name of New Spain, had a colossal reputation. When Humboldt visited it many illu-

sions were destroyed in his mind. And since then other travellers, who had not the sagacity and reputation of Humboldt, have found many more illusions to destroy. I do not say that Mexico is not a fine country; but look out at America; from the great lakes to Cape Horn there is not a country of which the same could not be said that has been said of Mexico. We have but to take actual facts. Consult the statistics, then, and you will see whether that wonder is as wonderful as they say.

Mention has been made of the cotton of Mexico; and certainly that which is of more importance to a country than rich mines is a large amount of agricultural productions; that is better than gold and silver.

Cotton, if Mexico could furnish it, would be a very precious product. We have been told, it has been widely circulated, that Mexico could furnish us with cotton. Well, here are the rigorous facts in this regard. I have conversed with merchants who applied themselves to the cultivation of cotton; I have consulted the directors of the agricultural school of Mexico, and here is what they have told me:

Cotton can grow only in the low lands along the Gulf of Mexico, which resemble those of Texas, but which, unfortunately, are most of the time subject to the malaria. Cotton grows there, it is true, but they have not the labor of Texas—that is, black labor; they have nothing but Indian labor, and the Indians are unwilling to descend to the low lands. They have been so badly treated there by the Spanish planters that they have retired into the mountains, where they live on little, and it is only in cases of extreme necessity that they enter into any relations with the white race. They descend only as rarely as possible into the lower regions.

Cotton, therefore, cannot be cultivated in the low lands for want of labor; and out of five crops, two or three are always lost, because the rains of the month of March attack the cotton at the moment when the cotton balls are opening. So the cultivation of cotton has been almost abandoned in Mexico; it is yet cultivated to a small extent, but this cultivation scarcely suffices for the very few cotton factories in operation in Mexico.

On the table lands it cannot grow. On the table lands there are four months of inundation and eight months of drought, and for this reason all cultivation is difficult. Cultivation is possible only in the valleys, and there it is magnificent, it is true. There, where they can collect the water and preserve it, where they can employ the means of irrigation, either natural or artificial, every class of cultivation is magnificent; that is incontestable.

Yet, there the same difficulty exists, the want of labor. At a period when Mexico is said to have been in a remarkable state of prosperity, at the end of the last century, or about 1803, when M. Humboldt wrote his work, do you know what the soil of Mexico then produced?—and certainly it is not more cultivated at the present day. It produced a hundred and forty-five millions a year. Now, compare this with the agricultural production of France, and see how much it represents. There has been great discrepancy in regard to the amount of the agricultural production of France; it has been variously estimated at about six, seven, or eight thousand millions. Well, according to Humboldt the productions of the soil of Mexico were 145,000,000 at the commencement of this century.

But they say that there are mines. The mines can yield from 120,000,000 to 130,000,000. These mines, of which they talk so much, assuredly are rich, but their wealth is not the essential thing. You must know that gold and silver diggings are found everywhere—in California, for example. California presents no great amount of gold wealth in the portions of the country in the neighborhood of San Francisco, and the Californians have crossed the Sierra Nevada, and have found magnificent silver diggings beyond the Sierra Nevada, between that range and the Rocky mountains; and they have found, moreover, mercury, which is indispensable. Other miners have ascended the Fraser river, opposite Vancouver's island; diggings have been discovered there of the greatest richness. The Americans have also proceeded towards the Colorado, and they have there also found diggings extremely abundant in the precious metals.

When you are told that a country is the richest of countries, because it possesses mines of gold and silver, the assertion is not serious. The essential requisite for the prosperous working of mines is to have large capital, good managers, much continuity of effort. This is found with difficulty.

Well, in Mexico, for want of these requisites, do you know what has happened? The greater part of the capital invested in the mines of Mexico has been lost. The English have lost more than fifty millions of piastres, or two hundred and fifty millions of francs. The Germans have lost fifteen millions of piastres, or seventy-five millions of francs. Consequently we must not imagine that the mines of Mexico are anything wonderful.

Yes, there are silver diggings of considerable importance—that is undoubted; but there is no mercury at hand; it has to be bought in Europe or in California. That would contribute very much to increase the expenses of working. All the speculators of Europe that are ready to follow Prince Maximilian to Mexico have written, "I have seen letters transmitted through the most respectable houses." Do you know what replies have been re-

turned? Not to be too confident, for that there was nothing more hazardous than working the silver mines of Mexico. They have been told, even, that it would be better to direct their attention to the copper mines.

This explains to you why Mexico, with about one hundred and fifty millions of agricultural production, one hundred and twenty, one hundred and thirty, or one hundred and forty millions of mineral production, making about three hundred millions in all, has only a commerce of one hundred and thirty or one hundred and forty millions, importation and exportation combined, in which we enter to the amount of twenty millions.

Well, gentlemen, as dreaming is the order of the day, I am going to have my dream too. I grant you the most that you can possibly imagine. I grant you that Mexico is going to succeed like Brazil. Yes, Prince Maximilian, who is a man of talent, will be, moreover, a prince of pre-eminent ability and skill; the Mexicans will all at once rally round the new monarchy; they will not act as the mulattoes are acting in Dominica—the Prince will perform the miracle of bringing the old and the new régime to perfect accord; he will reign; everything will turn out for the best; everything will turn out as in Brazil.

Well, how do matters go in Brazil? Do you know how long it has taken Brazil to reach the point to which it has arrived? Only fifty years. It has required princes of great wisdom, uninterrupted repose, happy relations with the whole world, and fifty years, I repeat, to attain a revenue of one hundred millions, and a commerce amounting to five or six hundred millions. Whilst we, gentlemen, see our commerce doubled in ten years—it was so said from the tribune the other day, and with justice—whilst we see it in that space of time pass from two to four and even five thousand millions, Brazil, in twenty years, has risen from about four hundred millions to six hundred millions; it has increased one-third.

And how, gentlemen? By peace, by time, by labor. God has given to man but one magic ring—that is, labor and patience. [Good, good.] Brazil has employed this means, which is more efficacious than the precious metals. I am going to give you a proof of it.

Brazil has precious metals, also; it has scarcely occupied itself with them. It has devoted itself to agriculture, and it possesses one admirable branch of agriculture, coffee. Do you know how much coffee it gives to the world every year? At the present hour, more than two hundred millions! That is better than the precious metals. With the aid of repose, calm and quiet liberty, excellent princes, not a single enemy, and a period of fifty years, Brazil has arrived at this state.

I ask you, suppose Brazil had a friend in Europe who had deeply obliged it, most sensibly obliged it, could it possibly make the fortune of that friend, or repay him for the efforts made in its favor? [Divers manifestations.] It is, then, a mere dream to pretend that Mexico, by succeeding like Brazil, could indemnify us, and pay the five or six hundred millions which we shall have spent for her.

I am well aware that people say, "Oh, yes! but you forget one thing; you forget that a miracle might be performed." A miracle! What miracle? The miracle of California.

Ah! that is true. They have talked to you of a province called Sonora, and which, it is said, must be like California. It is said, "If we had something there like California it would not be a thing to be despised, and we would have no reason to regret our sacrifices and our efforts."

Gentlemen, I have detained you very long—

SEVERAL VOICES. No, no.

M. THIERS. I shall require only a few minutes to illustrate this miracle of California. If you will allow me to speak a few words to you, you will see whether this wonder is anything so prodigious after all, or calculated to make the fortune of a government.

Well, yes, the diggings of California are very rich; are those of Sonora equally so? Nobody knows. There are some German engineers who have written on the subject, and who question it. The truth is, that we know nothing about it; and this should render everybody very cautious. As for me, it does render me very cautious; and I declare that I know nothing about it. But there is one thing that I do know, because I have studied geography, and that is that Sonora is situated about ten or fifteen degrees lower than the country where they seek for gold in California—that is, some hundreds of leagues further south, and that the climate is one of the most dangerous for Europeans; moreover, there are ferocious savages there—the Apaches—who have hitherto rendered that province almost uninhabitable.

But I am willing to concede this point; I shall make everything easy to the partisans of the Mexican monarchy. I am willing to grant them that Sonora will be the easiest province in the world to reside in. Well, things will go on as they did in California; and see how they went on in California.

When it was discovered that there were sands yielding gold, which not only offered facilities for gaining two hundred or three hundred francs a day, but that also those famous veins were found which could yield twenty, thirty, or forty thousand francs a day—oh, it

was just after the termination of the European revolutions—all the outcasts of all classes, as they have been styled, rushed to California. They obtained much money at first, it is true. In the beginning, many of them killed each other—fatigue and misery killed many more; for, even whilst they possessed gold, gold in abundance, they had misery at their sides. They came to San Francisco to enjoy the treasures which they had collected.

Well, for an article of clothing which here at the Palais Royal could be procured for five francs, they were obliged to pay one hundred francs. It was very simple: the storekeepers of San Francisco profited by the condition of things and sold everything, it may be truly said, for its weight in gold. As these storekeepers themselves were obliged to pay in Europe for all that they had need of in California, and that, too, at very high prices, they did not make such extraordinary profits as some people might be induced to believe. So that the gold of California was somewhat diffused everywhere, and it is well that such was the case. For my part I do not question this; I seek merely to know whether that gold has been accumulated anywhere in such a way as to enrich a friend who might desire therewith to enrich another friend.

The gold of California was, therefore, diffused throughout the world. After a brief time what happened? The sands became less rich. The gold-seekers, who had not been prudent enough to be economical, were obliged to stop. It was necessary to open shafts; it was necessary to examine the beds of auriferous quartz; this quartz it was necessary to break up; after breaking it was necessary to employ washing to separate the gold from the stony matter. It was necessary for companies to take the matter in hand. Now only companies carry on the works in California, and the gold-seekers have become simply laborers.

There is no great evil in this, perhaps. But let us see. Has the government of California, or has the federal government, made any great fortune? The facts are these: The government of the State of California has seen its revenues increase a little, not much. As to the federal government, it was for a short time engaged in a quarrel with the State of California; it asserted and proved that the revenue from the customs, although considerably increased, was just sufficient to pay the expenses.

Consequently, the gold of California has been diffused throughout the world, it is true; but it has not been accumulated anywhere to such an extent as to provide a government with the means of handsomely recompensing a friendly government that might have rendered it great services.

There has been a wonder produced, I acknowledge, an admirable one, the only one now left, I can tell you. Who has wrought this wonder? Who has profited by it? A good creature, in truth, which makes no noise, which makes no promises, but which works—agriculture.

Do you know what has passed within twelve years in California? That province, which was entirely uncultivated, is now as well cultivated as one of the finest provinces of France. And how has this wonder been wrought? Because among the gold-seekers there was a number of men who had the good sense to buy up at very low prices some parts of that soil which is so fertile; they have cultivated these, and now California sends corn to Australia.

Here is the wonder. Yes, there is one province the more now in the United States, magnificently cultivated. But the federal government is not for all that dispensed from the necessity of using paper money, as you know; and as to the State of California, it has gained almost nothing by it.

Well, will the wonder be repeated? Suppose, I repeat, that Sonora is a California; I ask whether means will be found there to indemnify France for some hundreds of millions which she will have expended, and for the dangers which she will have run? Not at all. We must lay aside these dreams; we must come to positive realities; and I now resume this, perhaps, too long discussion, [no, no; go on,] which, if it has not exceeded your powers of endurance, begins to exceed mine.

The truth is this: The wisest course would be simply to content ourselves to maintain our honor safe, to have the interests of France so likewise, and to desist from the further pursuit of a dangerous and chimerical enterprise, in the result of which I can perceive nothing to advance any great interest of France.

Now, I shall be told: "We have addressed ourselves to Prince Maximilian; the Prince is going to set out; we have entered into engagements towards him."

That is true, gentlemen; but it is your part to come to the assistance of the government—it is your part. And beware! we are about to assume a great responsibility; for, according to the language you may use, the result may be very different. If you express yourselves in a certain way, the French government might say to that Prince, and this course would be honorable to all parties: "What do you wish? The public authorities in France are not favorable to this enterprise, and I will not be able, perhaps, as my honor would lead me, to sustain you as long and as energetically as I would wish."

Well, the Prince, who is, assuredly, a sensible man, when the French government would address him thus in accordance with your wishes, would, perhaps, decline to accept, and we might return to that President—not a very attractive personage, undoubtedly—to that President Juarez, who is at the head— [interruptions and numerous cries.]

Gentlemen, it seems that those who interrupt me find that the responsibility which we are about to assume by this language that we will use is not heavy. I congratulate them for thinking so. As for me, I do not think it so, and I believe that when you will have encouraged the government to persist in its designs, which will depend on your words, it will be entirely out of place for you hereafter to refuse to it the troops, the sailors, the millions requisite to carry out to the end what you are now going to undertake. For, reflect on it well, hitherto your honor is not engaged in the affair; but the day that the Prince shall have set out with your support and your guarantee, you must sustain him whatever happens. [Various demonstrations; applause around the speaker, who takes his seat.]

Recess for a quarter of an hour.

*Speech of M. Berryer.*

I have but a few words to say. On this great question I have already formed my opinion, decided both by the study which I have made of all that has transpired to this day in our Mexican expedition, and by the examination which I have made, as far as it is permitted to penetrate the future, of the consequences of the enterprise on which we have entered.

The disposition which I feel at this moment I believe is shared by the immense majority of this assembly. I see in the state of the debate only a question on which, in virtue of a right which you all assert for yourselves since it is constitutionally established, I would have wished to obtain, or that you might obtain, some explanations on the part of the organs of the government.

The question for me, in the present state of the affair, is absolutely foreign to those facts already passed and discussed, on which the speaker on the side of the government has invoked the authority of established and decided facts. I shall not, therefore, examine its antecedents, and if I refer to them at all, it will be only to deduce from them something illustrative of the troubles and difficulties which the future may have in store for us.

The question of the moment now, that in regard to which no judgment has been reached, the question on which I ask, and I presume others as well as myself will ask, some positive explanations from the government, is this: Are we soon to discontinue the occupation of Mexico? When are we to put into execution the last instructions sent to General Bazaine on the 24th of August last? This is the main question.

FROM MANY BENCHES. That is so.

M. BERRYER. That is to say, can the government assure France that it has resolved to quit Mexico soon? Or shall we be told, on the contrary, that it desires to pursue the establishment of a monarchy in Mexico, conformably to the instructions sent to General Bazaine? This, I repeat, is the real question.

In the antecedent stages of this affair, we were told that the expedition was not undertaken for ourselves alone. That is true. As to the past, I shall not discuss in any manner the motives which determined us to undertake an expedition to Mexico. We had to avenge our honor, which had been wounded and deeply outraged in the person of the representatives of France. We had to obtain legitimate reparation for material injuries done to our fellow-citizens, and reparation also for the assaults which, through a course of violence unexampled, had been made on the persons of several among them. To avenge our honor, to obtain lawful reparation on these two accounts, is assuredly a very natural motive for undertaking an expedition against the government from which these two classes of reparation are to be obtained. We had undertaken to reach this difficult result, and, it is said, we had not undertaken it alone.

Here I shall say a word about the past in order to determine precisely the condition in which we now are. On the 31st of October, 1861, a treaty was made between three powers equally or almost equally offended by Mexico. For a long time Spain had injuries to avenge, and injuries, too, of the greatest moment. In 1858, the Queen of Spain, on opening the Cortes of Madrid, pronounced a warlike speech against Mexico. The very idea of such an enterprise by Spain alone awoke all the ardor of Castilian imagination; recollections reaching backwards for three centuries and the long possession which Spain had had of that territory, all gave reasons to think that Spain would be very glad, in view of the abominable disorder which reigned in Mexico, of the anarchy which caused the fall one after another, in forty or fifty years, I do not know of how many governments, more numerous even than the years themselves—that Spain, I say, would be very glad to find an occasion to reconquer Mexico. Her ideas became more animated and her resolutions more precise when the great embarrassment of the United States occurred in consequence of the civil war which has broken out in that country.

I do not wish to read any extracts to you at this hour, but a letter, a despatch addressed to M. Mon, the Queen's ambassador at Paris, says precisely that this may be the proper occasion. Its terms are: "The government should not conceal"—that is the expression used in the despatch—"the government should not conceal that this may be a suitable occasion for awakening ancient recollections and placing on the throne of Mexico a prince of the blood of the Bourbons more or less intimately united to that house." This despatch was addressed to M. Mon in 1861.

This, then, was the position of Spain; it was known to France. I know not what passed at Vichy and under what point of view General Prim presented the ideas of his country in regard to Mexico; but what I do know is, that a despatch arrived immediately from Madrid, of the date of September 10, 1861, announcing that they desired to know whether the French government would be willing to unite with Spain in making an expedition to Mexico to demand reparation. M. Thouvenel immediately answered that France was well disposed to unite with Spain, but that she would not do so without being of accord with England, her ally. And then in that same conversation, as is stated in a despatch of October 13, M. Thouvenel indicates that it was a monarchy that was to be established in Mexico; and as to the prince that might be chosen, the three contracting parties engaging not to procure the elevation to the throne of Mexico of any prince of their own families, assuredly Prince Maximilian was the best candidate to be presented to the choice of the Mexicans. This was the position of France. As to England, she was in a quite different disposition. England thought that it was necessary to perform some vigorous act against Mexico; that it was necessary to take possession of her ports and of her outlets, to seize her custom-house revenues, and to remain satisfied with that method of obtaining a reparation which she considered sufficient; but at the same time and in the most formal terms, in her despatches to Mr. Wyke, she declared that she did not intend under any consideration to interfere in the internal affairs of the Mexican republic.

It is true, therefore, as the Hon. M. Thiers has said, that when, on the 31st of October, the three powers, in these three different dispositions, made a treaty in common, it was a veritably negative treaty; for it was impossible that, when they came to deliberate on the direction to be given to the expedition thus agreed upon, each of the plenipotentiaries should not strive to make the results of the deliberation incline towards the principle, the ruling thought, of his own government.

Thus our agent was to think of the establishment of a monarchy in Mexico in favor of Prince Maximilian; Spain could not see without pain an Austrian prince coming to occupy a position which she would have asked for a prince of her own family; and England, who did not wish to interfere in any manner in the internal affairs of the country, must necessarily have objected. I speak not of the protests made against the exaggerated nature of the debts due to us; these are details of the past which I omit. There, gentlemen, was the thing which brought on dissension, when we presented ourselves in Mexico with General Almonte in our ranks. Moreover, this dissension was in the nature of things; it was in the dispositions of the three governments, in their intentions, which were not altogether secret, at the time when the treaty of October 31, 1861, was concluded. The plenipotentiaries did all they could to come to an agreement with each other. First, the treaty of la Soledad was made, a treaty more or less blamed, more or less approved. They proceeded to Orizaba. It was there that it was necessary to pronounce the final words, and it was there that they broke off before they had opened communication with the commissioner of the government established at the city of Mexico.

Here commence our faults; here commences our resolution to undertake the whole enterprise alone, a fault into which we have been very naturally led; and to this point, in my retrospective observations, I call the attention of the assembly. We were led by false reports, by lying communications, with which we have been saturated by the press and in every possible way, to regard as an extremely easy enterprise our taking possession of the Mexican republic. There yet, gentlemen, lies our illusion; we have yet to do with the same persons, with those who have deceived us, with those who have brought our government to engage in this affair with forces entirely insufficient, and who brought us to the necessity of retiring from before the strong position of Puebla in 1862. Here is a warning; it is the only one which I would wish to deduce from the past. When faults are past, we can gratify ourselves in enumerating them.

Mention has been made of glory. Yes, the glory of our soldiers covers everything; it covers all faults. But this glory, which never fails us, will ever be the same. In all engagements it has been the same in all ages, since the first day of the French monarchy, since the first Christian king has sat on the throne of France; the French soldier has ever been the same, and unfortunately many administrations, and guilty administrations, have sought to cover their faults with the never-failing *éclat* of the valor and glory of the French soldiers. [Several voices: Good, good.]

Let us come, then, to events subsequent to their victory; let us pass over the antecedents.

H. Ex. Doc. 11—20