

plete, unembarrassed by congressional interference, is daily coming to be recognized as a public misfortune. The dexterity of Presidents is repeatedly called upon to overcome the deficiencies of the constitution. By a master stroke of state-craft a former President, Mr. Cleveland, at an even more critical moment, obtained the necessary command of the situation. The Venezuela excitement was rapidly approaching a dangerous height. It was important to tide over the danger of the hour by means of a dilatory diplomatic commission. It was equally necessary, to make the expedient effective, that the President should acquire sole power of determining the personnel of the commission, free from the confirmatory control which the constitution vests in the Senate. To attain this end Mr. Cleveland paralyzed Congress by a message, so unexpected in its fierceness and boldness, that the Senate, in the surprise of the moment and under compulsion of popular enthusiasm, was obliged to surrender its control, and confer on the President the untrammelled power he demanded. He seized the opportunity to carry out his plan by selecting a commission of the learned, diplomatic and judicial quality he had intended, in place of one composed of furious politicians. The calculated deliberation of this commission carried the nation past the danger point, and delivered civilization from an imminent peril. In issuing his startling and apparently violent proclamation, the President was simply borrowing the device of the North American Indian, when threatened by a prairie fire. He set fire to leeward, and made a place of safety, in advance of the approaching conflagration. I hope that history will render belated justice to Mr. Cleveland, and that future generations of English-speaking nations will acknowledge their debt to his statecraft and courage. To his sole premeditated act it was owing that the war guns of the United States did not wake from their silence three years earlier, to spend their thunders in a more atrocious and unnatural war, against a thousand-fold more formidable foe.

Mr. McKinley appears to have sought to maintain the higher traditions of Presidential statemanship. It is evident that the President recognized, as a statesman, that, in a conflict with a European nation, other European nations might at some time or other claim a voice. He, therefore, with prudent foresight, desired to fortify the action of his country by keeping as closely as possible to European precedent. Such precedent was to be found in the action of the concert of Europe in the case of Crete. That action