ty for sea service. Individual Frenchmen are as much at home on the
ocean as English or Americans; but, as a nation, the French are averse
to the sea, on which they have seldom accomplished anything brilliant,
and where they have sustained defeats such as rarely have been known
to any other people. While France has produced many of the greatest sol-
ders whose names belong to history, she has not produced one really great
seaman, though some of her naval commanders have been respectable,
but nothing more. "What a pity," says an English naval writer, "that the
French, who excel all other nations in the theory of seamen-
ship and in practical naval architecture, cannot find men to fight at sea.
They are like flying-fish, a prey for every fish that swims and for ev ery
bird that flies. From the oldest records we trace that all other nations,
powerful enough to organize a naval force, have produced men able
and worthy to command it with honor and glory. The naval annals
of barbarians, then of Greece, Rome, and Carthage, down to the modern
history of Spain, Portugal, Holland, Sweden, Norway, Denmark,
and England, have several times seen naval heroes who shed a
bright luster on the countries which gave them birth. France exhibits
a solitary exception, a dull obscurity unenlightened by a single bright
page; a blotted chapter in history, a waste log-book: the eye in vain
seeks for one spot to rest on, a single star, as a beacon or sea-mark
to guide the lonely pilot or stimulate emulation the aspiring sailor-
boy!"

What France has been in the past, that she is to-day, and that she
will be in the future. There is nothing in the last fifty years of her his-
tory to create the belief that she is likely to make a great figure on the
ocean. Her present great navy is the result of a forcing process that
has been pursued for half a century of peace with all national nations, not
even the Russian war forming an exception to the assertion, as the
union of the French and English fleets in that contest did not render it
possible for the Russian fleets to venture out to sea, which they would
have done had they only the French for antagonists. This forcing
process has been steadily pursued under all kinds of French govern-
ments by that of the Restoration, by the Orleans monarchy, by the
brief Republic, and by the Empire. It would be strange if something of
a high character had not followed from exertions so persistently con-
tinued, and on which so much money has been expended. Accord-
ingly, we see that France has a brilliant navy; but what would there
be left of it after two years of war with a real naval power? Not much,
we incline to think. There would be no replacing its losses, as the
maritime population of France is not large, and it is slow work to build
such ships as are now built. On the other hand, England could build
vessels much faster than France, and her maritime population is large,
and her people generally, like Americans, take naturally and easily
to salt water. National character would tell in such warfare—and it
would tell much in favor of England in a contest for naval supremacy
between the two countries.

THE NATIONAL HIGHWAYS.

During the last year, it is said, some fifteen hundred persons have
been killed and as many seriously injured on railroads in our country.
If this be true, it is a sad and disgraceful story. Probably two-thirds
of these accidents might have been avoided by proper care. At all
hours of the day and night many thousands of our people are travelling
on railroads. That these should be safe, so far as skill and care can
make them safe, is a matter of great and universal interest. The
problem presented to us is, how to reduce to its minimum the element of
danger which belongs to the nature of the railroad.

Roads, rails, cars, and engines of the best construction, kept always
in perfect order and worked by competent men under wise regulations,
would seem to be the conditions on which the highest degree of safety
depends. That these conditions fulfilled is the question. It can be
done only by the directors of the railroad company. Can they be
relied on for the purpose? If they cannot, then the public must appeal
to some power strong enough to control the directors, or the evil must
continue.

Three thousand persons killed or wounded annually sufficiently
proves what a priori reasoning would teach, that railroad companies
cannot be trusted with the power of life and death over all who
travel. No men, however respectable, are to be trusted with such power,
more especially if it be granted without restraint or responsibility, and
with strong temptations to abuse it. The directors and officers of our
railroad companies are almost universally persons of high character
and usefulness, intelligent, well informed, forcible, practical men,
who conduct in its various departments the great business of the coun-
try. They are the leaders of enterprise, the chiefs and guides in the
manifold fields of effort which produce our rich harvest of prosperity.
Their influence, social, industrial, and political, is beneficial to society.
Nevertheless, as directors and officers of railroads, they ought not to be
trusted with absolute power over the safety of travellers, for two rea-
sons: first, because railroad companies are monopolies; and second,
because they are corporations.

They are a monopoly, considered collectively, because they do the
work of transportation over land for the whole country. The advan-
tages they offer are so great that no one can afford to travel in any
other manner. Whatever the distance or the object, whether an excurs-
ion to Newport or Saratoga for pleasure, a journey to New Orleans or
Chicago on business, or the daily passage of a merchant between his
villas and the city, every one who travels, with exceptions too few to
affect the result, must, or actually does, first purchase permission to do
so in the shape of a ticket from a railroad company. Not only is the
whole business of carrying travellers over the length and breadth of
the country monopolized by the railroads, but, for the most part, each
particular road absorbs all the travel between its terminals, because the
amount of business is not sufficient to support more than one road, or
the one in possession, as soon as other enterprises are started, bums
them off. It is needless to argue what all experience proves, that a monopoly
leads directly to abuse of power, to extortion, to neglect, to rapacity,
and to reckless disregard of the rights of others. The transportation
of merchandise and passengers is a business. Competition is necessary
to render business fair and advantageous to both parties. When one
man possesses what the other must have, the former can demand his
own terms of purchase of which may be the inferiority of the thing sold.
The only check on this rapacity is the fear of diminishing the demand.
Three thousand a year killed or wounded, and the manifold needless
annoyances of travelling, together with the large profits made by rail-
roads, prove that this check operates but feebly on the companies, who
sell danger and discomfort to the public at a high price.

The railroad companies are also corporations. Lord Coke's saying,
that a corporation had no soul, has become a proverb. It is an artic-
ual being, the creature of the law. It has no heart, no conscience, no
humanity, no moral responsibility, and exists only for the purpose for
which it was chartered. It cannot be guilty of a crime in its corporate
capacity, nor be punished, nor is it sensitive to public censure. Why
are railway companies created? To benefit the public by carrying
freight and passengers. That is the purpose of Government in granting
them a charter. The purpose of the stockholders in making it and in
spending capital on the work is private gain. This universal and eager
desire for gain is the great fact which the science of political economy
and all the principles of business are deduced. The Government
uses this desire when it grants power to banks, insurance companies,
transport companies, and other corporations. It says to them: "Go to
work and make money; the more you make, the better for the community." Associated capital is thus enabled to create
enterprises to which individual wealth is inadequate.

In this arrangement each party has its own special object to attain.
That of the Government is the public good, and its duty is to attach
such conditions to granted powers that not injury, but good only,
shall be produced by them. The object of the corporation is profit.
It is permitted to seek this as its exclusive object. Wilful injury, of
course, a corporation cannot commit without subjecting its property
to the fullest ligation and its members to punishment. But there are
juries which are not wilful, the result of indifference, expediency, or
neglect. No director of a railroad ever intended to kill or maim its
passengers. But to employ the best men in sufficient number to work a
road and to keep it and its machinery in perfect order, is expensive.
To employ an inadequate force of inferior men and to put off repairs
as long as possible, saves money and increases profit. A catastrophe may
indeed result from this economy, but the chances are that it will not
be so great as the saving of the money.
All went safely to-day—why not to-morrow? This chance weakens the sense of duty, and discourages prompt action involving expense. Moral responsibility, by which men are governed in their private affairs, does not reach the directors personally. As Jeremiah Bentham said, "Boards make fences, and fences make screens," and it is notorious that men will, as members of a board of directors, sanction acts which they would consider disgraceful if done by themselves for their own private interests. When an accident occurs, causing a horrible scene of splintered cars haphazard together, and men, women, and children mangled and torn, dead and dying—who is to blame and who is responsible, morally or criminally, to the law or to public opinion? Not the corporation. It has no character, no conscience, no soul. Not the directors. They had no malice against the sufferers, did not intend to injure them, did not foresee the accident, regret for it alone the sale of the company, whose property has been destroyed, and personally deplore the loss of life and the suffering that has been the result.

Clearly, therefore, our railroad companies, which are both monopolies and corporations, ought not to be trusted with power over the safety of travelers, without supervision, restraint, or penalty. Yet this power, unlimited as to time and unrestricted as to the manner in which it may be exercised, has been granted to these corporations by the legislatures of the States.

As the corporations will not perform any other duty than that of making money for the stockholders, shall we appeal to the State legislatures to protect us? What can the public expect from them in the present condition of the railroad companies and of our politics? These companies are great corporations, using millions of capital, employing thousands of laborers, outlaying on their sidetrack prominent men and influential journals. They control, therefore, votes and money, things all-powerful with State legislatures, and with the politicians, demagogues, and secret powers by whom State legislatures are governed. We can expect nothing from these, therefore, unless a public opinion, so loud, so strong, and so general as to command the elections, shall require reform, of which there is little hope, or, should such be created, it is more likely to take the shape of blind, unreasoning, and passionate popular clamor than of sober and well-founded judgment. It is not a pleasant thing to say—but every one knows the fact—the railroad companies are too strong for the State governments, control them, and dictate every law that concerns their own interests. It is fair to say, also, that these interests are, for the most part, the interests of the community, and, so low have our public affairs fallen, the railroad companies are the wiser and more honest government of the two. What power commands at Trenton? Is it not the Camden and Amboy? What at Harrisburg? Is it not the Pennsylvania Central? What at Albany? Is it not the New York Central? And so we might go through the list, and find that the railroad companies, in all that concerns themselves, rule the State governments, and nowhere so entirely as in those States whose wealth and population increase travel, rendering therefore some measures to secure its safety the more important.

If the State governments cannot help us, what can? Are we delivered over, bound hand and foot, to the power of soulless corporations? The nature of our railway system suggests the answer. The highways of the nation should be regulated by the national Government.

**Correspondence.**

**ANOTHER VIEW OF THE CONDITION OF THE SOUTH.**

**BOSTON, Sept. 27, 1865.**

**DEAR SIR:** I enclose further extracts from the letters of our correspondents, who is taking the census of the cotton bales. You will notice that he finds the negro in a much better position where negro troops are absent. In all his letters he has explained this by stating that the negro troops are not well officered, and, consequently, not well disciplined.

Yours truly,

E. A.

QUITMAN, GEORGIA, Aug. 20, 1865.

It is a fact not to be disputed by any candid and intelligent eye-witness of the condition of affairs in this section of the country at this present time, that the freedmen, whatever may be their capacity or willingness for labor, are not working to any considerable extent. I repeat that this is a fact which cannot be disputed by any one who is well informed upon the subject. Not one negro is induced to labor who was not previously laboring on his own account, and many who were not otherwise disposed to work are working all that could have been expected of them, and in some cases, perhaps, even more, but these are exceptions.

There is no use in denying that there is an antagonism existing between the freedmen and wages which may not be expected. It is not geted immedi-

ately. When I first landed, I heard these reports from Northern citizens, believing them to be but the results of unfounded prejudices on the part of the planters. At first I laughed at the idea, but recent and new experiences have led me to believe that there is something to the statement. Thus I find the impression general among the blacks upon the plantations that next Christmas the lands are to be divided among them.

This idea they say they heard first from our soldiers. General Sherman's order to divide the property of the rich élite of the South has suggested the idea, but, however it came, it is prevalent to a great extent, and amounts almost to a conviction with some. The breach between the blacks deplorer the old master and the new is very great, and becoming, the true way the whole body of the people seems bewariness, at least in Georgia. I am convinced that they would be content to remain under military rule for an indefinite period, if the black troops could but be withdrawn.

An exceeding number of negroes is a class of hungry people, and others who are clamorous for the restoration of civil government, merely that they may resume power, and not the best part of the community only appear to desire the restoration of law and order and appear to think that it is easiest to get it by their aid as our military officers. For instance, in the town of Quitman, Georgia, there was stationed for a time a company of U.S. white troops, and I am informed that they were as well believed as any could expect.

Under their supervision the town was orderly and quiet, and no violations of law were committed. In consequence of the peaceable and habitual conduct of the troops the inhabitants petitioned the general commanding to send back the troops to Quitman to preserve social order. If our troops were to be withdrawn to the country. The planters place no confidence in the negro, and offers him adequate wages. Five to seven dollars a month, the negro to cloth and feed himself, is the general rule in the interior of the State. Ten dollars a month, and the negro to board and clothe himself, is considered extremely liberal by the planters. Frequently they offer nothing in money, but only the board, clothing, and medical attendance, the latter two being scarcely more than nominal, and then at the end of the season they offer a certain number of bales of cotton, worth, etc., of course of some kind, the negro for not working for such wages; but then, on the other hand, the freedman is not inclined to work, even for better and reasonable wages, except in the most dastardly and indifferent manner. I will say more on this subject hereafter.

**SAVANNAH, GA., September 2, 1860.**

As the immediate future of the Southern country appears to hinge upon the relations that existed between the late slaves and their former masters, public opinion is fastened upon the subject, and for the present at least nothing else is talked of. Even the reconstruction question has sunk into insignificance on this side. Instead of being sublime to the fact that slavery is gone, as well as in fact as in name. Many profess to hope that by the enactment of a rigid system of vagrancy laws the negro may be compelled to work on the planter's terms, but most of the people recognize the fact that negro labor is dead by the feeling of the planter towards the negro seems to vary according to position and surroundings. Thus in Florida I found a vague and indefinite fear prevalent at the time of events. An exceeding number of the late party character of the planter towards his once slaves; if the latter did not live up to their contracts, as was generally the case, the planter, instead of attempting to stem the tide, of recompensing with his hands, would simply cause it to happen, or by a sort of signal would induce the provost-marshals. The consequence appeared to be that the negro observed his employer's evident timidly, and learned to despise the planter and refuse obedience. In fact, in some cases the planter was obliged to call in aid to maintain his authority, in order to maintain the semblance of his own house. At Jacksonville it was painful to witness the fear on the part of the whites towards the blacks. This is not confined to Southern men. Thus, in the North, northern men are inclined to insult the blacks at the hands of negroes in the city, as, for instance, being knocked off the sidewalk when walking with ladies. He assured me that he had always been a warm and earnest friend of the negro, and had come down South with this opinion. He had been employed as a doctor, and was aghast at such things as he had seen. I could scarcely credit some of the stories he told me. At Macon I found much the same state of affairs. I was there introduced to a number of gentlemen, all Northern men, by the way, who had been grossly insulted, fired upon without provocation, their lives endangered, etc., by the negro troops stationed there.

I was shown a bullet which hit a child in bed the night before: splinters from a door hit close beside a man sitting at the window reading; the morn ing's paper covered three instances of negroes that escaped that night I had a swell in the city; and, finally, I was witness to the careless and wanton and usual