

Cuba and the Monroe Doctrine.

The administration begins to wake up, evidently, to the necessity of applying the Monroe doctrine to the case of Cuba, and that not in the cramped and narrow meaning which has been given to it lately by the red-tape diplomacy of the State Department, but in accordance with the interpretation of the people. Public sentiment, which must always prevail in the end under our form of government, begins to tell at last upon the timid and excessively conservative Secretary of State. The seizure and "libelling" of the Spanish gunboats and the issue the government is prepared to raise against them, as a last resort, of these vessels being intended to make war on a "people or colony" with which the United States are at peace, show the broad ground the administration will take in case of necessity. The President, no doubt, has taken an active interest in this new movement and new phase that is about to be given to international law by America, though the question belongs especially to the State Department in its administrative capacity. It is proper to conclude, therefore, that Mr. Fish is preparing to move from his old and unsafe moorings and to set sail with the popular breeze. We recommend him to "crack on" with all sail set, for he has a ship equal to any storm, plenty of sea room and no danger.

The Monroe doctrine was not an abstraction at the time it was promulgated. It was based on great and broad principles of national policy, and the government in those early days, when not a fifth as powerful as now, was ready to maintain it at the mouth of cannon or by the sword. The policy proclaimed by that doctrine was that there should be no more colonization or conquests on American soil by the nations and monarchical Powers of Europe, and was intended to prevent at that particular time the threatened reconquest of the Spanish American republics by Spain and her allies. While this was its special application there was a broader and more comprehensive one which looked to the protection and extension of republican institutions over all the countries of America. It meant that whenever a favorable opportunity arrived the United States would use its influence or power to enlarge the area of republican government and to exclude European domination in this hemisphere. Since the Monroe doctrine was established as a fundamental principle of American policy there have been occasions when it was not strictly enforced. The invasion of Mexico and setting up a European monarchy there by the French was a clear violation of this doctrine and policy; but the United States had a gigantic civil war on hand at the time and could not act as promptly as it would have done otherwise. Still this doctrine was applied, and the French had to leave and their exotic monarchy was suppressed in the end. The application would have been made, no doubt, on broader ground to Cuba, when revolutionary movements on several occasions afforded the opportunity, but for the conflict of opinions in the United States relative to slavery and sectional rivalry.

These opportunities were lost, and, as a consequence, Cuba has been a subject of much trouble and sharp diplomatic encounters between this country and European Powers. The jealousy and rivalry of these Powers and the sensibility of Spain have brought this country to the verge of a rupture with Europe more than once. Now there is another opportunity and a better one than ever occurred before to apply the Monroe doctrine to Cuba; and there is no division in this country on the subject. The slavery question cannot enter into it, for that institution has been abolished both in Cuba, by the revolutionary government, and in the United States. The Cubans have established a *de facto* government, which exercises authority over two-thirds of the island, have a perfect civil and military organization, have maintained a successful struggle for fourteen months against Spanish despotism, have been gaining strength from the commencement of the revolution, and are stronger to-day than ever. What better opportunity could be afforded to apply the Monroe doctrine—to favor the extension of republican institutions in this hemisphere, and to exclude European domination from America? Never was there a clearer case, and our government would show an amount of weakness and ignorance almost incredible if it should fail to recognize the Cubans and to throw the shield of American protection over them.