

# **FRANCE AND THE CONFEDERATE STATES**

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France and the Confederate States by John Welsford Cowell

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**JOHN WELSFORD COWELL**

**FRANCE AND THE  
CONFEDERATE  
STATES**



FRANCE  
AND THE 33  
CONFEDERATE STATES.

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BY  
JOHN WELSFORD COWELL,  
AGENT AND REPRESENTATIVE WITH FULL POWER AND AUTHORITY OF THE  
BANK OF ENGLAND IN THE UNITED STATES IN THE YEARS

1837—1838—1839.

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## FRANCE AND THE CONFEDERATE STATES.

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THE natural and perfectly legitimate desire of France to acquire the same supremacy at sea which she already possesses on land, is known to all the world; and while the policy pursued by British Statesmen towards the Confederate States of America affords her the fullest opportunity at this moment of attaining this grand object of her ambition, her mercantile and manufacturing interests imperiously command her to seize it, because her manufacturers must otherwise become mainly dependent for the future on the British possessions in India and elsewhere for a supply of cotton. France has thus two motives, either of which is of itself strong enough, to impel her to action. The Emperor now sees before him the means of establishing the future naval and commercial glory of France on a foundation so solid and secure that nothing hereafter will be able to shake it; and even were his entanglements

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with Great Britain calculated to embarrass his political movement at this particular moment, it is not probable that the aroused attention of the commercial and manufacturing interests of France to the great crisis before them would acquiesce in inaction on his part. The opportunity which offers is, however, somewhat fleeting in its nature: the Statesmen of Great Britain have still in their hands the power to destroy its efficacy, and will not fail to avail themselves of it, if hesitation on the part of France should afford them an opening. France must therefore seize at once what *volvenda dies, en! attulit ultro*, or be content to forego it altogether and for ever.

To explain this clearly, it is necessary to advert to the governing points in the respective positions of each of the two parties with whom France will be concerned.

I will begin with the Yankees. The vast proportions which their maritime power has assumed during the last fifty years have sprung entirely from the monopoly which the Southerners accorded to them of the carrying trade of their raw produce in cotton, tobacco, &c., and of the commercial returns to it. The indigenous products of Yankee-land itself—those that are exportable in ships—are not many, but the Yankees have hitherto enjoyed the export of a great portion of the corn and provisions of the West. Thus their mercantile marine, as dependent merely on their own products and

on those of the West, could never have reached anything like that enormous magnitude which it attained in 1860. Besides this the Yankees do not possess a considerable indigenous nautical population, the sailors who man their ships being of all nations, but chiefly English, of whom I ascertained, in 1839, they had between 40,000 and 50,000 in constant employ. To what number the English sailors had risen in 1860 I have no means of learning, the Yankees carefully concealing the amount, and our own authorities taking no steps to ascertain it.

Now, in the year 1860, which was the last year of the Union, the total exports of the whole Union, omitting the gold of California, amounted to the value of 70,000,000*l.* in round numbers. Separating this total into two parts, and distinguishing between Northern and Southern products, we shall find that the value of exported Northern produce, including the provisions of the West and the re-exports of manufactured cotton, did not exceed 18,000,000*l.*, while the value of exported Southern produce exceeded 50,000,000*l.* The Protective Tariff of 1816 practically threw into the hands of Yankee shippers the transport of all Southern products; of these, cotton, the chief, is bulky, and requires much ship-room. Now, connecting these several points together, it becomes obvious that not less than two-thirds of what was the mercantile marine of the Yankees in 1860 had been called into



existence to supply the transportation of Southern exports and imports, and that this portion of their marine must cease to exist as *theirs*, when the transport of Southern produce is withdrawn from *their* hands.

It is to recover possession of this grand instrument of political power and of private profit that the Yankees are now murdering men, women, and children throughout the South, being determined, as is at last manifest to all, to exterminate the Southerners altogether (unless they will return to that fiscal, commercial, and maritime subjection to the Yankees from which they emancipated themselves in 1861), and to occupy their lands and houses themselves. But while one of the two main objects of the Yankees in their war against the South is to repossess themselves of the control of Southern exports, essentially necessary for the support of two-thirds of their marine, it is in the absolute pleasure of the South, having no ships of her own, to bestow this great instrument of power and wealth on whatever nation she may choose. It is the dower she will bring to France in an alliance, and France, in accepting it, need not envy England the far less useful and lucrative possession of India or Australia.

The other governing point in the position of the Yankees to which it is necessary to advert, is the absolute dependence of their scheme of productive and commercial industry on the Protective System. It is unnecessary for my present purpose to say

anything regarding that system itself; the Yankees adopted it unreservedly, and founded on it the future fortunes of their usurped domination over the rest of the Sovereign States of the Union. Under its stimulus they have, since the year 1816, been investing capital in every variety of producing, manufacturing, and mining industry which the climate and capabilities of the North did not absolutely repudiate. This all-comprehensive scheme of investment was begun and was continued by means of "Companies," so that by degrees it came to involve, directly and indirectly, the whole community, because shares in companies constituted the most convenient investment for the savings of servants and operatives, especially of young women. The South was not long in discovering itself to be the alimending victim of this system, and the South revolted against it in 1825, but was beaten by a majority of two in one house, and of five in the other. The victorious Yankees have preserved their legislative ascendancy ever since 1825, and all efforts of the South to readjust the balance of legislative power having failed, it seceded in 1861. By this secession, the immense capital which the Yankees had, during the forty-five years preceding, invested in enterprises of artificially protected industry was instantaneously deprived of value. The only market beyond the line of the Potomac was the South, and this was the market which, under the pressure of the tariff, constituted the support which had hitherto sustained the whole system.

As soon as the Yankees awakened to the terrible effect of the Southern secession on their artificial prosperity, they rushed to war, and the war has, for the moment, provided much of their invested capital with temporary employment. Thus far the war has staved off for a very short time the ruin that must inevitably overtake them, and it serves also to divert their eyes from the fact that it is inevitable. This Southern market, for the lucrative monopoly of which they have been investing their capital, is now opened by the Southerners to all nations, and it can never again become, practically, the protected market of the Yankees. The fierce malignity of baffled monopolists is greater even than that displayed in religious wars, and among the Yankees it animates, and, alas! unsexes the women, whose unfeminine proceedings would be unintelligible, unless we take into consideration the way in which the overthrow of the protective system threatens to affect their social interests.

Thus are brought into light the two governing points in the position of the Yankees — viz., the recovery of the Southern carrying trade and the recovery of the monopoly of the Southern market. They are fully sensible that, deprived of these advantages, they must soon be reduced to a very insignificant condition, politically, commercially, and nautically. Hence they are men fighting with the political halter round their necks, and they will and must fight desperately on to their last dollar, unless