

for a definite statement of policy. At this moment the claims of the rival powers upon the Pacific coast of America, as yet unsettled, were indeterminate and conflicting. Russia was mistress of Alaska with an uncertain boundary to the south. The somewhat shadowy claims of Spain to what is now the British Columbian coast had been assigned to Great Britain by the convention of 1790. The United States by virtue of the progressive movement of its expansion westward and by right of exploration also asserted a claim to the Pacific coast between the territory of Mexico and that of Russia. Meantime the Russian government disregarding the rights of all other claimants had declared that its boundary extended southward to the fifty-first parallel (the latitude of the north end of Vancouver Island) and endeavoured to refuse to foreigners the right of entry to its territory. This conflict of titles did not end until the Oregon treaty of 1846, although the Russian boundary was established at the parallel $54^{\circ}.40'$ by a treaty concluded with the United States in 1825. Meantime the outstanding boundary question on the Pacific coast served as a supplement to the larger issue involved in the fate of the Spanish Colonies of Central and South America.

Turning now to the text of Monroe's message of 1823 we find it to enunciate two leading principles of American policy; the one a desire to prevent further European colonization in America, the other a determination to prevent a European conquest of the existing independent States of America. The first appears in the language used in regard to the Russian boundary question: "In the discussions to which this interest has given rise and in the arrangements by which they may terminate, the occasion has been judged proper for asserting as a principle in which the rights and interests of the United States are involved, that the American continents by reason of the free and independent condition which they have assumed and maintain are henceforth not to be considered as subjects for future colonization by any European powers." The second principle—the denunciation of European conquest—is rehearsed at length in dealing with