

Notwithstanding all this, the conclusion of the article is eminently pacific. M. T. Colani, the writer, is evidently no believer in the rodomontade of which *La France* is now the chief standard-bearer. He is hard upon the Presbyterian missionaries, who hate Popish France. He looks upon the remonstrances from Australia as presumptuous and unfounded. He thinks that, as we have halved New Guinea with Germany, we are out of court when we talk of the annexation of the New Hebrides by France. Still, he thinks that England is entitled to guarantees that the convict element shall be eliminated, in deference to her Australian subjects. A little good-will on both sides will speedily settle a question of miniature diplomacy which ought never to have had any element of bitterness about it.

[Extract from the *Advertiser*.]

THE NEW HEBRIDES.

THE *République Française* has been treating its readers to a review of the condition of affairs in the New Hebrides. The writer is positively charming in his *naïveté*. He really cannot see why so much fuss is being made over the prolonged French occupation of those delectable regions. "England and France," he says, "could easily come to an agreement on the subject if England would only put a stop to the absurd calumnies and rodomontades of the Australians." "Of course," he coolly goes on to say, "England cannot oppose the French annexation of the New Hebrides, but she can demand guarantees from France, notably an undertaking not to use the islands as a convict settlement." England most unquestionably can, and we sincerely hope she will, oppose most energetically and effectually the annexation of the islands by the French. Such annexation would be a distinct violation of the existing treaty between the two countries, and the duty of our Government to resist it was strongly urged in the discussion which arose upon the diplomatic vote in Committee of Supply last night. The reasons why England must never permit France to follow her usual line of conduct in such cases are important and various. Regard for our own prestige in the eyes of Europe will not allow us to submit to so direct a humiliation. The eyes of the Australians are also fixed upon England to see whether she is going to support them or not. And if she does not, but "caves in" ignominiously to French bounce and bluster, her prestige with the colonies and the affection they bear her, which has been so strikingly manifest of late, will alike be grievously diminished. Lastly, the energetic protests of the Australians themselves, who know their own business at least as well as we do, ought to preclude the bare possibility of the British Government giving way to the coolly-impudent request that we will disregard the interests of our own colonies to study the convenience of France. It is an unfortunate fact that, diplomatic assurances notwithstanding, there has never been any real doubt, or there should not have been, as to the intentions of France. It is now very many months indeed since those intentions first became discernible, and still the French are in the New Hebrides. Moreover, they have completely changed their tone. Then they protested that annexation was out of the question; now they practically ask us unofficially to accept the *fait accompli*, and some time ago they officially proposed to the English Foreign Office to discuss the matter side by side with the Egyptian question. In other words, there they are, and there they mean to stay; but they will be much obliged to us if we will afford them some decent diplomatic excuse for doing so. We trust Lord Salisbury will be equal to the occasion, and will insist upon the specific compliance with the terms of the existing agreement, by which France and England both bound themselves to keep clear of the New Hebrides.

[Extracts from the *Times*, Thursday, 25th August, 1887.]

THE NEW HEBRIDES.

Paris, 24th August.

THE *Soleil* to-day refers at some length to the New Hebrides question, and expresses the opinion that it would be easy to arrive at an understanding with England on the subject. The journal says,—

"It will be sufficient to seek some compensation with which England would declare herself satisfied. Since her opposition can have no other real motive than a desire for such compensation, and as the British Government possibly already knows what demands it will put forward, the discussion between the two Governments could be quickly finished, and the sooner the better."

THE NEW HEBRIDES.

SIR,—

To the Editor of the *Times*.

According to a telegram published in your issue of this morning, the *République Française* believes that the New Hebrides question could be settled with ease "if England were willing to put a stop to the absurd calumnies and rodomontades of the Australians." Now, I am familiar with all the colonial protests by speech and pen against French annexation, and I am certainly not aware that the Australians have been indulging in either calumny or meaningless rant in discussing this most vital of questions to the future of their country. Their policy throughout has been one of simple self-defence. They have a well-grounded fear that if the French obtain possession of the New Hebrides the group will, notwithstanding present professions to the contrary, eventually become a second New Caledonia in the Pacific. They want to prevent, and they are determined to prevent, the establishment of another penal settlement, or "moral cesspool," as they more forcibly characterize the institution, in Australian waters. As for France giving "an undertaking not to transport either *récidivistes* or convicts to the New Hebrides," what would such an undertaking be worth in view of the present undisguised French military occupation of the islands in open defiance of treaty obligations? The *République Française* holds that "England, who divided New Guinea with Germany, cannot oppose the French annexation of the New Hebrides;" but this very plausible contention ignores the ferment that was created throughout Australasia by Lord Derby's pusillani-