

as little as suited their convenience. Their scheme resembled that of the Romans, who erected their own standards of the *jus gentium*, and then imposed them by force upon the outside world, whose ethics on usages they preferred to consider as no part of a mutually obligatory law of Nations. Towards the populations of both continents—north and south,—they have, indeed, laid down as the basis of a new American system, “the Munroe doctrine,” declaring the era of Colonization closed and the founding of new communities recognizing any sovereignty in an European state, inadmissible. Hitherto this doctrine has neither been formally admitted nor rejected, by the great colonizing powers; but there can hardly be a doubt that the erection of British Columbia into a Crown Colony, and the intervention of France in the government of Mexico, would, at any past period, have been regarded by the professors of “the American system” as flagrant violations of the *doctrine* of Mr. Munroe.

To extend the European system of international law to North America, it is necessary that there should be two or more States desirous to enjoy the benefits of that system. While there was but one important power north of Panama, it was natural that power should dictate its own will to an anarchical Mexico, and an impotent British America. But should Mexico, under the guarantee of France, recover her lost unity and authority, and British America, under the protection of England, attain to the dignity of a kingdom or principality—dependent on the Imperial Crown, as Hungary on Austria, Egypt on the Sultan, or Hindostan on England—then the two great western powers of Europe would feel, equally with Mexico and British America, the importance of extending to this continent that code, under which, by the admission of Wheaton, the highest American authority, the Old World has made “a considerable advance, *both in the theory of international morality, and in the practice of justice among States.*” If this result should follow the union of these Provinces into one power, it is quite apparent our future history, like that of the Netherlands, would derive additional lustre from its intimate connexion with the history of international law on this continent.

We are arrived at that stage of experience, and we find ourselves surrounded by circumstances which enable us to play an essentially different part from that forced upon the revolted colonies of 1776. If we had been subjected to the same treatment they were, if the Imperial Parliament had denied us also the right of local self-government, there would be some propriety in our imitating, at whatever risks, the revolutionary example of those colonies. But as the Atlantic of this age is no longer the tremendous and perilous sea which it was to our great grandfathers, so neither is the empire so exacting, nor are the colonies