

upon her bosom, and reconcile her once again to public life, her people will see in it more than a fortunate concurrence of pleasing circumstances, and, tracing in it a connection of cause and effect, will throw increased warmth into their congratulations and good wishes. Come what may, however, the yet unnamed little one is greeted with welcomes. May he grow up to be the pride of the coming generation, as his father and his father's father have been of this! May he inherit all the virtues which have ennobled the names, or embalmed the memory, of those who preceded him! And may it be reserved to our children's children to do homage to him as a wise and beneficent Sovereign, swaying the sceptre over a peaceful, prosperous, and happy people!—*Illustrated News*.

### The European Crisis.

Sir Archibald Alison has expressed himself strongly in favor of restoring the Poles to their place among the nations. Such a restoration he regards as a great political necessity. Writing in 1854, he says:—"In the very front rank of the great league of the Western Powers, which can alone preserve Europe from Russian subjugation, must be placed the *restoration of Poland*. The extension of Austria to the mouth of the Danube, and her acquisition of Moldavia and Wallachia, under the burden of the stipulated payment to the Porte, is the obvious mode, without doing injustice to any one, of winning her consent to the cession of Galicia. If Prussia casts in her lot with the Muscovites, she cannot complain if she undergoes the fate which she herself imposed on Saxony when its sovereign adhered to Napoleon in 1814." The importance of restoring Poland to independence is as great now as it was when these words were written: but the position of Europe has changed since then, and the task of restoring Poland has become surrounded by new difficulties. Italy claims Venetia from Austria more vehemently than the Poles desire Galicia; the Hungarians refuse to unite with the other populations of Austria; and more embarrassing than all, it is now notorious that the Emperor of the French is bent upon destroying the Treaties of 1815, and extending the frontiers of France. England cannot afford to overlook the fact that Prussia's extremity is France's opportunity; and that Napoleon will never join in a war for the restoration of Poland except for the purpose of weakening Germany and seizing the provinces of the Rhine. The most that a successful intervention is likely to accomplish, would be to establish an independent kingdom of Poland, which would include part of the Prussian province of Posen and the Austrian province of Galicia—France paying herself for her exertions by advancing her frontier to the Rhine. What would then be the position? Would not the ascendancy of France be immensely increased, at the expense of those powers which at present keep her in check? Germany would lose provinces on both her eastern and western frontiers; while France would receive new power from the frontier and fortresses of the Rhine, and would find in the restored kingdom of Poland a new ally. To defeated Russia France would at the same time offer aid in pushing her conquests in Asia, where she comes into contact with England. These are considerations which may well make us pause before we give way to our natural sympathies in favor of Poland. We wish well to the Poles. We cannot regard with indifference the threatened extinction of a nationality. We cannot be spectators of their gallant and desperate struggles for independence without believing that they deserve to be successful. With Sir Archibald Alison, also, we believe that, if Poland become fairly merged in Russia, the power of that colossal empire will ere long overshadow the continent. But of what use these sympathies and opinions if circumstances deny to us the opportunity to act upon them?

The grand difficulty in the Polish question is neither Russia, Prussia, nor Austria. Let us say it plainly—it is the Emperor Napoleon. If he were the upholder of treaties, as he presented himself when he assumed the purple, or the disinterested champion of national rights, as he announced when commencing the Italian war—the Polish question would be easily settled. Austria, we believe, would be as ready to cede Galicia now as she was in 1815, simply for the sake of getting rid of an internal difficulty, and of erecting in an independent Poland an external shield against the power of her colossal neighbor, Russia. England would have nothing to seek, because nothing to gain, but the restoration of Poland. And if Napoleon were equally disinterested, an alliance between England, France, and Austria would ere this have been concluded, and the restoration of Poland would have become a matter of certainty. But Napoleon, as both Austria and England now know, is not disinterested. Neither as an ally is he reliable. England knows how he closed the Crimean war—Italy knows how he acted at Villa-

franca. And so does Austria—for in that interview he offered to give back Lombardy if the Austrian Emperor would permit him to attack Prussia on the Rhine. He has got Savoy and Nice; but in order to complete his "mission," he must extend the boundaries of France to the Rhine. If he can accomplish this, his dynasty is secure. Internal freedom may be safely granted to his subjects, when their external ambition has been satisfied; and France would then cease from her revolutions, and settle down into the normal condition of nations, under the dynasty of Napoleon. These are great objects, so far as regards France and himself. But if tried at the bar of Europe, they must be condemned. He cannot expect other nations to sacrifice their rights in order that the ambition of France may be satisfied and his dynasty secured. It is these objects—it is this ambition of Napoleon—we repeat, that forms the grand obstacle to the settlement of the Polish question. It forces Austria and England to mistrust and keep aloof from him, and threatens to divide Governments which ought to ally themselves on this question into opposite camps.

We have no desire to judge harshly of the Emperor Napoleon. He is a great and sagacious monarch, who has benefited France, and in whose policy towards the rest of Europe evil and good are intermingled. Like every one else, he has his own game to play, and he must play it to the best advantage. His policy requires that he shall aggrandise France at the expense of other states; but even as a matter of expediency, he must seek to minimise the hostility which such an aggrandisement must create by rendering to Europe all the benefits which he possibly can compatibly with the prosecution of his own ends. He is an enlightened monarch, who would fain be a benefactor of Europe as well as of his own country. But he is the Emperor of the French, and must attend to their interests and aspirations first; and with the realisation of these are bound up the success of his dynasty. He is now in a position alike of difficulty and of hope. If the present European crisis places him in the gravest embarrassment, he knows also—he has known all along—that without the occurrence of such a crisis his most brilliant hopes would remain unfulfilled. He has foreseen some such crisis as this from the first; he has framed his policy upon the wants of France and the exigencies of Europe. Availing himself of these exigencies, he has already won laurels for himself and aggrandisement for France. But the crisis with which he is now face to face is far grander and graver—presents alike more risks and more advantages—than any with which he has grappled in the past. It is the crisis of his dynasty. It is the crucial test of his ability to carry out his policy. He must now gather up his full strength to cope with the enterprise.

The intervention in Mexico has been called the greatest blunder which Napoleon III. has committed. We see no reason so to regard it. It may prove a failure; but it has not done so yet. If it succeed, it will prove a glory and an advantage to France, and promises only benefit to the rest of the world. It would redeem the rich and beautiful country of Mexico from chronic anarchy and suffering—from the political and commercial annihilation which has for a generation rendered it a blank spot in the world. It would give an outlet for the redundant portion of the energies and population of France; and by so doing would lessen the political restlessness at home, and, by allowing the now stagnant population to increase in numbers, would produce a healthier social condition among the people. Despite the present crisis in Europe, which requires the Emperor to concentrate his forces, this Mexican enterprise may yet be carried to a successful end. But already it has not been without its advantages for the Emperor. It has cost a few millions, indeed, but these may be repaid; and, meanwhile, it has distracted the thoughts of the restless French from the affairs of their own Continent at a time when these affairs presented no favourable opportunity for the prosecution of the Napoleonic ideas. The Mexican expedition, therefore, whatever be its ultimate fate—has shielded the Emperor from impatient pressure on the part of his people and has enabled him to bide his time. But it is easy to see that this shield will not be much longer available; nor can the Emperor desire that it should be. It is upon the affairs of Europe that the thoughts and ambitious aspirations of the French people are fixed. "Perish ten Mexicos," would be their words, "rather than Poland should perish." With this Polish affair is bound up this hope of winning the frontier of the Rhine. And the Emperor knows that, if he can attain this latter object, his people will be quite content that their "grand idea" on behalf of Poland be sadly shorn of its fair proportions.

The probable issue for the Emperor, we believe, from his present difficulty—a difficulty not altogether unwelcome—is through the portals of war. War, short if possible, and closed by compromises; but still war. One ally at least is already at his bidding. The Ita-