

and sentiments which I have described, that policy would probably scatter seeds which would be fruitful of jealousies, which might ultimately ripen into collision between France and the United States and other American republics. An illustration of this danger has occurred already. Political rumor, which is always mischievous, one day ascribes to France a purpose to seize the Rio Grande, and wrest Texas from the United States; another day rumor advises us to look carefully to our safety on the Mississippi; another day we are warned of coalitions to be formed, under French patronage, between the regency established in Mexico and the insurgent cabal at Richmond. The President apprehends none of these things. He does not allow himself to be disturbed by suspicions so unjust to France and so unjustifiable in themselves; but he knows, also, that such suspicions will be entertained more or less extensively by this country, and magnified in other countries equally unfriendly to France and to America; and he knows, also, that it is out of such suspicions that the fatal web of national animosity is most frequently woven. He believes that the Emperor of France must experience desires as earnest as our own for the preservation of that friendship between the two nations which is so full of guarantees of their common prosperity and safety. Thinking this, the President would be wanting in fidelity to France, as well as to our own country, if he did not converse with the Emperor with entire sincerity and friendship upon the attitude which France is to assume in regard to Mexico. The statements made to you by M. Drouyn de Lhuys, concerning the Emperor's intentions, are entirely satisfactory, if we are permitted to assume them as having been authorized to be made by the Emperor in view of the present condition of affairs in Mexico. It is true, as I have before remarked, that the Emperor's purposes may hereafter change with changing circumstances. We, ourselves, however, are not unobservant of the progress of events at home and abroad; and in no case are we likely to neglect such provision for our own safety as every sovereign state must always be prepared to fall back upon when nations with which they have lived in friendship cease to respect their moral and treaty obligations. Your own discretion will be your guide as to how far and in what way the public interests will be promoted, by submitting these views to the consideration of M. Drouyn de l'Huys.

I am, sir, your obedient servant,

WILLIAM H. SEWARD.

WILLIAM L. DAYTON, Esq., &c., &c., &c.

*Mr. Seward to Mr. Dayton.*

No. 410.]

DEPARTMENT OF STATE,  
Washington, October 5, 1863.

SIR: Your despatches of the 14th of September (No. 345) and the 16th of September (No. 347) have been received. Moreover, I have been favored by Mr. Mercier with a visit, and with a reading of the despatch addressed to him by Mr. Drouyn de Lhuys, of which special mention is made in your communications.

The explanations made by you to him are correct, and they are approved. Despatches from this department, which you must have received after writing your own, not only sustain those explanations, but they also draw very distinctly the line of policy towards France which the President has marked out under the counsels of prudence, and the traditional friendship towards her which prevails in the United States. Any statesman who has observed how inflexibly this government adheres to the policy of peace and non-intervention, would not need to be informed that the report of an alliance by us with Russia for

European war is an absurdity. So, also, no one who knows how completely the American people suffer themselves to be absorbed in the duty of suppressing the present unhappy insurrection, and restoring the authority of the Union, would for a moment believe that we are preparing for or meditating a future war against any nation, for any purpose whatever, much less that we are organizing or contemplating a future war against France, whom it is our constant desire to hold and retain as a friend, through all the vicissitudes of political fortune, and all the changes of national life.

I am, sir, your obedient servant,

WILLIAM H. SEWARD.

Hon. WILLIAM L. DAYTON, Esq., &c., &c., &c.

*Mr. Dayton to Mr. Seward.*

[Extract.]

No. 361.]

PARIS, October 9, 1863.

SIR: In the conference with Mr. Drouyn de Lhuys had yesterday, I communicated the general views expressed by you in despatches Nos. 395 and 400.

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I brought out your views, however, in the course of a general conversation about Mexican affairs. I asked of Mr. Drouyn de Lhuys what character of test was to be adopted, with a view to learn the wishes of that country (Mexico) as to its form of government. He said that the vote of the entire country, and of all its departments, whether the French were or were not in their possession, would be taken, and if upon its registries it should appear that a large majority of the whole population (Spanish and Indian) were favorable to a monarchical form of government, he supposed that would be sufficient. He thought there would be no difficulty in applying this test, and showing a large numerical majority in favor of the Archduke, and that form of government.

Mr. Drouyn de Lhuys went on to say, that the dangers of the government of the Archduke would come principally from the United States, and the sooner we showed ourselves satisfied, and manifested a willingness to enter into peaceful relations with that government, the sooner would France be ready to leave Mexico and the new government to take care of itself, which France would, in any event, do as soon as it with propriety could; but that it would not lead or tempt the Archduke into difficulty, and then desert him before his government was settled. He added, that France could not do that. He said, that the early acknowledgment of that government by the United States would tend to shorten, or perhaps, he said, to end all the troublesome complications of France in that country; that they would thereupon quit Mexico.

\* \* \* \* \*

I told him that, without having any authority from my government to say so, I should scarcely suppose that France, under the circumstances, would expect the United States to make haste to acknowledge a new monarchy in Mexico; but I would report his views to the government at home; not suggesting, however, that any answer would be given. In the course of conversation, he took occasion again to repeat, voluntarily, their disclaimer of any purpose to interfere with Texas, or to make or seek any permanent interest or control in Mexico. He said that our situation, as a next neighbor, entitled us to an influence there paramount to that of distant European countries, and that France, at her great distance from the scene, would not be guilty of the folly of desiring or attempt-

ing to interfere with us. He spoke highly of the conduct of Mr. Corwin, our minister in Mexico, who was reported to him as not having intrigued or interfered in these matters, but that he had always acted loyally and in good faith. Before leaving Mr. Drouyn de Lhuys, (assuming the purposes of the Emperor to be as he represented them,) I asked him why he permitted so many false reports, as to his policy, to be circulated both in Europe and America. I told him that it seemed to me the interests of both countries demanded that they should cease, and that a frank avowal in the *Moniteur* would end them. He said there were objections to using the *Moniteur* for such purposes, but that there were his despatches, which might be published. I told him that the world was given to looking at despatches as savoring too much of diplomacy. He then said that the Emperor, at the opening of the "corps legislatif," would have a proper opportunity, and he did not doubt that he would then declare his policy in Mexico, in conformity with the declarations heretofore constantly made to us.

I am, sir, your obedient servant,

WILLIAM L. DAYTON.

Hon. WILLIAM H. SEWARD,  
*Secretary of State.*

*Mr. Seward to Mr. Dayton.*

No. 412.]

DEPARTMENT OF STATE,  
*Washington, October 10, 1863.*

SIR: Your despatch of the 25th of last month, No. 352, describing your proceedings in relation to Mr. Partridge's course respecting French interests at Salvador, has been received and is approved.

I am, sir, your obedient servant,

WILLIAM H. SEWARD.

WILLIAM L. DAYTON, Esq., &c., &c., &c.

*Mr. Seward to Mr. Dayton.*

No. 417.]

DEPARTMENT OF STATE,  
*Washington, October 23, 1863.*

SIR: I have the honor to acknowledge the reception of your despatch of the 9th instant, No. 361, which brings me the views expressed by Mr. Drouyn de Lhuys concerning the situation in Mexico. Various considerations have induced the President to avoid taking any part in the speculative debates bearing on that situation which have been carried on in the capitals of Europe as well as in those of America. A determination to err on the side of strict neutrality, if we err at all, in a war which is carried on between two nations with which the United States are maintaining relations of amity and friendship, was prominent among the considerations to which I have thus referred.

The United States, nevertheless, when invited by France or Mexico, cannot omit to express themselves with perfect frankness upon new incidents, as they occur in the progress of that war. Mr. Drouyn de Lhuys now speaks of an election which he expects to be held in Mexico, and to result in the choice of his Imperial Highness the Prince Maximilian of Austria to be Emperor of Mexico. We learn from other sources that the prince has declared his willingness to accept an imperial throne in Mexico on three conditions, namely: first, that he shall be called to it by the universal suffrage of the Mexican nation; secondly,

that he shall receive indispensable guarantees for the integrity and independence of the proposed empire; and thirdly, that the head of his family, the Emperor of Austria, shall acquiesce.

Referring to these facts, Mr. Drouyn de Lhuys intimates that an early acknowledgment of the proposed empire by the United States would be convenient to France, by relieving her, sooner than might be possible under other circumstances, from her troublesome complications in Mexico.

Happily the French government has not been left uninformed that, in the opinion of the United States, the permanent establishment of a foreign and monarchical government in Mexico will be found neither easy nor desirable. You will inform Mr. Drouyn de Lhuys that this opinion remains unchanged. On the other hand, the United States cannot anticipate the action of the people of Mexico, nor have they the least purpose or desire to interfere with their proceedings, or control or interfere with their free choice, or disturb them in the enjoyment of whatever institutions of government they may, in the exercise of an absolute freedom, establish. It is proper, also, that Mr. Drouyn de Lhuys should be informed that the United States continue to regard Mexico as the theatre of a war which has not yet ended in the subversion of the government long existing there, with which the United States remain in the relation of peace and sincere friendship; and that, for this reason, the United States are not now at liberty to consider the question of recognizing a government which, in the further chances of war, may come into its place. The United States, consistently with their principles, can do no otherwise than leave the destinies of Mexico in the keeping of her own people, and recognize their sovereignty and independence in whatever form they themselves shall choose that this sovereignty and independence shall be manifested.

I am, sir, your obedient servant,

WILLIAM H. SEWARD.

WILLIAM L. DAYTON, Esq., &c., &c., &c.

*Mr. Seward to Mr. Dayton.*

No. 437.]

DEPARTMENT OF STATE,  
*Washington, November 28, 1863.*

SIR: I transmit for your information a copy of a communication of the 23d instant, addressed by this department to Major General Banks, and of an instruction of the same date (No. 88) to Mr. Corwin.

I am, sir, your obedient servant,

WILLIAM H. SEWARD.

WILLIAM L. DAYTON, Esq., &c., &c., &c.

*Mr. Drouyn de Lhuys to Mr. Mercier.*

[Translation.]

No. 21.]

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, DIPLOMATIC DIVISION,  
*Paris, September 15, 1863.*

SIR: Mr. Dayton, who exhibits in his relations with me a great confidence, and a rectitude to which I am pleased to bear testimony, has been moved at certain rumors, propagated with a design which I have not now to inquire into, but which appear lately to have obtained some credit at Paris, and he has come to converse with me about them. According to these reports, too inconsiderately accepted, the Emperor's government has decided to recognize the

States of the south, and a treaty has even been already signed, according to which the new confederacy is to cede to France, either for herself, or that she may make a retrocession of them to Mexico, Texas and a portion of Louisiana.

At the moment in which Mr. Dayton was imparting to me this information, I was exactly in a position to offer him information for information, and, before answering the questions which he addressed me, I asked him if, among the alarming symptoms for the maintenance of the good relations of the two countries, he had not, like myself, received other news, likewise diffused in public, such as, for instance, the transmission by him to me of a protest from his government against our expedition to Mexico and its consequences; the conclusion of an alliance, offensive and defensive, between the United States and Russia; the appearance of a federal fleet before Vera Cruz, &c., &c.

In regard to the protest, after remarking to me that I, better than any one else, knew that he had not transmitted to me any, Mr. Dayton said to me that, under the promptings of the general tenor of the correspondence of Mr. Seward, and of the knowledge which he himself had of the inclinations of his fellow-citizens, he had been able to speak to me of the painful impression produced on public opinion in his country by the preponderant intervention of a European power in an American republic, and by the creation of a monarchical establishment in a country adjacent to the United States; but that from that to a protest, or to any intention whatever of comminatory intermeddling, was very far, and that nothing in his instructions authorized him to overleap that distance. He knew nothing, on the other hand, of the alleged alliance of his government with Russia, and he had every reason to disbelieve it. As to the presence of a federal fleet before Vera Cruz, this news did not seem to him even to merit the honor of a contradiction.

I told Mr. Dayton that I had never attached any importance to the reports which I had pointed out to him, and that, in speaking to him of them, my object was much less to call forth explanations on his part, than to warn him against rumors of a different character; but having probably the same origin of which he had spoken to me, I could, however, contradict them categorically. In regard to the recognition of the States of the south, the intentions of the Emperor's government were known to him, and this question was still at the point where our late conversations had left him. We had not, therefore, recognized the south, and, much more, we had not signed with it any treaty for the cession of Louisiana and Texas. With respect to this, I could repeat to him, what I had so often said to him already, that we neither sought for ourselves, nor for others, any acquisition in America. I added that I trusted that the good sense of the people of the United States would do justice to exaggerations and false suppositions, by the aid of which it was endeavored to mislead and sour public opinion; and that I relied on his co-operation in trying to render prevalent a more equitable appreciation of our intentions and of the necessities which our policy obeyed.

I have thought, sir, that it was well that you should be informed of the particulars of this conversation, in order that you might, on your part, communicate it to Mr. Seward, and receive the precise words of it, in order to rectify around you false opinions and unjustifiable anticipations.

Accept, sir, assurances of my high consideration.

DROUYN DE LHUYS.

Mr. MERCIER,  
Minister of the Emperor at Washington, D. C.

Mr. Pike to Mr. Seward.

[Extracts.]

No. 97.]

UNITED STATES LEGATION,  
The Hague, August 19, 1863.

SIR: I have had the honor to receive your despatch of July 24, (No. 111.)

Two weeks' digestion of the news from America results in no revival of hopes on this side for the rebellion. The partisans of the south seem discouraged and disheartened. The only pretence they raise, to mitigate the extremity of the situation, is the allegation that their case has seemed equally desperate before. The argument does not arrest the fall of their sinking fortunes on the exchange. Their favorite cotton loan, so lately above par, is down to 70. The complete break down of the financial system of the insurgents, demonstrated by the fall of their paper currency to 10 cents on the dollar, has, perhaps, more weight attached to it here than in the United States. It is regarded as indicating a near relapse. Dispassionate observers fail to see how the resources of the rebel government are to be replenished, or their finances even nominally administered. The melting away of its armies, from internal weakness, alone seems thus inevitable.

But beyond this, the clearing out of the Mississippi river, if its approaches be properly guarded against any sudden descent of armed iron-clads from Europe, is viewed as a fatal grip at the throat of the rebellion. The events occurring in Mexico make New Orleans looked upon more than ever as the key of our empire. Its original capture was considered in Europe a deadly blow to the insurrection. The conviction was and is that it should be made impregnable to attack by sea, which seems easy enough; the hostile action of no power in the Gulf need be feared. But should this safeguard be neglected, we might find our dear-bought triumphs suddenly brought to a disastrous termination. Our enemies tried to find consolation in the hope that we shall be less prudent to secure than we have been energetic to conquer.

That we must look to ultimate collision in that quarter with foreign powers, the action of France in Mexico does not seem to allow us to doubt.

As I took occasion to observe some months ago (I believe you thought prematurely) the cotton question is ended in Europe. We have entirely gone by that danger. Cotton is abundant. The only disturbing fact that remains is that the price is so high that manufacturers decline to spin and weave on the old scale. Distress is again setting into the manufacturing districts, but the disorder and suffering is, to a great extent, compensated by the excellent harvest which almost everywhere prevails.

Now, therefore, as heretofore, I believe we are to be unmolested from abroad. If we can furnish the troops necessary to follow up our recent great successes triumphantly, we shall have a glorious issue from our trials. Viewed at this distance, the prospects of the country have never seemed so encouraging.

I have the honor to be, with great respect, your most obedient servant.

JAMES S. PIKE.

Hon. WILLIAM H. SEWARD,  
Secretary of State, &c.

Mr. Pike to Mr. Seward.

[Extract.]

No. 99.]

UNITED STATES LEGATION,  
The Hague, September 2, 1863.

SIR: I have to acknowledge the receipt of your despatch of the 13th of August, (No. 115,) and your circular despatch of the 12th of the same month,

with an accompanying map, giving an exposition of the military situation; all of which are attentively considered.

Political affairs are comparatively quiet.

The conference of German sovereigns at Frankfort has ended; with what success in the main purpose of consolidating their power against France remains to be seen. England approves and encourages the movement. France throws cold water on the proceedings, notwithstanding the real object of the conference is veiled under other pretences.

Some of the French journals are engaged in the effort to show that the United States have no cause of hostility to the effort to establish an empire upon the ruins of Mexican independence. The argument proceeds upon the assumption that France does not desire to do any offensive political act towards the United States, and so far intimates inactivity upon the question of recognition.

It seems to be reduced to a certainty that the Polish question will not disturb the peace of Europe. Russia claims that the rebellion is exhausted.

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I have the honor to be, with great respect, your most obedient servant,  
JAMES S. PIKE.

Hon. WILLIAM H. SEWARD,  
*Secretary of State, Washington.*

*Mr. Seward to Mr. Pike.*

No. 118.]

DEPARTMENT OF STATE,  
*Washington, September 5, 1863.*

SIR: Your despatch of August 19 (No. 97) has been carefully considered.

What you have noticed in Europe, in regard to the political aspects of the insurrection here, has been equally observable here during the period which you have mentioned. No fortunate military incident has occurred to revive the hopes of the insurgents, while Union sieges and marches have gone on favorably. The insurgents have burned much and lost more of the cotton that they had pledged to European creditors, while the price of gold in their currency has risen, within two months, from 1,000 per cent. to 1,600 per cent., which is the last reported rate. The insurgent financiers last winter adopted wheat instead of gold for the standard of values, and fixed that of wheat, if I remember rightly, at five dollars per bushel. It is now reported that the farmer refuses to thresh his wheat, and the government agents are considering whether the power to appropriate at five dollars does not also include the necessary preliminary power to thresh the grain.

You have rightly assumed that the safe occupation of New Orleans, so long as it is maintained, is sufficient guarantee for the success of the government. We are, however, not without some concern on that subject; for, in the first place, we have no clearly reliable assurances that the British government will prevent the departure of the iron rams, which are being prepared in British ship yards, for that or some similar purpose. And next, notwithstanding the great energy of the Navy Department, it has not yet brought out the vessels upon which we can confidently rely for adequate defence against such an enterprise. Nevertheless, Mr. Adams is making the best possible efforts with reference to the first point, and our naval means, which certainly are neither small nor inefficient, are rapidly increasing. Your observations on this subject are so sagacious that I have thought it proper to commend them to the special attention of the Navy Department.

I thank you for the account you have given me of public opinion in Europe in regard to the condition of Mexico and its bearing on the interests of the United States. Public opinion is not embarrassed by a want of accurate knowledge of existing facts. It anticipates and assumes probable events, and thus the imagination early arrives at, and is satisfied with, premature solutions; from Mexico we have nothing in regard to the attitude or proceedings of the republican government since it withdrew before the invaders to San Luis; from France nothing in regard to the question of a new government, but reiterated assurances of an absence of any design to permanently occupy or dominate in Mexico; and from Austria, only the speculations of the press upon a condition of affairs in Mexico, too imperfectly developed to justify any decisive action by the alleged candidate for an imperial crown.

In these circumstances we see no occasion for extreme sensibility or for immediate demonstration. Mr. Corwin cannot, of course, communicate with the authorities newly instituted in the city of Mexico, while he is shut out from access to the republican one to which he is accredited. That government may, for aught we know, maintain an effectual resistance to the new one, or, on the other hand, it may even succumb. Such a resistance would relieve the people of all difficulties, while, on the other hand, it would be as unreasonable as it would be unavailing to seek to rescue a people that should voluntarily surrender itself to foreign control. The new government, if it succeeds, may respect the sovereignty and all the rights of the United States, and so give us no cause of complaint or dissatisfaction. Our opinions as to the ultimate and permanent success of an European intervention in Mexico were early expressed by way of anticipation. Until we recall them no presumption that they are abandoned can arise. But we see now, instead of a whole and normal Mexico on our southern border, a Mexico divided between Mexicans and the French. We do not know how this new condition of things might sooner or later affect the authority of the United States in Texas. Independently of that consideration, the time has arrived when that authority ought to be, and, as we think, can be, restored in that important border State, and this will be done.

I am, sir, your obedient servant,

WILLIAM H. SEWARD.

JAMES S. PIKE, Esq., &c., &c., &c.

*Mr. Seward to Mr. Perry.*

No. 10.]

DEPARTMENT OF STATE,  
*Washington, September 21, 1863.*

SIR: Your despatch of August 26 (No. 110) has been received. The general views of the United States concerning the interests of society and government in Mexico, and on this continent, have been heretofore fully made known to all parties who officially expressed to us any concern on that subject. While adhering to these views, the President does not perceive any necessity for entering at present into the European debates which have arisen out of the changing phases of the war with France against Mexico. You will be promptly advised if it shall be deemed important to enter into explanations on that subject with the cabinet of Madrid.

I am, sir, your obedient servant,

WILLIAM H. SEWARD.

HORATIO J. PERRY, Esq., &c., &c., &c., *Madrid.*

*Mr. Motley to Mr. Seward.*

No. 31.]

LEGATION OF THE UNITED STATES,  
Vienna, August 17, 1863.

SIR: So soon as the news of the proclamation of the empire in Mexico, together with the offer of the imperial crown to the Archduke Ferdinand Maximilian, reached Vienna, I requested an interview with Count Rechberg.

I saw the minister accordingly on the 11th August. As he was to leave next day for Frankfort to attend the conference at the diet of sovereigns, and as many other members of the diplomatic corps were waiting to see him, the interview was necessarily very brief; I merely begged him to inform me what was authentically known to him in regard to the Mexican affair.

He replied that the intelligence received by the government was hardly in an authentic shape. He said: We do not consider our situation essentially altered. We are not prepared to take action on what may prove to be an ephemeral demonstration. We regard all that is reported concerning the whole affair—so far as relates to his Imperial Highness—as not having occurred; (*comme non venu* was his expression, the conversation being in French.) I asked if he considered it true that a deputation was on the way from Mexico to offer the crown to the archduke. He replied that it was possible, but that it was very doubtful whether such a deputation would be received.

I asked if it was true that a telegram had been sent by the Emperor Napoleon congratulating the archduke on the news. He said yes; but that, from the tenor of the telegram, the Emperor Napoleon did not appear to attach much weight to the intelligence.

Under such circumstances, I said it was useless to ask whether any decision had been taken in regard to the offer, as such a question had already been answered in the negative by what he had already said.

He replied, "of course;" and I then took my leave, saying that I only wished to know the exact position of the affair up to the present moment.

I beg to be informed, at your earliest convenience, what language you wish me officially to hold on this very important subject. The recent conquest of Mexico by France seems to me fraught with future woe to our whole continent; but I cannot think it desirable, in the present condition of our own affairs, that we should hasten the evil day by taking any part in that most unhappy adventure.

It is generally supposed that the Archduke Maximilian is desirous of accepting the crown of Mexico, but I am not aware that there are many persons in this empire who regard the project with favor. It certainly is an unpopular one with all classes of society, so far as I have been able to observe.

The language of the press is, in some cases, guarded, but in general decidedly hostile on the subject.

As a specimen of Vienna journalism in this matter, I send you a translation of a portion of an article from a widely circulated journal, *Die Presse*. The tone, although bold and bitter, is not exceptionably so.

I have the honor, sir, to remain your obedient servant,

J. LOTHROP MOTLEY.

HON. WILLIAM H. SEWARD,  
Secretary of State, Washington.

[Extract from the *Presse* of August 11, 1863.]

"The journals of Paris announce to-day that the Emperor and Empress have already sent congratulations by telegraph to the Archduke Ferdinand Maximilian, on the imperial Mexican dignity which has been offered to him. Well, they may think it a piece of good fortune—and

they may have their reasons for it—to obtain possession of a crown in such a way in a country like Mexico. We, however, believe that we are a faithful organ of the opinion of the Austrian people when we say, without concealment, that the acceptance of the crown by the Archduke Ferdinand Maximilian would not be looked upon by any of them as a piece of good fortune, but, on the contrary, they would look upon it as an evil destiny. An evil destiny, we say, for it would be nothing else if an Austrian prince should ever seriously think of accepting a crown from the hands of a Napoleon. In the deepest humiliation of Germany by the forcible dominion of Napoleon I, we find nothing similar to this; and shall constitutional Austria bear to-day what absolute Austria was too proud to endure? And what sort of a crown is it? Without any plausible reason, treading under foot those liberties of the people of which they are always speaking, the French soldiers have broken into Mexico, and, after shedding streams of blood, they have occupied the Mexican capital, followed by the curses of a people hitherto proud of its independence. And shall a crown of tears and blood, conquered in this forcible manner, be placed upon the head of a prince of constitutional Austria, perhaps as an indemnity for the pearl which in 1859 was broken from Austria's crown, or as a present to keep us unharmed in case of future occurrences of a similar kind? The more we lose ourselves in speculations of this kind, the more impossible, adventurous, unacceptable, and monstrous, this proposed attention of the court of Napoleon to Austria appears to us. Have those who play with the thoughts of wrapping themselves in the purple mantle of an Aztec emperor already reflected on the political consequences which would follow Austria's acceptance of this imperial crown? Have they painted to themselves the wretched, dependent relation, the vassalage in which Austria—even assuming that there is no thought of compensation at the bottom of the French offer—that it is dictated by the purest unselfishness—will find itself in regard to Napoleonic France by accepting the Mexican throne? Is Archduke Maximilian, in Mexico, to be the counterpart to King George of Greece, with only the difference that before his throne French soldiers would keep watch, as the king's crown in Athens would be protected by those of England? And even if it should be decided to give the new Emperor of Mexico an Austrian corps as an escort, has the cost of this scheme been already counted? What in the name of Heaven has Austria to do in this Mexican galley? It would be bound and exposed to France on all sides for this present of the Danaides, and particularly in regard to Poland it would be made lame and impotent in its political action; it would afford France a pretext for occupying Mexico, as the Pope affords a pretext for occupying Rome; it will have engaged its honor for specific French speculations, without satisfying a single reasonable interest. We already see the moment when the Cabinet of Washington, fortified by the Monroe doctrine, by the alliance of the states of Central and South America, and by the enormous military resources which the end of the civil war will leave at its disposition, shall call upon the French in Mexico to leave a continent on which they have no business and no right to command. Shall Austria, then, make war in company with France upon America to uphold and occupy a problematical throne in Mexico? That would be the height of the adventurous, and Austria would have then no alternative than that of a shameful fiasco or that of a vassalage, which would absorb its best powers for the interests of France. Even if the thought of ruling the old empire of the Aztecs should not be devoid of poetic charm to a romantic character, we believe that the times have gone by when such caprices are sufficient to compromise the policy of great states and to throw them into endless complications. And so we still hope that the answer of Austria to the proposition of the Mexican asamblea, received by way of Paris, will, this time, be a decided negative, and that once for all an end will be put to an intrigue which has no other aim than to shift the ignominy of the Mexican expedition—that attack on an independent people—from the shoulders of France on those of Austria, and to cover the gulf of the dirty speculations of the banker Jecker and his worthy associates in France and Mexico with the brilliant name of an Austrian prince."

*Mr. Seward to Mr. Motley.*

No. 41.]

DEPARTMENT OF STATE,  
Washington, September 11, 1863.

SIR: Your despatch of August 17 (No. 31) has been received.

When France made war against Mexico, we asked of France explanations of her objects and purposes. She answered, that it was a war for the redress of grievances; that she did not intend to permanently occupy or dominate in Mexico, and that she should leave to the people of Mexico a free choice of institutions of government. Under these circumstances the United States adopted, and they have since maintained, entire neutrality between the belligerents, in harmony with the traditional policy in regard to foreign wars.