

The Commercial

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THE MONROE DOCTRINE.

The mistake made by the United States in holding to the Monroe doctrine, is in applying a fixed rule or principle to different circumstances. The Monroe doctrine was evolved to meet a particular case. Its application at that time was commendable. When president Monroe in 1823 sent his celebrated message to Congress, he was supported by Great Britain. In fact it said that the "doctrine" was formulated in London, and that president Monroe really gave effect to words suggested to him by the British premier. At that time there was a prospect that an effort would be made by a combination of European powers to subjugate certain South American states to their rule. Great Britain was opposed to this probably quite as strongly as was the United States. President Monroe's message was applicable to the situation then existing, and was such as would meet with the approval of the British people both then and now. That message, however, was moderate—even meek in tone, compared with the bellicose blast sent to Congress by president Cleveland. In that message president Monroe said:

"We owe it, therefore, to candor and to the amicable relations existing between the United States and allied powers to declare that we should consider any attempt on their part to extend their system to any portion of this hemisphere as dangerous to our peace and safety. With the existing colonies or dependencies of any European power we have not interfered and shall not interfere, but with the governments who have declared their independence, and maintained it, and whose independence we have on great consideration and just principles acknowledged, we could not view an interposition for the purpose of oppressing them or controlling in any other manner their destiny (by an European power) in any other light than as a manifestation of an unfriendly disposition toward the United States."

The Monroe doctrine, as announced in 1823, is really obsolete at the present day. Circumstances are altogether changed. No European nation has now any notion of forcing its system of government upon any portion of America. The talk of United States papers that South America would be divided like Africa has been among European countries, if they were not here to prevent it, is all buncombe. There is no just comparison between South America and Africa. Every part of America, north and south, is now under an organized form of government, while much of Africa was in the position of America when it was first discovered—simply held by the savage tribes. The division of Africa among the civilized states of Europe, is the best thing that could happen that continent. Indeed, it would perhaps be better for some of the countries of South America, if they were under the control of some stable European government. Still, no European country has any disposition to interfere with them, and the South American people will no doubt work out their own civilization to a higher plane in due course of time. The

Monroe doctrine as originally promulgated, has therefore no practical existence at the present day. It served a good purpose at the time and should have been allowed to die with the departure of the features which called it into existence. The day has gone by when nations can extend their territories by the conquest of other organized and civilized, or even semi-civilized states. France is about the only country which has sought to extend her domains of late years by conquest. Europe, no more than the United States, would permit the conquest of independent American states.

The present position of the United States is not to stand by the principles announced by President Monroe, to prevent the conquest of independent American states. That position we say is obsolete and dissolved by the passing away of any necessity for action in such direction. The present position of the United States is simply that of dictator of the New World. It has not found a counterpart since the days of Napoleon the great. Napoleon made himself dictator of Europe. President Cleveland has declared that the United States shall be dictator of the Americas. Ten years hence, and perhaps in a much shorter time, we believe the position taken by the present president will be written down by his own people as preposterous. At any rate, it remains to be seen whether dictator Cleveland will be any more successful than was dictator Napoleon. It is absurd to say that a boundary dispute over a very limited area of territory in South America with which the United States has no connection, in any way menaces the peace and safety of the republic, affects its honor or challenges its interference. The United States can have no more real interest in the matter than it has in the subjugation of Madagascar by the French—Indeed not as much, for in the latter case United States citizens were imprisoned or interfered with, and trade restricted.

At the same time there appears to be a great deal of genuine enthusiasm in the United States in favor of the so called Monroe "doctrine," though it is said by an authority high up in their own country, that over 90 per cent. of the people have no conception of the real meaning of the doctrine. Analyzed down, the position seems to be one of national vanity. There is probably no other people in the wide, wide world who are so afflicted with national vanity as are our southern neighbors. True, they have much to be proud of, but they should not lose their heads on this account. National vanity, we say lies at the bottom of the popular support of the Monroe "doctrine," and to the average United States citizen that doctrine simply means that "we are the people"—the only people on this continent. "No pent up Utopia contracts our powers. The whole boundless continent is ours." The Monroe doctrine of today is not the principle propounded by Monroe, that the conquest of independent American states "would be viewed as a manifestation of an unfriendly disposition toward the United States." It now conveys the idea to the United States citizen that the United States is the supreme dictator of the Americas, and when the cry of Monroe doctrine

is raised, national pride blinds the eyes to reason. Herein lies the danger of the situation.

As regards the Venezuelan question, it seems strange that the United States should be taking sides with the Latins to hamper its own race and language in South America. From the United States boundary southward to Cape Horn, the country with the exception of Guiana is all under the control of the Latins. The United States has really very little in common with these people, who are quite different in race, language and religion. This great stretching of alleged principles in the present instance, in the interest of these people, seems absurd. In particular instances it may please the Latin Americans to have the United States interfere in these matters, but we may depend upon it that eventually the Latin Americans will repudiate and Monroe doctrine, as now held by the former country. As civilization and population increase in the Latin republics, they will become formidable rivals to the United States. The amalgamation of many of these republics into one strong nation, seems to be a probability of the future. Mexico has already a population of 14,000,000, and of late years has made great progress in commerce and civilization. A movement is even now on foot to form a confederation of all the Latin-American states. Such a confederation is quite probable in the future, and that such a movement has lately been started, would indicate that the Latins feel competent to look after themselves, without the dictatorship of the United States. That the United States should seek to hamper people of its own race, language and religion under these circumstances, seems peculiar.

A great Latin empire will surely arise in the south, and a few square miles either added to or taken from the little British colony of Guiana, will not alter or affect the destinies of the future one iota. South America is bound to remain in the control of the Latins. This cannot now be changed. If it could, one would suppose the United States would be interested in seeing a strong community of its own race and language in the south, rather than that the country should be entirely in the control of a race so different in almost every respect from the Saxon. If the United States has anything to fear from the south, it is the building up there of a great Latin nation. It is the height of absurdity to talk about this small English-speaking country of Guiana being a menace to the United States even if it does get a few square miles of Venezuelan territory.

EDITORIAL NOTES.

WINNIPEG has suffered rather severely from contagious diseases, particularly among children, during the past few months. Scarlet fever and diphtheria have been much more prevalent than usual. There certainly must be great carelessness somewhere that these diseases have been so prevalent for such a length of time. We believe that if the same care were taken in preventing the spread of these troubles as is taken in the case of small pox, these diseases would be just about as rare as the latter. Herein lies much of the trouble,