

ARE WE TO RECOGNISE THE SOUTHERN CONFEDERACY?

(From the Morning Post.)

American affairs approach a crisis which will necessitate on the part of the Federal Government the adoption of some decided course. Indeed, we might go farther, and state that it will shortly become utterly impossible for neutral nations to remain impassive spectators of an aimless struggle in which the hard knocks are not bestowed alone upon the combatants. When shall the South have vindicated its right to be deemed an independent State? This is the question which, more than any other, now occupies the minds of European statesmen. It is not necessary for Great Britain to avow or to justify the policy she has consistently pursued during the past fifteen years, a period in which she has been the passive spectator of intestine struggles in almost every European kingdom. Non-intervention in the mouth of an English minister is not an empty clap-trap phrase. It expresses the true policy of the nation, a policy from which no Government which cared to remain three days in office could for a moment swerve. We have enough to do to mind our own affairs. We leave others to take care of theirs. We recognise to its fullest extent the principle that every nation has the right to choose its own form of government, and to subvert at pleasure the existing order of things. When Louis Philippe was compelled to abdicate the French throne we straightway recognised the republic which was raised upon its ruins; and when from the republic emerged the present empire, we did not hesitate to acknowledge Louis Napoleon's right to take his place among the Sovereigns of Europe; and if fate willed it that the "elect of millions" should again experience the instability of fortune, and be driven into exile, we would receive at St. James's the ambassador of his successor, whether that successor was Henri V., the Comte de Paris, or M. Louis Blanc. In fact, non-intervention in England means non-interference in the squabbles of other nations so long as a state of hostility subsists, and ample recognition of those who are lucky enough to gain the upper hand, so soon as hostilities terminate. We cannot say with the Roman—

"*Victrix causa Deus placuit sed victa Catoni*" simply because we give our sympathies to neither side. We quietly await the issue of the contest, and then acknowledge the prowess of the victor.

We have now been waiting for a year and a half, anxiously desirous of knowing whether in our diplomatic relations with the North American States we are bound to recognise one or two Confederations. To us it is a matter of the purest indifference. To the Americans it is otherwise. War between the two portions of what was once the Union has been the consequence, and on its issue will depend the solution of the question. True to our policy, we have stood indifferent spectators. The legality or illegality of secession does not concern us. Everything that a nation is able to do in determining its form of government is legal, since ultimately the nation is the source from which all power flows. We have consequently only waited to see if that portion of the American nation which has cast off allegiance to the Federal Government is sufficiently powerful to maintain the form of government which has been established in its stead. As soon as it shall have demonstrated that ability it will have vindicated its right to be considered independent, and will be entitled to demand admission into the number of sovereign states. Has the Southern Confederacy vindicated that right? Has it proved to the great community of nations that it is sufficiently strong to maintain the form of government it has chosen? Such are the questions to which answers must now speedily be given.

This summer's campaign is confessedly closed. The Federal forces must for many months rest on their arms. At Charleston they have beaten a retreat, and have publicly announced their intention of deferring till a more auspicious occasion the seizure of the capital of South Carolina. In the West, General Halleck has established his residence at Corinth, and there he proposes to earn fame during the hot months by acting simply on the defensive. In the Mississippi, the Federal flotilla are waiting to take Vicksburg. In Arkansas, General Curtis finds himself in a position which excites the most anxious solicitude for his safety in the bosom of his friends. In the Shenandoah Valley, General Pope is or was waiting to be attacked by General "Stonewall" Jackson, whilst that officer was carrying havoc into the ranks of what has been called *par excellence* the "grand army" of the North. And where is that army? If not utterly vanquished, it is entirely powerless for offensive purposes. It may secure its own safety, but it will not, at least this summer, quarter in the Confederate capital. Everywhere, then, the campaign has closed, and still the Southern Confederacy stands unsubdued. It is not that in the wilds and fastnesses of the interior the population wage a guerilla warfare against the representatives of the Government which charges them with rebellion. All the functions of government are exercised at Richmond with the same—nay, perhaps with more regularity than at Washington. The railway traveller might in time of peace find his way in little more than two hours from one capital to the other. The intervening country is easily traversed. Still, at the close of this campaign, as at its commencement, the seat of government of the Southern Confederacy remains secure from the approaches of the invader. These are facts to which European nations cannot shut their eyes; nor can the Government of the United States ignore them. What length of time shall be considered long enough to ratify successful opposition to what is styled constituted authority? No length of time can sanctify rebellion, answers the successor of Washington, and the descendants of those who fought in the war of independence echo the cry. But foreign nations do not recognise "constituted authorities." They only recognise might. Assume for the sake of argument that the South is in open rebellion, still the only question for neutral States to decide is whether that rebellion can be crushed. If it cannot be crushed, then the rebel States are entitled to demand the recognition of their independence. Even the warmest supporters of the Federal Government must confess that up to the present no progress has been made towards extinguishing the rebellion. Shall the attempt, notwithstanding the disastrous failure of the present year, be persisted in next? This question Mr. Lincoln's Cabinet must speedily answer. Should folly still reign supreme, should three hundred thousand more men be levied, and should another invasion of the Southern Confederacy be projected, it will then remain for neutral States to determine whether the South has not by its recent prowess established its claim to be considered independent. If the North would take the initiative, and sail with the current which it cannot stem, neutral States might be saved the disagreeable necessity of discharging a most disagreeable duty.