

THE "BIG STICK LETTER" AND THE "MONROE DOCTRINE."

THE WORLD says recently, referring to Mr Roosevelt's letter of acceptance: "No former president ever thought it his duty to regulate the affairs of 'the world as a whole.'"

How about one James Monroe, who with the express advice and consent of Madison and Jefferson, threatened every European government with war, if they attempted to acquire one more inch of territory either in North or South America at that time or at any future period?

If that was not trying "to regulate the affairs of the world as a whole," what was it? It was not only regulating the affairs of the world but mapping out the future and declaring war against every country that sought to acquire territory either by purchase or conquest for all time to come. Not only that, but it was a declaration that no North American or South American country should ever thereafter, be permitted to give, grant, cede or surrender any part or all of its territory to any European ally. Yet these South American states which were the special objects of President Monroe's anxiety, were independent sovereignties, having an inherent right to manage their own affairs and had not asked the United States to assume any guardianship over them. On the contrary, this was done at the suggestion of the English premier to balk the suspected designs of the Holy Alliance on Argentina, England, time of which, at that time was apprehensive might be detrimental to her own purpose to exploit that region of undeveloped resources. As usual, we pulled the chestnuts out of the fire for England to munch but had the satisfaction of forever safeguarding republican institutions over the whole American continent.

Mr. Roosevelt's "Big Stick" letter is purely negative in character--a declaration that if any country fail to pay its debts or fail to keep the peace, the United States will not hold

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an umbrella over it when the stress of storm comes on. The Monroe Doctrine was a belligerent, aggressive Democratic declaration of war against any European power that happened to cast an envious eye on any part of a continent over a greater part of which the United States had no more jurisdiction than it has of the ~~wings~~ of the planet Jupiter. To compare Mr Roosevelt's expression of dissatisfaction at the idea that the United States would uphold and shelter lawlessness and fraud on the part of another country, with the lordly, sweeping declaration made by Mr Monroe eighty years ago, is an insult to the carefully-ordred defiance which after consultation with all the leading Democrats he could reach, including two ex-Presidents--Jefferson and Madison--who were the chief Democratic expounders of the Constitution, hurled in the teeth of all the great powers of Europe. For boldness and arrogant assumption of a right to "regulate the affaires of the world as a whole," the Monroe Doctrine has no parallel in international history. It has practically become a part of international law, simply because the American people have approved and maintained it and all the world knows we are willing to fight for it. But it would be impossible for Mr Roosevelt to exceed or even equal it in strenuous intermeddling with the affairs of other nations unless he first invented a new language.

The Monroe Doctrine has been approved for more than three-fourths of a century by the American people, not because Mr Monroe had any authority, constitutional or otherwise to warn European nations having monarchical governments off from the American continent, nor because they consider other American nationalities under their guardianship or control, but because they believe the security of republican institutions demands that so far as possible, monarchical institutions be prevented from obtaining farther foothold in contiguity therewith. They have regarded the Monroe Doctrine as a defensive measure directed, not

against particular countries but against monarchy as a system of government, more especially imported monarchy or non-resident control of American territory. It was purely unselfish and benevolent in character. The President of the United States by this act underwrote the biggest contract ever undertaken by a government without the least probability of material advantage to this country but imposed by the highest sentiment of devotion to republican institutions. This attitude suited the American people. They believed and still believe themselves the pioneers and chief guardians of the republican idea, --the right of people to govern themselves, --or as it has been more tersely put, in "government by the people." Thus the Monroe Doctrine was intended to establish and maintain by declaring to all European monarchies that they must keep hands off American soil in the future. Of what they had already, the United States would not attempt to dispossess them, but not one hair-breadth must they enlarge those dominions. It has been called an international impertinence by a high authority, and no doubt its merits that designation, but it clearly expresses the ultimate determination of the American people. They will shrink from nothing to maintain the right of every people on the continent to govern themselves.

The letter of Mr. Roosevelt was the mildest sort of modification of this supreme attempt to regulate the affairs of the universe--a mere expression of opinion that the United States would not stand between any American state and the wrath of a foreign government unless that state discharged the common obligations of all governments to maintain peace within its borders and discharge its pecuniary obligations. Less than that he could not have said as the representative of the American people. It was simply a warning that the Monroe Doctrine must not be made a cloak or cover for fraud, injustice or revolution. It was nec-

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necessary to put the American Republic on a fair and honest footing before all the world and justify the recognition of the Monroe Doctrine as an integral part of international law.

Albion W. Tourgee,

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