

# CHILE AND THE MONROE DOCTRINE

BY THEODORE ROOSEVELT

CHILE is one of the countries in which there has been much misconception of the Monroe Doctrine, a misconception largely due to the fact that the United States in its turn has utterly misunderstood Chile and failed to appreciate the really great qualities that Chile possesses. Moreover, the unwise citizens of our own country who write essays to the effect that the Monroe Doctrine is dead, or who defile the National honor by false assertions as to our conduct in acquiring Panama, do all they can to further this misconception and to bring us into disrepute. Finally, mischief is done by the men who talk with loud insolence about all "Latin America," making no distinction between stable and self-respecting countries, on the one hand, and, on the other, some utterly impotent and anarchic little so-called republics in tropical America.

It is important, both for the United States and for Chile, that neither the one nor the other shall identify Chile with these impotent and anarchical little tropical American commonwealths. It is, for instance, very important that the United States shall not ignorantly and stupidly look down on Chile because Colombia behaved badly; and, on the other hand, that Chile shall not encourage

this very regrettable attitude by making common cause with Colombia. No two states of the civilized world are more fundamentally different than Chile and Colombia. Chile has a right to rank on a footing of full equality with the United States, England, Germany, Sweden, Belgium, and Switzerland; in short, with all self-respecting free nations. Colombia as yet has no such right. There are charming, high-bred, and cultivated people in Colombia, just as there are in Egypt, for instance; but the action of Colombia as a governmental unit was such as to render the action of the United States in Panama as inevitable and as justifiable as the interference of England in Egypt and the Sudan twenty years before. The interference, in one case as in the other, was enormously to the benefit of civilization as a whole, and, moreover, was enormously to the benefit of the country over which civilization was thereby extended.

The far-seeing public men of Chile already thoroughly understood the fundamental need of the Monroe Doctrine, and, moreover, thoroughly understood the propriety and necessity of our having acted exactly as we did act in Panama. But there were certain men in Chile, corresponding precisely to the similar

men at home, who were not clear on either subject. It was therefore with real pleasure that I took advantage of the opportunity to set forth the views which I held and which, I believe, represented the views of my countrymen on this subject. It came at a great meeting at the beautiful Municipal Opera-House in Santiago.

One of the addresses of welcome was by Professor Vargas on the history of Chile. The other was by a noted writer and public man, Senator Bulnes, the son of a great Chilean statesman. The Senator, with singular justness and fair-mindedness, touched on the question of the relations of the United States with her sister republics. He showed fair-minded understanding of the policy of the United States, together with a keen sense of national self-respect which found expression in the words, "Chile loves peace, but is not afraid of war." In his address he particularly dwelt upon the advantage to all America of our action in Panama, saying: "Your name is associated with a great work of progress, which will be of especial benefit to Chile—the piercing of the Isthmus of Panama. We Chileans owe you gratitude for this great work, which has placed our national house on the new highway of world-intercourse, and has opened a new and wide door through which our country will come into close contact with the material wealth and the fund of common knowledge and morality of the civilized world." I answered as follows:

"I have been greatly interested in the learned address by Mr. Vargas on the history of Chile. I have already been fairly familiar with that history; for when I was doing my part in preparing my own country for war, at the time that I was Assistant Secretary of the Navy under President McKinley, I studied with minute attention Chilean military and naval history. Among the many things that I have enjoyed here in Chile, one of the chief has been the chance of seeing the admirable work of the officers and enlisted men of the Chilean army, and I look forward to getting at least a glimpse of the Chilean navy. I am acquainted with the really notable poem of Ercilla. I was already aware of the remarkable character of the Araucania Indian. I recognize to the full the high value of the new ethnological entity arising in Chile from the mixture of the two virile types, that of the Spanish Conquistadores and of the valiant Indian by whom Chile was originally

populated. The ruling class, I was also aware, included not only these men of pure descent from the early Spanish conquerors, but also many men descended from the Biscayan and other newcomers of a very high type who came thither in the eighteenth century.

"I also wish to thank most sincerely the distinguished and eloquent orator and public man, Senator Bulnes, who has just addressed you. I deeply appreciate his courteous references, not only to myself, but to the great republic of which I am a citizen. And, moreover, I cordially agree with the entire tone and tenor of his address. Certain of the allusions he has made, notably to the Monroe Doctrine, and of the questions which he has so courteously put, and the wishes he has uttered, make it proper and desirable that I should myself speak on the points to which he alludes.

"We republics of the Western Hemisphere are working out the democratic experiment on a far vaster scale than has ever been attempted anywhere else in the world. We are meeting many new problems, and though we act with certain advantages in our favor, we also suffer under certain disadvantages. Moreover, each of us, each republic, yours, mine, each among all the other American nations of importance, has made certain failures and certain successes that were peculiarly its own, and each has something to learn from as well as to teach every other. For example, the nation to which I belong handled the whole question of slavery very much worse than it was handled by any other free republic of the entire Western world. Again, it was my own nation which, in solving the problem of slavery, was brought to the verge of destruction by four years of civil war, during which it became impotent to aid its sister republics of the New World, or to enforce the Monroe Doctrine, or in any shape or way to be of service to mankind, or to secure respect for itself among the nations of the earth. I hold that, normally, each nation can do best by concerning itself with its own faults and shortcomings, and not with the faults and shortcomings of others, and that each of our nations should find its chief work in advancing the cause of social and industrial betterment among its own people at home; and that it should endeavor always to deal with other nations in a spirit of justice, of courtesy, of consideration and forbearance.

"But there are other duties, less important, and nevertheless of great importance.

*(Continued on page following illustrations)*

There must be international relations. I hold that these relations between nations should be handled on the same plane as the relations between individuals. The same principles should apply in one case as in the other, although the methods of achieving the principles must differ because international law does not exist in the sense that municipal law or law within each nation exists; for there is no law in any real sense unless there is both a judge to declare the law and a representative of the police power able and ready to put that declaration into execution.

"I speak to a gallant people, a proud and patriotic people, with a great military record, with a fine army and navy. Therefore I am certain of being understood when I say that an honorable private man will indignantly refuse to wrong others, and will also himself refuse tamely to submit to wrong by others. In similar fashion, an honorable nation, a free nation, fit to do its part in the worldwide struggle for civilization, for liberty, for order, and for the only peace worth having, the peace of righteousness, must both be able and ready to defend itself against wrong-doing, and also be proudly eager never to wrong others.

"In addition to our duties as members of the great family of civilized nations throughout the world, we of the Western Hemisphere have certain special interests of our own. A hundred years ago the only American nation that had achieved independence was the United States of the North. Ninety years ago the other free nations had just begun their independent careers. As yet they were wholly unable to speak with authority abroad. At that time, and for many years afterwards, even the United States could not always make itself heard by Old World powers, and it was listened to at all only when it spoke with the utmost decision, while at that time no other American power received any heed whatever. It was under these circumstances that the Monroe Doctrine was promulgated. This Doctrine was perfectly simple. It declared that the soil of the Western Hemisphere was no longer to be treated as a subject for territorial conquest or acquisition by Old World powers. I wish you to remember just what the Monroe Doctrine is. If any man tells you that it is dead, ask him if he really means that Old World powers are to be permitted to acquire territory by conquest or colonization in the Western Hemisphere. Unless

he so believes, he cannot assert that the Doctrine is dead. So far from its being dead, I think it is a great deal more alive than ever before. I believe that there is less chance than ever before of the American nations permitting any species of conquest or colonization on this continent by Old World powers. Moreover, I believe that the time has now come when the Doctrine in reality has the guarantee not only of the United States, my own country, but of your country, Chile, and of every other American nation which has risen to a sufficient point of economic well-being, of stable and orderly government, of power to do justice to others and to exact justice from others, and therefore of potential armed strength, to enable it thus to act as a guarantor of the Doctrine.

"In other words, keep these two facts distinctly in your minds: (1) the Doctrine itself, (2) the question as to who the guarantor or guarantors of that Doctrine shall be. I am wholly unable to understand how any farsighted patriot of the two Americas could fail to recognize the vital importance of the Doctrine to the liberty and well-being of the nations of the Western Hemisphere. The only differences that can arise are as to the methods of its enforcement and as to who shall be its guarantors. On those points there must of necessity be change as conditions change.

"When the Doctrine was promulgated, the United States was the only power able to secure any respect whatever for it from the Old World nations. Without armed strength back of it the Monroe Doctrine is not worth the paper on which it is written or the breath of the orators who speak it. It was at the beginning rendered respectable only because back of it lay the army and navy of the United States. When in 1861 our Civil War broke out, and we became powerless to secure respect from other nations in international matters, while no South American nation had yet advanced to a degree that would enable it to take our place, the Monroe Doctrine vanished into thin air. Old World nations at once began a course of conquest and aggression on the American continent, and a foreign empire was established immediately south of the United States. When the Civil War ended, and the United States once more became a power able to speak with self-respect in international affairs, that foreign empire at once crumbled to dust and ashes.

"During all this early period various

causes, to which the two eminent speakers who have preceded me have alluded, combined to keep the nations of Southern and Central America weak and to retard their growth to influence and power. But within the last quarter of a century there has been a great change. Certain republics have achieved a position of assured and orderly liberty. These republics do justice to other peoples. To them there has come a great material prosperity and a moral growth such as to make them in character and in potential strength fit to handle their own Monroe Doctrine, or, to speak more accurately, fit to act as co-guarantors of the Doctrine. Your own Republic of Chile is one of those republics.

"In short, the Doctrine is as emphatically a living doctrine to-day as it ever was; but for many years after it was promulgated it was of necessity a unilateral doctrine because only one country had power to enforce it. Now other nations of the Western Hemisphere have come to a position where by international conduct and by strength they are entitled to stand on a full equality with the United States in this as in all other matters.

"As yet, unfortunately, there still remain other nations in the Western Hemisphere of which this assertion cannot truthfully be made. As long as a nation is from any cause, and especially from chronic revolution and anarchy, reduced to a condition in which she is impotent to perform her duties toward others, or to exact the performance by others of their duties toward her, then it is a waste of words to pretend that what does not exist does exist. It is untruthful folly to assert that it is possible for the United States, or for any other great nation, to treat an anarchic and wrong-doing country on a footing of real and full equality of which I have above spoken as representing that plane of conduct which should characterize all the dealings between my nation and your own, and my nation and certain other South American republics. I hope, and I am reasonably confident, that the less advanced nations of the New World will in their turn gradually advance just as my nation and yours, as well as certain others, have already advanced. As soon as any such nation in the course of its advance reaches a position of self-respecting strength and orderly liberty and achieved power to do and to exact justice, then it should at once step out from any position of tutelage in any respect. Then as regards it likewise the Monroe Doctrine should be

treated as no longer a unilateral doctrine, but one in the upholding of which this nation herself shall take part as an equal among equals. I hope, and I believe, that ultimately the day will come when this will be true of all the nations of the Western Hemisphere. When that day comes, the Monroe Doctrine, in the sense of being a unilateral doctrine, enforced only by the United States, will entirely disappear. It will remain as much as ever a doctrine to be believed in and enforced, but it will be enforced by all the nations of the Western Hemisphere as co-guarantors on a footing of equality.

"The Doctrine partly represents the self-interest of each nation, and partly the disinterested belief that it is essentially in the interest of the nations of the Western Hemisphere. When promulgated by the United States, and as since adopted and followed by the United States, it had, and has always since had, and ought always to have, both of these bases of justification. The United States in its own interest cannot afford to see a great Old World military power acquire territory on this continent. Moreover, the United States, from disinterested friendship for the rest of the free peoples of this continent, must also object to seeing any of their territory thus acquired. This, after all, is simply to feel as every other nation on this continent would feel. Chile could no more afford to tolerate conquest by some Old World military power on or near her northern border than we could afford to tolerate such conquest on or near our southern border.

"At the present day, then, so far as the United States is concerned, the Doctrine must still be one of unilateral enforcement in regions where her interests are vital, and where unfortunately no other American nation has achieved a position of such stable and orderly power as to enable it to be a co-guarantor of the Doctrine.

"This applies to the lands, both continental and insular, which cover the approaches to the Panama Canal. The time had come when it was imperatively necessary that that Canal should be built. The United States ought not to, and, in my judgment, will not, permit any great Old World power to establish itself along the line of approach to the Canal. This is not only vitally important to the United States, but it is also eminently to the interest of the other New World nations. For example, your own nation, Chile, will, I believe, be benefited at least as much

as the United States itself by the building of that Canal—which I may remark parenthetically would not have been built at all if I had not acted precisely and exactly as I did act.

"And, men and women of Chile, let me here use the admirable words with which Senator Bulnes has truthfully described the attitude of your own republic. I too love peace, but it is because I love justice and not because I am afraid of war. I took the action I did in Panama because to have acted otherwise would have been both weak and wicked. I would have taken that action no matter what power had stood in the way. What I did was in the interest of all the world, and was particularly in the interests of Chile and of certain other South American countries. It was in accordance with the highest and strictest dictates of justice. If it were a matter to do over again, I would act precisely and exactly as I in very fact did act.

"We of the United States are solemnly pledged to administer the Panama Canal in the equal interest of all the nations of mankind, and we are pledged to defend it by our army and our navy, by fortifications, and by ships along the Canal and along the lines of approach to the Canal. Therefore we are obliged to see that the Monroe Doctrine applies in full to the territory controlling the approaches to the Canal, and this both because of our own vital interest in the matter, and especially because as yet no other power along the approach is able to act as a guarantor.

"But in other parts of South America there are nations such as your own, such as Chile, which have now reached a position that entitles them to stand on a footing of exact equality in all international relations with the United States. I believe that they have the right to expect such treatment.

"Now, gentlemen, as you know, I believe that words are worse than useless except as they represent or are translated into actual deeds. I ask you to judge what I now say about the proper attitude of the United States in foreign relations by what I actually did when I was President. My host, your fellow-citizen and distinguished public servant, Senator Walker-Martinez, was Minister from Chile to Washington during my term. He can tell you of his own knowledge from the inside that I strove my best throughout those years to act in a spirit of the most cordial and genuine friendship and justice towards all our

fellow-republics in the New World. He can tell you this specifically in reference to Chile. When I said a thing I meant it, and I acted on it. When, in response to the unanimously expressed wish of the Pan-American Congress, I said that the time had come to build an Isthmian Canal, I meant it, and I saw to it that the words were translated into deeds. When, on the other hand, my country had promised that Cuba should be a free and independent republic, I saw that the promise was kept. The Cuban Minister here in this city can tell you all about our relations with Cuba. All I wished of Cuba, as of each one of our Central American neighbors, was that she should be stable and prosperous. All I did was to try to help her to achieve such stability and prosperity as enabled me to see that every representative of the United States, civil or military, left her during my term of service so that she could begin her career as a sovereign and independent republic."

I then instanced the facts in the case of Santo Domingo as stated in my article on "South America and the Monroe Doctrine" [The Outlook of March 14] and continued:

"I do not believe that the United States should meddle in its neighbors' affairs, when such meddling can possibly be avoided. While I was President, I declined to interfere in any disputes between any nations on this continent or elsewhere unless both the nations asked me to aid in settling their differences. We never acted toward any other nation save as our own self-respect demanded; and if the other nation showed respect for itself and for us, we showed it respect in return. These are the principles upon which I believe that the foreign policy of my country should be founded. Specifically, I desire the United States and Chile to treat each the other on a footing of absolute equality, and of self-respect, combined with respect for the rights of the other. The essentials of the Monroe Doctrine are vital to the welfare of all our people in the Western Hemisphere. Chile has achieved a position where she is entitled herself to stand as one of the guarantors of that Doctrine. I hail her advent to this position of assured international power and dignity, and I am glad to be the guest of her hard-working and valiant people to-night."

The sentiments which I expressed in this speech were in effect exactly the sentiments upon which while I was President I had

acted. The chairman of the committee of reception in Chile was Mr. Walker-Martinez, who had been Chilean Minister at Washington during most of the time that I was President. My relations with Mr. Walker-Martinez had been close. I had found while I was President that I could trust implicitly his loyalty and discretion, and that, moreover, he and I looked at the fundamental questions of foreign policy from the same standpoint. Accordingly I used to discuss freely with him the methods of application of the Monroe Doctrine. He and I both felt that it was imperative that the Monroe Doctrine should be retained, but that the methods of application must of necessity change with the changing conditions, and especially with the growth in South America of such stable, orderly, and powerful national units as Chile, the Argentine, and Brazil.

I had discussed at some length with Mr. Walker-Martinez the possibility of getting these three powers to join with the United States—and Mexico, which then was in a condition of stability and apparent prosperity, from which, alas! it has now completely retrograded—in securing order in certain disorderly Central American countries which we were anxious to protect from European aggression. Specifically, I discussed this matter with him in order to lay the grounds for future action at a time when it seemed that I might have to interfere as regards Venezuela. This was about January, 1906. When the question immediately at issue concerned Santo Domingo, I told Mr. Walker-Martinez in full the reasons for my action in the case, he being one of the foreign diplomats who was informed of all the circumstances. At that time I told him that if Santo Domingo had been in the Pacific I should have asked the Chilean Government to undertake the task which we were undertaking—using the expression that, in such event, as soon as the Chilean ships appeared off the island ours would retire.

There was a peculiar appropriateness in making this speech in just the place I did. The time had come when it was necessary clearly to restate the Monroe Doctrine as changing events had rendered it necessary that it should be restated. In Chile the educational system is excellent, and many students from Central American states come thither. Most naturally, these students tend to ask that their states be treated on a full equality with Chile. They cannot be so

treated until they show themselves worthy of the treatment. By effort, by sober determination, by steadfast exercise of will power and self-respect, Chile has raised herself so that she stands in the front rank of civilized powers, among such powers as those, whether of big population or not, to which I have alluded above. When any tropical American state at any time raises itself in similar fashion to such a level, it will be the duty of the United States, no less than of Chile, promptly and heartily to recognize that fact, and thenceforth to treat that state as one equal treats another.

As with everything else in life, facts are what count, and words are of use only so far as they represent the facts. It is of no use whatever for well-meaning but misguided representatives of these states inexcusably to assert, or for less well-meaning people at home inexcusably to assert, that these states are to be treated on a full equality with great stable civilized powers until they show themselves fit for such treatment. Let them by sustained effort prove their worth, and then it will become the highest duty of the United States to give fullest and most generous recognition of the fact.

At the time of my visit to Chile the Colombian Government had sent to its diplomatic representatives in Chile a published circular which really amounted to an incitement to make demonstrations against me. In Chile a few Colombian students and citizens endeavored to carry out the spirit of these instructions by shouting "*Viva Mexico!*" and "*Viva Colombia!*" on public occasions. In its circular the Colombian Government quoted with satisfaction some of the untrue assertions in the campaign utterances of the present Vice-President of the United States. The equal readiness with which the Colombians cheered for Colombia and for Mexico showed their entire indifference as to whether the controversy with the United States was due to President Wilson's action or to mine; they did not care a rap for the rights of the case; they cheered Mexico with the same enthusiasm as Colombia merely because each represented hostility to the United States.

It is an entire mistake to suppose, as some well-meaning people assert, that the assertion by the United States of the Monroe Doctrine, or its display of power, has hurt it in its dealings with South America. To be offensive, to be rude, or to adopt a bullying attitude in the name of that Doctrine of course does hurt the United States; simply because

rudeness and bad manners and bullying are always damaging, without regard to the exciting cause. But no nation in the world now can, or does, receive respectful treatment from others unless it possesses the virile virtues, and no nation can affect to play a great part in the world unless it possesses potential strength and the will and the ability to use that strength in defense of its own rights and in defense of the cause of justice should the need arise. The voyage of the American battle fleet round the world helped the cause of peace, helped the honor of the American name, a hundred times more than all the peace conferences in which American representatives have ever taken part.

I wish that the good people who so often because of imperfect information follow unwise people into the ultra-peace movements could realize the damage they thereby do the United States in the eyes of sensible men abroad. If only they would face facts and make up their minds to test words by deeds the result would be of incalculable benefit to our people. At this moment far-seeing and self-respecting South American statesmen have been put in a very uncomfortable position by the request to have all American nations sign an agreement for obligatory arbitration about all difficulties. Naturally, they think that the United States cannot be honest in making such a request—and indeed those who make the request can prove their honesty only by admitting their folly. At the moment that the request is made the American Government has been following a course with regard to Mexico which either means that war between the two nations is a likelihood over matters which cannot be submitted to arbitration, or else that the action of the American Government has been one of humiliating bluff and insincerity. These South American statesmen feel that as long as it is evident that the United States neither could nor would submit its own attitude as regards Mexico to arbitration it is insincere and improper for it to ask other nations to join in making a promise which, at the moment, the United States is repudiating, and which in time of national need every other strong and self-respecting American commonwealth would be obliged to repudiate.

It was announced the other day in the South American press that the United States was about to agree to a treaty with Denmark which should provide that all questions, even those affecting national honor and interest,

should hereafter be arbitrated. Under such a treaty Denmark would have the perfect right to sell the island of St. Thomas to any great military nation of Europe, and any arbitral court would decide that she had the right. Yet no patriotic American of courage and sound intelligence would hesitate for a moment to say that, treaty or no treaty, such action could not be tolerated by the United States. In the same way, if Mexico chose to sell Magdalena Bay to some great Old World power, any arbitration court would decide that Mexico had the right to do so. Yet it would be a criminal act for the United States to permit such a sale. As regards St. Thomas and as regards Magdalena Bay alike, not only would the Monroe Doctrine forbid the transfer of either to any foreign power, but, even if it did not, and if no such doctrine were in existence, the United States, if it possessed the slightest wisdom, could not permit such transfer to take place. It is worse than folly, it is mischievous hypocrisy, to make promises which ought not to be and would not be kept.

Nor is this all. At the very moment when I write, the Senate of the United States is holding up two proper arbitration treaties which ought to be continued, and the Administration is not submitting to arbitration one question which we are asked to arbitrate, and which under these treaties we are pledged to arbitrate. We expose ourselves to the derision of all serious-minded and upright men when, at the very time when we fail to carry out and to continue the moderate arbitration treaties already made, we yet profess our willingness to enter into new and far more sweeping arbitration treaties which every sane man knows that we would violate, and would be obliged to violate, if the occasion for their fulfillment ever arose. The United States can keep the respect of other nations and can continue to do good in the world only if it keeps up the navy and army of the United States at the very least at their present pitch of preparedness and efficiency relative to other nations; only if it acts with justice and high-mindedness toward other nations; and only if it refrains from putting itself in the humiliating and hypocritical attitude of making foolish and improper promises, the making of which is inconsistent with National self-respect, and which, if made, would have to be repudiated because of imperative National need if ever the question of their serious application arose.