

THE OKA QUESTION.

IMPORTANT LETTERS

The Spectator is decidedly radical in the manner with which it deals with the Oka Question. It thinks that if the Seminary of St. Sulpice was "spoiled and disestablished" it would be the best thing that could happen. It acknowledges indeed that the Seminary has some right to the land at Oka, but it declares that it also has obligations as well. It is all a fight between has and had. Sometime since the mouthpieces of the "Civil Rights Alliance" declared that the land belonged to the Indians; now they admit that that was a mistake, and that the land belongs to the Seminary, but that the Indians have certain privileges, &c., &c. The Spectator and Dr. Beers, to whose energy the Indians owe their protracted and useless struggle—champion the Civil Rights Alliance, and the Minister of Finance, champions the Seminary. The Civil Rights Alliance, say the Indians had rights, but that they forfeited them when they ceased to be Catholics. In order to place both sides of the question before our readers, we give the letter of the Deputy Minister of the Interior, and a reply written by Dr. Beers, who is perhaps the ablest champion the Oka Indians have. The Deputy Minister of the Interior writing to the Indian agent at Oka says:—

THE OKA INDIANS.

A STRANGE GOVERNMENT DOCUMENT.

OTTAWA, March 23rd, 1878.

Sir,—I am directed by the Superintendent-General of Indian Affairs to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 15th instant, communicating the effect of a conversation you had with the Rev. Mr. Borland, a member of the Civil Rights Alliance of Montreal, with respect to the proposition of the Department to remove the Indians of Oka to Cockburn Island, and enclosing a written statement by Mr. Borland of his views on the subject.

The Department have gone into the whole history of the Oka Indian matter, have read and carefully considered all that Mr. Borland and other friends of the Indians have advanced on the subject and have taken the best possible legal advice, that advice has uniformly been that the Indians have no legal title to the soil, that the gentlemen of the Seminary are not trustees for the Indians but absolute proprietors of the land, and that no suit against the Seminary with a view to obtain possession of the property for the Indians could be successful. The Department, therefore, cannot accept Mr. Borland's opinion in a legal question as against the opinion of the first lawyers in the country.

More than two years ago Mr. Borland and those associated with him were given an opportunity of bringing a test case before the courts, but up to the present moment they have neglected or at least failed to do so, leaving the Department to draw the obvious inference that their counsel is not of opinion in a legal question as against the opinion of the first lawyers in the country.

More than two years ago Mr. Borland and those associated with him were given an opportunity of bringing a test case before the courts, but up to the present moment they have neglected or at least failed to do so, leaving the Department to draw the obvious inference that their counsel is not of opinion such a suit would succeed. It is therefore no action resting upon anybody on account of no action having been taken, it is not certainly upon the Department. From advice given by counsel who have considered every phase of the question with the utmost care, and who brought to their work ability of the highest order, the Department is convinced that the only result of taking the case into court would be to confirm the Seminary in what they claim to be their rights. I need scarcely say that in that event the Indians would receive nothing. The Seminary offer the Indians twenty thousand dollars at present for any rights they may have, if they will move altogether from the seigniory.

The Department believe it in the interest of all parties to the dispute, and especially in the interest of the Indians, that all causes of difficulty and difference should be removed, and have therefore earnestly pressed upon the chiefs and leading men of the band the desirability of accepting the offer of the Seminary. The Superintendent-General has not been informed what those who interfere between the Indians and the Department propose to do in case a suit is brought and the result is unfavourable to the Indians an amount equal to that which the gentlemen of the Seminary now offer? Are they prepared to give some satisfactory assurance that the Indians should they prefer their advice to the advice of the Government, are not going to lose by doing so? These are considerations upon themselves the onerous responsibility of urging the Indians to disregard the advice of the Government, and refuse to entertain the propositions which have been made to them.

If an early and favourable conclusion to these negotiations is not arrived at, it is the intention of the Department to withdraw their Agent from the seigniory and leave those who have interfered to prevent the Government from exercising successfully their good offices with the Indians the responsibility of any difficulty which may arise in consequence. It would be well that the Indians, Mr. Borland and all concerned should know that the gentlemen of the Seminary renewed their offer with a great deal of reluctance, and that it will be open for acceptance for but a limited period.

As to the points raised in the resume of the conclusions arrived at by the committees of the Civil Rights Alliance and the Methodist Church, which Mr. Borland recites, the Superintendent-General directs me to say:—

1st. That very serious objections have been raised by some of the people of the Manitoulin Islands to that locality being selected for the Oka Indians; but even were this not the case, the Department considered Cockburn Island the best suited and at the same time the most available for the purpose of an Indian Settlement.

2. In discussing what the Government would or would not do for the Indians in case of their removal as proposed, it must be borne in mind that the Indians are not nor is it desirable to make them pensioners upon the country. The Government and the Department are merely trustees to administer the property of the Indians as may be thought best for the Indians themselves. There is no fund in the possession of the Government belonging to the Oka Indians, and beyond administering these funds and seeing that no injustice is done them it has not been the practice to go. (Their personal wants must be met by their own industry and by Provincial and Municipal authorities.

3. It will at once be apparent to Mr. Borland that the erection of a church and parsonage by the Government is something entirely at variance with

the well settled policy of the Department something which must in this case and every other be left for the churches and religious organizations interested in the spiritual welfare of the Indians to accomplish.

4th. Of course it would be necessary to defray the cost of whatever lands on Cockburn Island was purchased for the Indians, out of the sum offered by the Seminary. These lands have recently been surrendered by another band of Indians, and the proceeds of any sale which takes place goes to the credit of the fund which the Department administers in their behalf.

The department have no means of purchasing these or any other lands for the Oka band other than such as the amount given by the Seminary in consideration for their removal may afford; but the price of the lands on Cockburn Island is so small, only fifty cents an acre, that the expenditure would be quite inconsiderable.

5th. In conclusion I am to say that the Superintendent-General in his capacity as Trustee for the Indians, in case the proposition he has made to them is accepted, would arrange all minor details connected with their removal, respecting which Mr. Borland makes inquiry, as he might find it best in their interest.

I am, Sir, Your Obedient Servant (Signed) E. A. MERRITT, Deputy Minister of Finance.

John McGill, Esq., Indian Agent, Oka, P. Q. To that letter Dr. Beers as Secretary pro tem to the Civil Rights Alliance sent the following reply.

ANSWER OF THE CIVIL RIGHTS ALLIANCE TO THE GOVERNMENT.

MONTREAL, 23rd April, 1878. DEAR SIR,—As the legal defence of the Oka Indians, and the settlement of the questions between them and the Seminary of St. Sulpice have been transferred from the Methodist Church to the Civil Rights Alliance, the letter from the Department of the Interior of the 23rd ult., respecting certain proposals made by the Seminary of St. Sulpice had to be submitted to the council. The Civil Rights Alliance is composed of all political and religious creeds, organized to secure the civil and religious rights of any creed or class, and is not a body to "interfere between the Government and the Indians."

The Council of the Alliance regrets that the letter of the Minister of the Interior is a plea in defence of the Seminary, containing not only an undignified threat as to the removal of the agent placed in Oka, but a further retraction of concessions proffered by the Government. The Alliance has no political or religious animus. It simply seeks to secure certain rights for a people to whom these rights were given, and which rights were recognized for over a century by the very corporation which now aims to reject them. The questions between the Oka Indians and the Seminary of St. Sulpice are not mere questions of sentiment, but of momentous fact and inalienable legal claims. It may have happened, that in the multitude of advisers, voluntary and even official, who have persistently urged the Government to do justice between these claimants, that some conflicting opinions have obtained, as to the real claims and demands of the Indians.

It does not appear that "the best possible legal advice" taken by Government, has been directed to the real question at issue, inasmuch as the letter of the Minister of the Interior declares that this legal advice "has uniformly been that the Indians have no legal title to the soil, that the Gentlemen of the Seminary are not trustees for the Indians, but absolute proprietors of the land, and that no suit against the Seminary to obtain possession of the property for the Indians could be successful." Eminent legal gentlemen have given the opinion that the titles under which the Seminary claim an absolute ownership of the seigniories, destroy instead of establishing their claim; that the ordinance of the Special Council of 1840, merely confirmed the original grants with the same obligations; that the Act abolishing the Seigneurial Tenure put the Seigniories under the common law, as it did the Seignory of Sault Ste. Louis, the abolition being for the Indians respectively, who should receive the constituted rent in lieu of cens et rentes, and the indemnity for the abolition of fods et ventes, or the interest of the capital set apart for such indemnity. The 16th section of the ordinance in question (3 and 4 Vict., cap. 30, now cap 42 of the Consolidated Statutes of Lower Canada), preserves the rights of the Indians. "Nothing in this Act or in the ordinance aforesaid contained, shall extend to destroy, diminish, or in any manner to affect, the rights and privileges of the Crown, or of any person or persons, society or corporate body, excepting such only as this Act and the said ordinance expressly and specially destroys, diminishes or affects."

Yet this is not the present question between the Oka and the Seminary, and no such desire has been officially expressed to the Government by this Alliance, as the dispossession of the gentlemen of the Seminary, and the installation of the Indians as absolute proprietors. It seems evident that the legal advice taken by Government has been directed to an issue not now in question, and one likely to prejudice public opinion against the interests and real claims of the Oka.

The simple questions are these: 1st. Has the Seminary of St. Sulpice obligations to fulfil towards the Indians? 2nd. What are these obligations? 3rd. Will the Government or the courts compel the Seminary to fulfil them? The Minister of the Interior will perceive that the legal advice received by his Department, as expressed in his letter of the 23rd ult., has no bearing at all upon these questions, and that much of the argument contained in his letter, therefore, fails to meet the real issue.

The Alliance recognizes the fact that the Act of 1840 confirmed certain claims of the Seminary. It does not, however, recognize any revocation of the obligations imposed upon the Seminary by the concessions of the King of France. It rather sees therein an explicit confirmation of these obligations. To satisfy the Minister of the Interior that this position is tenable and just, it would fix his attention upon a few undeniable facts. 1st. The Act of 1837-38, which sought to confirm the Seminary as absolute owners with no obligations to the Indians was disallowed by the Crown. 2nd. The Act of 1840 was only allowed by the Crown because it contained the very obligations towards the Indians and others which the disallowed Act was made to evade. 3rd. Until within the last forty years or thereabouts, the gentlemen of the Seminary faithfully fulfilled the obligations this Alliance now seeks to have continued, to wit: Erecting house and home for the people, or at least permitting them to erect house and home for themselves with timber from the seigniories; prosecuting in the name of and as the guardians of the Indians, trespassers who cut wood on the lands; permitting the people to cut what wood they require for fuel or building purposes, as well as for the small industries upon which much of their existence depends; providing means for moral and religious instruction, and acting in every sense as Trustees.

Attention is requested to the admissions of the Rev. T. A. Baile, Superior of the Seminary, in his letter of the 12th October, 1868 (Parliamentary Return, Third Session, First Parliament, 33 Vict., 1878, page 13), in which he says, "We allow them to take what wood they require for building purposes or for firewood, but we do not allow them to sell it." Also his reiterated statement on page 23, same Return. "If they want any firewood or timber for building purposes, we

allow them to have it." "We have but a few places capable of being converted into canoes: when the Indians require any, we allow them to take them, but on the condition that they will not sell them. In general we cut wood on the lands reserved for the Indians at their demand only, either to enlarge their fields or to make new ones; and if sometimes we have cut some without consulting them, it was on unoccupied or deserted lands." Again on page 36, in a letter dated 26th February, 1870, he repeats, "The Seminary has always allowed the Indians of the Lake to take firewood in the forest for their own use. They have also been allowed, when asked for, to take timber for building purposes." Again in the "Historical Notice" of the question published in 1876 under the names of the present Cure of Oka and the advocate of the Seminary, pages 17 and 26 the admissions are made: "Each head of a family of these tribes of Indians has had permission to take in the Domain of the Seminary all the wood necessary for building and heating purposes."

If these statements were at all correct, one of the most serious grievances of the Indians could or would have had no existence. But they are directly contradicted by the plain facts that in every instance where the Indians have attempted to cut wood for these purposes, the Seminary has invariably caused their arrest and prosecution since they have seen fit to change their creed. It has also been stated that permission had to be asked from the forest-keepers; but this is a fact, known to residents of the Seigniories that these forest-keepers were solely appointed for the purpose of keeping the French population at the rear of the domain from cutting wood. They never interfered with the Indians until within the last eight or ten years, but frequently arrested French residents for trespass and cutting wood. It is also wholly incorrect that since the Indians have changed their creed they have been allowed to cut wood: The residence of the Methodist Missionary, owned by an Indian, had to be repaired with lumber bought by private gentlemen; many houses are badly in want of repair and the Seminary will not let the people cut wood for this purpose; houses have fallen into decay from age, and hundreds of the Indians and their families have been obliged to leave Oka for want of house and home, and are now residents in various parts of Quebec and Ontario. Several families are crowded into small dwellings for want of sufficient houses. The necessary firewood has only been obtained by purchase, and by using decayed stumps found on the lands or canoes from across the Lake. These matters are here enlarged upon to show the Department of the Interior, that the statements made by the Rev. Mr. Baile are utterly disproved by facts; and that in no instance have the Protestant Indians of Oka enjoyed the ancient privileges, which have been continued uninterrupted to the few Indians on the Seignory who are Roman Catholics.

The Alliance and its advocates do not consider that the Government has any such relations with the Oka as with other Indian bands. The Seminary of St. Sulpice voluntarily assumed the same direct Trusteeship of these Indians and the lands, which the Government now occupy towards other Indian bands. Proof of this is apparent from the statements in the letter of the Minister of the Interior, that "there is no fund in the possession of the Government belonging to the Oka Indians;" and that "the Department have no means of purchasing these or any other lands from the Oka band, other than such as the amount given by the Seminary."

The Oka occupy a peculiar legal position by no fault of their own. The Seminary petitioned the King of France in 1717 for the Seignory of the Lake "as a Mission to these Indians," plainly expressing the desire to secure it for "the advantage of the Indian Mission, not only because of the conversion of the Indians, who being further from the city would be beyond the danger of becoming drunkards, but also to the colony, which in this way would be protected from the incursions of the Iroquois in time of war." It must be remembered that when England took possession of this country this band of Indians were then under the guardianship and special care of the Seminary of St. Sulpice on the very seignory where they still remain; and that from that period till the confirmation of the Seminary Title in 1840, the highest legal opinions held that the estates of the Seminary were being illegally having become by the capitulation of the property of the Crown. It was no fault of the Indians if they were placed by old legislation in this peculiar position, and left by the ordinance of 1840 under the Seminary trusteeship instead of exclusively Government control. In fact, the Crown is directly responsible for this peculiar relationship as it disallowed the Act of 1837-38, by which the Seminary tried to get rid of their obligations to the Indians, and put their care upon the Crown.

The plain reason therefore why the Government has no fund belonging to the Oka is that the Seminary of St. Sulpice hold and have always held this fund in trust; have held the position towards the Indians for over two hundred years, one hundred and sixty of which have been in Oka. The Government occupy a certain relation towards the Cahnawaga, St. Regis and other Indian bands, which gives it the exclusive control of these Indian funds. The Seminary of St. Sulpice, by the original deeds of concession and the ordinance of 1840, occupy a similar relation towards these Oka, which has given it the exclusive control of the funds belonging to the Oka.

The Seminary maintain that the Oka have no legal rights in Oka; that they are a tolerant people. Government seems to confirm this view. Now if the Oka have no legal rights in the Seignory there clearly they have no rights anywhere else. Thus they are placed in an inferior and anomalous position, which no other band of Indians occupy. If the ordinance of 1840 was meant to alienate the Indians rights, it was a wrong and an injustice which no Government had or has a legal power to perpetuate, and for which Government must be held responsible. Nothing is clearer, however, from the original deeds of concession, as well as from the petitions presented to the French King by the Seminary, than that these Indians were specially chosen for special instruction and care, as well as a special defence of the Island of Montreal from Iroquois invasions. The letter of the Minister of the Interior declares that the Government "has no funds belonging to the Oka Indians," and has no means of purchasing land for them. Supposing now, as the letter of the Department intimates, that in the event of the refusal of the Oka to accept a money inducement from the Seminary to leave the Seignory, and they are ultimately forced to do so by the same circumstance of annoyance and restriction which have forced hundreds of others to leave, and then there is "no fund forthcoming," does the Department of the Interior wish it to be understood that the Government has no fund to do for these Indians which it has done and is doing for others?

Does the Department intimate that by withdrawing its agent at Oka, and leaving the responsibility of the consequences to the friends of the Indians, that it is willing to expose the Oka to the annoyances and open persecutions they have endured for so many years? This must inevitably follow, and the Alliance urges the Minister of the Interior to reconsider the position in which these people would then be placed—one dangerous to the peace and prosperity of the country.

In regard to the Test Case, said in the letter of the Minister of the Interior to have been offered in the interest of the Indians, the offer was made by the previous Government, but no case has been secured under which the questions at issue could be tested, and the Seminary has refused to agree to such a case as will make this possible. It has been

the constant aim of the advisers of the Indians to obtain a legal settlement of the difficulty, but the Seminary has systematically resisted every effort to bring a proper test case before the Courts, by harassing the Indians by criminal proceedings and arrests, without ever yet having secured a verdict,—these arrests having been almost exclusively for attempting to exercise the privilege of cutting wood, which the Rev. Mr. Baile declares they "have always been allowed to exercise."

No such judicial opinion has been solicited as that expressed in the letter of the Minister of the Interior, viz: that "the Department is convinced that the only result of taking the case into Court would be to confirm the Seminary in what they claim to be their rights," and "that in that event the Indians would receive nothing." This, it seems to us, is the jurisdiction of the Courts to decide, and it is the earnest desire of the Alliance that if no fair settlement can otherwise be made, such a test case be entered in the Courts by Government as will finally settle the disputed points. It does not appear to us probable that if the Seminary believed the Oka "have no legal rights," they would offer them even \$20,000 "for what rights they may have."

In the consideration of the proposal to give the Indians \$20,000, the fact stated in the letter of the Minister of the Interior that "out of this sum lands would have to be purchased for the Indians elsewhere," at once renders such a compromise impossible. The fact, too, that Cockburn Island has been deserted by less civilized Indians is certainly no inducement for the Oka to remove there. The letter of the Department speaks strongly in the interests of the Seminary. It offers very poor encouragement to the Indians. Removal under such circumstances would reduce these Indians to the condition of pauperism, which the Department says it is undesirable should occur. Not only is the sum offered wholly inadequate, but the Alliance speaks the earnest desire of the Indians themselves, and speaks it authoritatively, that they be secured on the lands where they have lived so long, the rights they claim, and previously enjoyed undisturbed.

The Alliance is unaware that any hint of making the Oka "pensioners upon the country" has been made by their friends. Societies by the hundred for the relief of the poor of enfranchised communities are necessary; yet the relief which it has been found necessary to extend to the Oka, has been solely in consequence of the certainty by the Seminary of the privileges and rights they always previously enjoyed to maintain themselves. The people were independent of charity until the Seminary infringed upon their rights. Government has been frequently solicited to relieve communities of white people. Whatever the faults of the Indians may be—and they bear no comparison to those of the more privileged pale face public—an Indian mendicant among the Oka has not been known within the last eight or ten years. In their present distress they have suffered without themselves soliciting aid.

It would be a cruel blow to the interests of the Indians to remove the Agent appointed by the Department. The Alliance is fully satisfied that his presence alone has tended to peace, and is confident that his personal observation and inquiry will convince the Government, that the reports and statements made by the Alliance are fully borne out by facts; and that statements prejudicial to the conduct of the Indians are unworthy of belief. The Alliance would rather suggest that in the interval of the settlement of these questions, the Agent now at Oka, who has evidently familiarized himself with both sides, be given higher discretionary powers, so as to secure to the Indians the acknowledged right to cut what wood they require for building and heating purposes. A serious grievance would thus be removed. The Minister of the Interior will see, that if the Seminary is sincere in its expressions, as represented by the Rev. Mr. Baile, a simple plan is here presented to prove it, and one to which it is hoped the Seminary will consent.

In reply to the questions in the letter of the Minister of the Interior, as to "whether the gentlemen who are interfering between the Government and the Indians are prepared to guarantee that the Indians will not lose by rejecting the offer of the Seminary," &c., the Alliance is satisfied, from the statements of the Indians themselves, that if they are secured in the rights they enjoy for over a hundred years, and are not persecuted by the Seminary for daring to change their religious creed, their content and material progress will be almost a certainty.

The Alliance would gladly see the Government relieved from anxiety in this whole matter, and will second any fair and reasonable effort to this end. The "personal wants" of the Indians will be secured by themselves once they are allowed to live and labour undisturbed. Responsible gentlemen are willing to try experiments to promote the social and material progress of this special band,—experiments which will cost the Government nothing, and be of deep interest to the Department of the Interior. It is desirable to engage them in various branches of mechanical industry, for which they have shown special capacity.—To accomplish this, it is necessary to secure the civil and religious rights of the people, the safety of capital invested, and the retention of the band in their present convenient proximity to the metropolis. No movement is made by this Association on their behalf without first consulting the Chiefs and obtaining their approval. The Alliance would feel it a deep injustice and wrong, were the Oka to be left to their own untutored opinion, in a dispute with a rich and talented body of gentlemen like the Seminary of St. Sulpice, and its advocates, more especially as the Department of the Interior seems disposed to deny that the Oka have any legal rights in the Seminary.

The Alliance would respectfully suggest and urge the appointment of a commission composed of three gentlemen of the Seminary, three members of the Alliance, the head-chiefs of Oka, with one legal Counsel of the Seminary and one of the Alliance, to discuss the claims of the Indians, the best and most peaceful arbitration or settlement, and to present a signed report to the Department of the Interior. In the event of disagreement, the Alliance will then pray the Government to enter a test case to finally settle the difficulties in the Courts. The Alliance trusts that immediate action will be taken to bring about some settlement.

Soliciting an early reply, I have the honor to be, Sir, Your obedient servant.

W. GEO. BEERS, Secretary pro tem, Civil Rights Alliance.

HON. DAVID MILLS, Minister of the Interior, Ottawa, Ont.

Here then is the question, reasoned by the Government on the one hand, and Dr. Beers upon the other. The Deputy Minister of the Interior, with the "best possible legal advice" to sustain him, says: "that the Indians have no legal title to the soil, that the gentlemen of the Seminary are not trustees for the Indians, but absolute proprietors of the land, and that no suit against the Seminary, with a view to obtain possession of the property for the Indians, could be successful." In reply, Dr. Beers makes the best of a bad case, and no one can read that reply without seeing that

Dr. Beers is merely fighting in retreat. Position after position is abandoned, and he is unwise enough to advise the Indians not to accept the generous offer of \$20,000 made by the Seminary, but instead suggests that a "Commission composed of three gentlemen of the Seminary, and three of the Alliance, the head-chiefs of Oka, with one legal council of each to discuss the claims of the Indians." This, we hope, the Seminary will take no notice of. The gentlemen of the Seminary have no cause to recognize the Civil Rights Alliance at all. Perhaps Dr. Beers would take into consideration the \$60,000 of property destroyed, which belonged to the Seminary, and if as he says the object of the Civil Rights Alliance is to secure Civil and Religious Liberty for the Indians, it might assist in obtaining it for the "Civil" reparation for the Seminary as well. The fault of the Seminary is, that they have been too kind to the Oka Indians, and that kindness has been interpreted into weakness. The privileges as Father Baile admits, of allowing the Indians "to take what wood they require for building purposes or for firewood," has been interpreted as a right by the bullies at Oka, backed by Orange lodges, who vowed to "defend said Oka Indians at the risk of their lives." If the gentlemen of the Seminary fought their battles as men of the world, there would have been no Oka difficulty, but their retiring disposition and easy manner, accepting everything with a calm and Christian resignation, has brought to the front a party of rascals, hostile to the interests of the Church, and who under the name of "Civil Rights," would destroy the Seminary,—"spoil and disestablish" its property, and hug the fancy that it had done all in the name of "Civil and Religious Liberty," although "the Department of the Interior have gone into the whole history of the Oka Indian matter," and have decided that the Seminary is RIGHT, and the insurgent Indians WRONG.

STRAY LEAVES FROM HISTORY.

HOCHÉ.

The following extracts, from a posthumous work of the late historian, Michelet, was published recently in the *Rapport de Paris*:

"The Vendome war was over. Hoche then had but one thought—to be avenged of England.

"He said, with that good sense and judgment which characterize the Fabian, that wars on the Continent were secondary things; that it would be necessary to make war at the fountain-head in England, where was the wealth that paid the armies of the Continent.

"He thought little of the war on the Rhine, which gave him all his glory. Obligated to return to it shortly before his death, he wrote to the Minister of the Navy—'If there be a favorable moment, let me know; even if I reach Vienna, I shall leave everything to fly to the Rhine and embark.'

"The only way to stop England in this war, which, while undisturbed at home, she makes to the world, was not, as Bonaparte imagined, to strike her in the Alps, or in Egypt, but to shake her vigorously and near, in threatening her in Ireland.

"It was not necessary to be victorious, but to alarm her constantly in her commerce, in her money interests, and on the exchange.

"Such were the projects of Hoche, and of his friend, Admiral Truguet. Bold projects, heroic and disinterested, which did not even look for victory.

"The descent on Ireland, really impossible in 1804, when Napoleon intended to make it, was very possible in 1793 and the following years. Why was it so? For a very simple reason: England was not informed of it, it was not prepared, and had not all the means of defense which she accumulated in ten years.

"And to that reason let us add another important one, which made the project of Hoche as reasonable as that of Napoleon in 1804 was hazardous, and that is, that in 1793, and even in 1768, there was in Ireland a people who held out their arms to us. There existed an Ireland; it was not yet drowned in blood, it had not yet entered on that career of increasing misery and famine, which made us witness one of the most terrible phenomena the physical destruction of a race, without its disappearance or decrease of population.

"Hoche, in isolating Ireland, was cutting off the right hand of England, and extinguishing Wellington in advance.

"The undertaking was no doubt an uncertain one, but a splendid danger, one of those to which a hero would love to give his life. It was more than a war of destruction—it was, above all, the evocation, the resurrection of a people, that France would have brought from their tomb—of a fraternal people so good and so amiable!

"What a stimulant for the enthusiasm of our young navy, delighted to know that on another shore there was another France expecting them. A France half barbarous, but enthusiastic and impatient to join in that fraternal union. Our men, brothers of those who made the Federation in 1790 who continued on the Rhine the military federation of the armies, imagined that they would begin in Ireland the maritime federation of the human race.

"While Bonaparte and Massena crossed the snows Hoche affronted the tempests of the ocean (16th Dec) The fleet at Brest was not ready; he will go alone (3d Nov., 1796.) The Directory refused permission. Hoche lost a precious month. Discouraged, he offered to take, no matter where, the 13,000 men reserved for the expedition. It was a means of reminding the Government, and getting the order to leave. The Directory, on the contrary, took him at his word, and congratulated him for having abandoned his project. It came too late. The fleet had sailed for Ireland.

"Having sailed on the 16th, on a dark night, four ships came in contact with other. It was necessary to wait until morning. During the night of the 17th a new calamity happened—the *Séguant*, on passing the *Baz*, went down with her 64 cannons and 1,300 men.

"The fleet went to sail for the Bay of Bantry. A terrible tempest came on the 18th, dispersing the ships—Hoche's vessel the farthest off. In his absence, Commodore Bourret rallied what remained, and when the tempest was over entered the Bay of Bantry, with seventeen vessels and 7,000 men. But the wind blowing hard again, he cut his cables and sailed for France. A second tempest assailed the fleet; and it was only a fortnight after that the ships reached Brest.

"When they were entering the French harbor, Hoche arrived at Bantry. No one not a single ship on the sea! He was told that the fleet, without landing any men, had sailed off.

"He was near dying of grief."—*McCue's Weekly*.