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THE MONROE DOCTRINE.

PAPER BY EDWARD EVERETT.

II

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In an elaborate article in the *London Quarterly Review* for January, 1862,* among the facts adduced to prove that the United States had pursued for fifty years an offensive course toward Great Britain, showing herself "not a loyal friend, but a grasping and bullying enemy," it was mentioned that President Pierce, on occasion of the negotiation between the two countries, relative to Central America, had "avowed his adherence to what is called the Monroe doctrine." At the close

* NOTE.—In this article on the *Trent* affair, it was maintained, that the capture of Messrs. Mason and Slidell was but one of a series of studied insults offered by the United States to Great Britain during the last fifty years, and these alleged insults were briefly enumerated and commented upon by the reviewer. In a series of articles in the *New York Ledger*, commenced in 1862 and continued during the present year, these so-called insults have been carefully examined by Mr. Edward Everett. We understand that his articles will be published in a collective form. In the meantime, we have obtained permission to reprint the last of them, which is on "The Monroe Doctrine," as one of the tracts of the "Loyal Publication Society of New York." It appeared originally in the *Ledger* for the 3d October last.

of the article I observed, that, as far as the so-called Monroe doctrine "bore upon the affairs of Spanish America, it had the concurrence and warm approval of the British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Mr. George Canning."

It was hardly to be expected that, so soon after Mr. Canning's time, the Monroe doctrine should so far have lost favor in England, that it should be characterized by a leading journalist as a national insult, and the act of a grasping and bullying enemy, for an American President to adhere to it. Even if the English government had wholly changed its own views on this subject (of which I have seen no proof), it was surely no matter of offense that an American President adhered to a declaration of one of his predecessors, made not merely with the approval of the British Minister for Foreign Affairs, but, as I shall presently show, at his earnest and persevering solicitation.

But though the British government, as far as I am aware, has given no intimation that it has changed its views on this subject (unless such an intimation is found in the lately repeated remark of Lord Palmerston, that perfect harmony exists between France and England as to the foreign policy of the two powers), it is confidently stated that the merchants of London "are well pleased with the course pursued by Louis Napoleon in Mexico." The following statement is found in the *City Article* of a recent number of the *London Times*: "It would be vain to deny that the feeling of the merchants of London is that, on the whole, so far as the affair has proceeded, the Emperor Napoleon has done a great service, both political and commercial, to the world—political, in confirming the previous action of Spain in extinguishing the Monroe doctrine; and commercial, in restoring the intercourse of nations with a territory which, from its geographical position and mineral wealth, can claim a general and almost exceptional importance."

It is very likely that individual "merchants of London,"

concerned in running the blockade, or in speculating in the Confederate loan, may be pleased with any event which may make difficulty between France and the United States, but I greatly doubt that the "merchants of London," as a body, are delighted to have either the commerce or politics of Mexico controlled from the Tuileries. As for the statement just quoted, it contains a grave error of fact. Spain has never, that I am aware of, attempted "to extinguish the Monroe doctrine." On the contrary, from the moment she recognized the independence of her revolted colonies, she acquiesced in that doctrine, which, as far as concerned those colonies, was, that the United States would not be indifferent to any attempt of France and the Holy Alliance to aid Spain in subjugating them.

Not only has Spain made no attempt to "extinguish" the Monroe doctrine, but, conjointly with England, she withdrew from the expedition lately undertaken in concert by the three powers, as soon as she found that France intended to conquer and occupy the country. It remains to be seen how far Spain, a proud and sensitive power of the Latin stock, will rejoice at having her ancient colonial kingdom of New Spain turned into an empire, for the benefit of a German prince, by the *fiat* of the sovereign of France, and with remainder to any other candidate to be named by him, if the Archduke Maximilian should decline.

The point, however, which I propose at present to illustrate is, that the doctrine, whose extinguishment is now considered by "the London merchants" so great a political and commercial benefit, was announced by President Monroe, not merely with the approval of the British Minister of Foreign Affairs, *but at his earnest and often repeated solicitations.*

In December, 1822, the dominion of Spain over her former colonies on the continent of America being manifestly at an end, England determined so far to recognize them as to send consuls

to some of the principal ports. In March following (1823), Mr. Canning, at that time Minister of Foreign Affairs, addressed a despatch to the British Minister at Madrid, in which, while he disclaimed, on the part of Great Britain, all intention of appropriating to herself the smallest portion of the late Spain colonies, he intimated at the same time, his conviction, that "no attempt would be made by France to bring under her dominion any of those possessions, either by conquest or cession from Spain." France, it will be remembered, was at this time invading Spain for the purpose of putting down the constitutional government and restoring Ferdinand Seventh to absolute power. As the invasion drew near to a successful issue, symptoms began to appear of a design on the part of the French government, to reimburse themselves for the expenses of the expedition out of the American colonies, and in order to paralyze the expected opposition of England, to call a congress of the continental powers forming the "Holy Alliance." They were depended upon to sustain France in this movement, because the Spanish colonies were regarded by the members of the Holy Alliance as rebellious subjects, setting at defiance the authority of their legitimate sovereign.

The great object which the British government now proposed to itself, under the auspices of Mr. Canning, was to baffle these designs of France and the Holy Alliance on the Spanish colonies, and for this there were three motives: 1. To avenge the affront offered to Great Britain by the invasion of her ally, Spain; 2. To "redress the balance of power disturbed in the East by calling into existence a new world in the West;" 3. To procure for England the benefit of an unrestricted commerce with the American colonies. Fearing, however, that a formal recognition of the independence of those colonies would involve England in a war with the continental powers, Mr. Canning determined to try the efficacy of an "open, straightforward

declaration of his future intentions." His first step, in order to give added weight to such a declaration, was to solicit the co-operation of the American government. Accordingly, on the 16th of August, 1823, in an interview with Mr. Rush, he inquired whether the United States would not join Great Britain in such a declaration, adding that if France entertained designs on Mexico, he (Mr. Canning) "was satisfied that the knowledge that the United States would be opposed to it as well as England, could not fail to have its decisive influence in checking it." Mr. Rush, being without instructions, could make no reply to this overture, except that he would communicate it to his government.

On the 22d of the month, being about to leave town, Mr. Canning addressed an unofficial and confidential note to Mr. Rush, renewing the overture for a joint declaration to be made by the United States and Great Britain, to the effect that, while they aimed at the possession of no portion of the Spanish colonies for themselves, and would not obstruct any amicable negotiations which Spain, as the mother country, might attempt with them, "they could not see the transfer of any portion of them to any other power with indifference."

Four days later, being then at Liverpool, Mr. Canning wrote a second letter to Mr. Rush, urging the joint declaration, on the ground that information had reached him that, as soon as France had effected her military objects in Spain, a proposal would be made for a European congress to settle the affairs of Spanish America.

Five days later (31st August) Mr. Canning addressed a third letter to Mr. Rush from the country, intimating that events might make it necessary for him to act without waiting for the co-operation of the United States. On his return to town on the 18th of September, he had another conference with Mr. Rush on the same subject, in the course of which he pressed

upon the American Minister, *to the point of importunity*, the expediency of the proposed declaration. In case a congress of the European powers should be called to dispose of the affairs of Spanish America, he stated that he should insist on the United States being represented. Mr. Rush yielded so far to Mr. Canning's urgent solicitations as to promise at length, if Great Britain would at once recognize the Spanish colonies, that he would take the responsibility, even without instructions, of joining in the declaration.

Eight days after this interview, another conference took place between Mr. Rush and Mr. Canning, at the request of the latter, still earnestly soliciting the co-operation of the United States. Mr. Rush having made the recognition of the Spanish colonies by England a condition precedent, Mr. Canning now asked if he would not join in the declaration, provided England would promise to recognize the colonies *hereafter*. The subject was discussed at two other interviews between Mr. Canning and Mr. Rush, in the course of the autumn, and the reader will perhaps be pleased to see a specimen of the arguments by which the former urged the adoption by the United States, in conjunction with England, of the Monroe doctrine. Mr. Rush having stated that it had been the traditionary rule of the government of the United States not to interfere with European politics, Mr. Canning replied :

“ However just such a policy might have been formerly, or
 “ might continue to be as a general policy, he apprehended that
 “ powerful and controlling circumstances made it inapplicable
 “ upon the present occasion. The question was a new and com-
 “ plicated one in modern affairs. It was also full as much Ameri-
 “ can as European, *to say no more*. It concerned the United States
 “ under aspects and interests as immediate and commanding, as it
 “ did or could any of the states of Europe. They were the first
 “ power established on that continent, and confessedly the leading
 “ power. They were connected with Spanish America by their po-

"sition, as with Europe by their relations; and they also stood con-
 "nected with these new states by political relations. *Was it pos-*
 "*sible that they could see with indifference their fate decided upon*
 "*by Europe?* Could Europe expect this indifference? Had not
 "a new epoch arrived in the relative position of the United States
 "toward Europe which Europe must acknowledge? *Were the*
 "*great political and commercial interests, which hung upon the*
 "*destinies of the new Continent, to be canvassed and adjusted in*
 "*this hemisphere, without the co-operation, or even knowledge of*
 "*the United States?* Were they to be canvassed and adjusted,
 "he would even add, without some proper understanding be-
 "tween the United States and Great Britain, as the two chief
 "commercial and maritime states of both worlds? He hoped
 "not, he would wish to persuade himself not."

Such was the vehemence with which Mr. Canning urged the
 United States to assume the ground of the Monroe doctrine.
 Mr. Rush, of course, communicated these overtures from time to
 time to his government. His first despatches on the subject
 were received in Washington by the end of August, 1823. The
 subject immediately engaged the attention of Mr. Monroe and
 his cabinet. In addition to the counsel of his official advisers,
 the President sought that of Mr. Jefferson, to whom he sent
 copies of Mr. Rush's letters. Mr. Jefferson warmly recommend-
 ed the step proposed by Mr. Canning, and encouraged Mr. Mon-
 roe to make the desired declaration. His cabinet concurred in
 the advice, and accordingly, in his message at the opening of the
 next session of Congress, the President, after alluding to the
 radical difference of the political systems of Europe and Ame-
 rica, expressed himself as follows:

"We owe it therefore to candor and to the amicable relations
 "existing between the United States and those powers to de-
 "clare, that we should consider any attempt on their part to
 "extend their system to any portion of this hemisphere, as dan-
 "gerous 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 on just principles acknowledged, we could not view any interposition for the purpose of oppressing them or controlling in any other manner their destiny, by any European power, in any other light than as a manifestation of an unfriendly disposition toward the United States.”

Such, as far as Spanish America is concerned, was this celebrated declaration to which Mr. Canning had so importunately urged the United States. In another part of the same message, and in reference to the negotiation with Russia, relative to the boundaries of the two powers on the north-western coast of the continent, President Monroe observed that,

“ In the discussion to which this interest has given rise, 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 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 power.”

These two statements of principle, in parts of Mr. Monroe's message, remote from each other and relating to totally different subjects, from what is usually called the Monroe doctrine. Much confusion of ideas has existed with reference to its purport and intended application, which I shall not attempt on this occasion to explain. I will only observe that it has never, in any acceptance, received a legislative confirmation; that it rests upon its original basis, as an executive declaration, wise and seasonable at the time it was made, creditable to the administration from which it proceeded, and beneficial to the country and the cause of free government throughout the world.

The message containing these declarations of President Monroe reached England, while the correspondence between Mr. Canning and the Prince de Polignac, the French Ambassador at London, was in progress. "Fortunately," says Mr. Stapleton, the private secretary and biographer of Mr. Canning, "just at the moment when these discussions were being carried on, the message of the President of the United States to their Congress arrived in Europe, in which document it was stated 'that any interference on the part of the great powers of Europe for the purpose of oppressing or controlling the destinies of the Spanish American states which had declared their independence, would be dangerous to the peace and safety of the United States, and would be considered as the manifestation of an unfriendly disposition towards them.'" Mr. Stapleton then claims that the correspondence of Mr. Canning with Mr. Rush, "mainly encouraged, if it did not originate to the government of the United States the idea of taking so firm and decisive a tone," and adds that, "when coupled with the refusal of Great Britain to take part in a congress, it effectually put an end to the project of assembling one similar to those which had met at Vienna, Aix-la-Chapelle, Laybach and Verona."

The reception of the presidential declaration by the English public in general and in parliament might be called enthusiastic. Mr. (now Lord) Brougham said "the question with regard to South America now was, he believed, disposed of or nearly so; for an event had recently happened, *than which no event had ever dispersed greater joy, exultation, and gratitude over all the freemen of Europe*; that event which was decisive on the subject, was the language held with respect to Spanish America, in the speech or message of the President of the United States to the Congress."

Mr. Stapleton, in quoting this remark of Lord Brougham, asks, "but was not that language which, in Mr. Brougham's

opinion, was decisive on the subject, in a very great degree, if not wholly, the result of Mr. Canning's overture to Mr. Rush?"

Sir James Mackintosh, alluding to the message, said :

“That wise government, in grave but determined language, and with that reasonable but deliberate tone that becomes true courage, proclaims the principles of her policy and makes known the cases in which the care of her own safety will compel her to take her up arms for the defence of other states. I have already observed its coincidence with the declarations of England, which, indeed, is perfect, if allowance be made for the deeper, or at least more immediate interest in the independence of South America, which near neighborhood gives to the United States. This coincidence of the two great English commonwealths (for so I delight to call them, and I heartily pray that they may be forever united in the cause of justice and liberty), cannot be contemplated without the utmost pleasure by every enlightened citizen of the earth.”

Would that words like these were oftener heard in the British parliament !

There was one point only in this part of the President's message to which Mr. Canning excepted. He understood it to deny not only the right of other foreign powers to interfere for the recovery of the Spanish American Colonies, but the right of the mother country to continue her efforts for that purpose. He thought it necessary to declare that he did not assent to that principle, and it is quite doubtful whether Mr. Monroe, though he used the phrase “*any* European power,” meant to interfere between Spain and her former colonies. Lord John Russell, however, urged that if, after the invasion of Spain by France, a Spanish army were sent by Ferdinand to re-subjugate the colonies, inasmuch as such Spanish army would have been set at liberty by the French occupation, the expedition should be regarded as virtually French, and as such resisted by England.

Such, as far as Mexico is concerned, is the Monroe doctrine; such its origin, such its significance, such its history; urged, all but forced on the United States by the importunity of England hailed with rapture in her parliament on its announcement, claimed on behalf of Mr. Canning as the work of his hands, admitted to have been decisive of the leading measure of his administration, now quoted among the studied insults which the United States have for fifty years been offering to Great Britain: another proof that instead of being a loyal friend to that country, she has shown herself to be a "grasping and a bullying enemy;" and the "merchants of London" are rejoiced that a French invasion, the precise movement which Mr. Canning in 1823 urged the United States to join him in forbidding, has succeeded in trampling in the dust the policy which England then had so much at heart, and to which it is as much her interest now as ever to adhere!

Boston, 2d September, 1863.

LETTER OF JOHN QUINCY ADAMS,

ON THE MONROE DOCTRINE.

Reprinted from the Providence Journal.

QUINCY, August 11, 1837.

Rev. Wm. E. Channing, D. D., Newport, R. I. :

MY DEAR SIR: * * * I rejoice to learn that you have it in contemplation to give the public your ideas on the appearance in the political world of the new republic of Texas.

Mr. Tuckerman wrote to me as you had requested, and I answered his letter, but he had mistaken the time when the transactions to which you desired referencè to be had, occurred, and supposed they had happened during the administration of my father. My answer, therefore, must have been unsatisfactory to the object of your inquiries.

It was in September, 1822, that the events, to which I alluded in my speech in the House of Representatives of the 25th of May, 1836, took place. It was the time when the Spanish government of the Cortes was overthrown by the French invasion under the Duke d'Angouleme. Great Britain became alarmed lest, under the shelter of that revolution, the Island of Cuba should pass into the possession of France. The French government fabricated or was imposed upon by a report that the British cabinet had determined to send a squadron and take possession of the island. The people of Havana, divided into parties between the Cortes and the King, were terrified by

premonitory symptoms of negro insurrection, and looking round for a protector. There was a party for resorting to Great Britain, a party for adhering to Spain, and a party for seeking admission to the North American Union—the last of which was the strongest. A proposition was then made by a secret agent from them to Mr. Monroe, to this effect—that they, by a popular movement, of the success of which they had no doubt, would declare the island independent of Spain, if the government of the United States would promise them protection and admit them into their Union under a state constitution, on the model of those of our Southern states, and with the understanding that as the population of the island should increase, they should be at liberty to divide themselves into two states, and have that proportion of representation in the Congress of the United States. As the inducement to the American government to pledge their protection, they were assured that the alternative would probably be the prevalence of the party in the island for the colonial connection with Great Britain, and a resort to her for protection. While this proposition was under consideration of Mr. Monroe and his cabinet, the French Minister at Washington, by a verbal, irresponsible communication, not to the Secretary of State, the only medium of *official* intercourse between foreign ministers and the government of the United States, but to Mr. Crawford, the Secretary of the Treasury, asseverated that the French government had secret but positive information that the British government had deliberately determined to take possession of Cuba.

The answer of Mr. Monroe to the proposition from the Havana was, that the friendly relations existing between the people of the United States and Spain did not permit them to promise countenance or protection to any insurrectional movement against her authority. Their advice to the people of Cuba was to adhere as long as possible to their allegiance to Spain—that an

attempt of either Great Britain or France to occupy the island would present the proposal from the Havana under a different point of view, concerning which the President was not authorized to pledge prospectively the action of the United States, but that the people of the Havana might be assured of the deep interest, which, under all the circumstances which might occur, the American Government would take in their welfare and their wishes.

It was the opinion of at least one member of Mr. Monroe's administration that the occupation of the Island of Cuba by Great Britain should be resisted, even at the cost of a war. Their unanimous opinion was, that a very explicit though confidential communication should be made to Mr. Canning, that the United States *could not see with indifference* the occupation of Cuba by any European Power other than Spain—and that *rumors* had reached the American government that such an intention was entertained by the British cabinet, which made it necessary to ask an explanation of their views.

Mr. Rush was instructed accordingly. Mr. Canning disavowed emphatically all intention on the part of Great Britain to take possession of the island; but avowed her determination *not to see with indifference* its occupation either by France or the United States, and he told Mr. Rush of the squadron dispatched by Louis XVIII. to the West Indies, without notifying *him* of expedition, and of the schooling he had ordered the British Ambassador at Paris to give the French cabinet for that sin of omission. Mr. Canning then proposed that, by a mutual understanding between the British, French and American Governments, without any formal treaty or convention, Cuba should be left in the quiet possession of Spain, without interference in the government of the island. This was precisely the policy which Mr. Monroe believed to be best adapted to the interests and the duties of the United States, and he cheerfully assented to it.

There was no further communication between him and the French government on the subject. So far as France was concerned, the arrangement was left to be concerted between her and Great Britain. The people of the Island of Cuba submitted to the government of Ferdinand, restored by the Duke d'Angouleme, and received a viceroy and captain-general in the person of Gen. Vives, who had been minister from Spain to the United States—one of the most upright and honorable men with whom it has ever been my fortune to hold political relations. He was precisely the man to tranquilize and conciliate the submission of the people of the island to their old government, and he so effectually accomplished that purpose that the government of the United States heard nothing further of intended insurrection in Cuba, during the remainder of Mr. Monroe's administration and the whole of mine.

All these transactions were at the time profoundly secret. The first public allusion to them ever made was by me, in the speech of the 25th of May, 1836, to the House of Representatives. The circumstances of the times no longer required absolute secrecy. France, Spain and Britain had all undergone political revolutions, and the abolition of slavery in the British colonies of this hemisphere had added tenfold terrors to *her* occupation of Cuba, for the meditation of our Southern statesmen. I partly raised the veil, therefore, from the negotiations of 1822, to stay the frantic hand of the Southern slaveholder, rushing from the terror of an avenging conscience into the arms of sympathizing Slavery in Texas.

* * * * *

I am, of course, your unalterable friend,

J. Q. ADAMS.

THE BALANCE OF POWER IN EUROPE.



Extract from a Speech of the Right Hon. George Canning on the Relations of Portugal, in the House of Commons, December 12th, 1826.

“Again, sir, is the Spain of the present day, the Spain of which the statesmen of the times of William and Anne were so much afraid? Is it indeed the nation whose puissance was expected to shake England from her sphere? No, sir; it was quite another Spain. It was the Spain within the limits of whose empire the sun never set—it was Spain ‘with the Indies,’ that had excited the jealousies and alarmed the imaginations of our ancestors.

“But then, sir, the balance of power! The entry of the French army into Spain, disturbed that balance, and we ought to have gone to war to restore it! I have already said, that when the French army entered Spain, we might, if we chose, have resisted or resented that measure by war. But were there no other means than war for restoring the balance of power? Is the balance of power a fixed and unalterable standard? Or is it a standard perpetually varying as civilization advances, and as new nations spring up and take their place among established political communities? The balance of power, a century and a half ago, was to be adjusted between France and Spain, the Netherlands, Austria and England. Some years afterwards, Russia assumed her high station in European politics. Some

years after that again, Prussia became, not only a substantive, but a preponderating monarchy. Thus, while the balance of power continued in principle the same, the means of adjusting it became more varied and enlarged. They became enlarged in proportion to the increased number of considerable states—in proportion, I may say, to the number of weights which might be shifted into one or the other scale. To look to the policy of Europe, in the times of William and Anne, for the purpose of regulating the balance of power in Europe at the present day, is to disregard the progress of events, and to confuse dates and facts, which throw a reciprocal light upon each other.

“It would be disengenuous, indeed, not to admit that the entry of the French army into Spain was, in a certain sense, a disparagement—an affront to the pride—a blow to the feelings of England. And it can hardly be supposed, that the government did not sympathize, on that occasion, with the feelings of the people.

“But I deny that, questionable or censurable as the act may be, it was one that necessarily called for our direct and hostile opposition. Was nothing, then, to be done? Was there no other mode of resistance, than by a direct attack upon France, or by a war, to be undertaken on the soil of Spain? What if the possession of Spain might be rendered harmless in rival hands—harmless as regards us, and valueless to the possessors? Might not compensation for disparagement be obtained, and the policy of our ancestors vindicated by means better adapted to the present time? If France occupied Spain, was it necessary, in order to avoid the consequences of that occupation, that we should blockade Cadiz? No. I looked another way. I sought materials for compensation in another hemisphere.

“*Contemplating Spain, such as our ancestors had known her, I resolved that, if France had Spain, it should not be Spain ‘with the Indies.’ I called the New World into existence to redress the balance of the Old.*”

