

through them the House. The members of his party voted as he desired, not because they wished to enforce the will of the majority party, but because they bowed to the will of the patronage dispensing speaker. The majority party had no other will than his.

This is one of the worst legacies that any public man has left to any country since President John Adams inaugurated the vicious spoils system.

Though Reed and Nast had nothing strikingly in common, in their personality, their associations, or their sentiments, they were alike in this—that with exceptionally great opportunities neither accomplished, or tried to accomplish, anything for the public good of an enduring quality. In no sense bad men, in many senses good and excellent men, their useful services were of the minor and transitory kind which are without permanent influence upon social life. Yet, with their splendid opportunities, each might have built not only for the present in which he flourished but for all time.

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## NEWS

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The movement against Venezuela by Germany and Great Britain (p. 552) has not been abandoned or suspended, as appeared from last week's dispatches that it probably would be; but on the contrary it has advanced to the point of open war.

On the 7th these two European powers presented an ultimatum to the Venezuelan authorities at Caracas; and on the 8th the British minister and the German charge d'affaires at Caracas closed their offices, and proceeding to La Guayra, each went on board a man of war of his own nation. They left their affairs in charge of the American minister. Their withdrawal is reported to have been made in secrecy, the Venezuelan government not having been informed of their intention. Even the presentation of the ultimatum was not done in accordance with diplomatic usages. It was simply left informally at the private residence of the Venezuelan minister for foreign affairs, on Sunday, when all the public offices were closed.

Within 48 hours after that unceremonious delivery of the German-British ultimatum, the combined British and German fleets began hostilities by seizing the Venezuelan fleet of four war vessels in the harbor of La Guayra. It is explained in the dispatches that this hostile act was precipitated by the arrest in Caracas of all British and German subjects resident there, under orders from President Castro. It would appear from the same dispatches, however, that these arrests may have been made in order to protect the persons arrested from mob violence; for patriotic feeling is reported as running high in Caracas, since the ultimatum was announced, and it is said that all the troops of the city have been called out and that the prison in which the fugitives are confined is surrounded by armed soldiers pressing back the frenzied mob. The prisoners have since been released, upon the application of the American minister. After seizing the Venezuelan vessels, the allied fleet sunk them. On the following day, the 10th, they captured a Venezuelan gunboat. They also on the latter day entered the harbor and landed a force of men with a view to seizing the La Guayra custom house. President Castro is reported to have issued a proclamation calling upon the people of Venezuela to take up arms in defense of their republic.

British explanations of the ultimatum with which this war began were offered on the 8th in the House of Commons by Mr. Balfour, the premier, in reply to questions from the Liberal leader. Mr. Balfour asserted that the British government has for two years had grave cause for complaint on various occasions of unjustifiable interference on the part of the Venezuelan government with the liberty and property of British subjects; that no efforts had been spared to obtain an amicable settlement of the questions at issue; that no satisfactory explanation had been forthcoming, and that lately the representations of the British minister had been left practically unnoticed. There were also cases, he added, in which British subjects and companies had large claims against the government of Venezuela. Proceeding with his explanation, he said that the British government had been acting in conjunction with the German government, which also has large claims against Venezuela, and a final communication had now been made to

Venezuela by the British minister and the German charge d'affaires that if no satisfactory reply was received the two governments had decided to take such measures as might be necessary to enforce the payment of their demands. Replying to a specific question, Mr. Balfour said he believed the communication sent to the Venezuelan government by Great Britain and Germany was neither joint nor identical; but he refused to answer James Keir Hardie, the labor member, who asked if the ultimatum was intended to enforce the payment of private claims. The British foreign office declared on the 8th that—

there is not the slightest desire to coerce Venezuela, and if any answer had been made to our repeated protests and demands no such action as now taken would have been proceeded with. It was the persistent and insulting disregard to all representations which compelled us to move. It is now too late in the day for anything but purely diplomatic arrangements for the satisfaction of our injuries. When the fleets have assembled there is scarcely time to deal with bankers, and a financial settlement should have been suggested long ago and would have been welcomed by both governments and ourselves. However, any bona fide proposition will receive careful attention. Reconstruction in commercial affairs is always better than liquidation, and if the reconstruction of the Venezuelan finances can be accomplished to the satisfaction of our diplomatic claims and individual losses, both Germany and Great Britain will have achieved their ends.

The German explanation was made on the 8th by Chancellor von Bulow, in the form of a memorandum for the reichstag. According to that memorandum the questions at issue relate to the demands of German residents of Venezuela and the claims of German contractors respecting the Venezuelan government's nonfulfillment of its obligations. The memorandum explains that German settlers lost in the civil war prior to 1900 \$340,000 through forced loans, seizures of cattle, pillaging of houses and estates; and in the last civil war they lost an additional \$600,000; and that the commission of Venezuelan officials appointed in January, 1901, to decide the claims was not satisfactory, because all claims arising previous to President Castro's administration were ignored, diplomatic protests were precluded, and the claims were only to be paid with bonds of the new revolutionary loan, which

would be evidently almost worthless. The German minister at Caracas having failed to get these points altered, so the German memorandum proceeds, Germany felt compelled to refuse altogether to recognize the commission. Similar refusals were made by Great Britain, the United States, Italy, Spain, and the Netherlands, but as Venezuela insisted Germany examined the claims and made Venezuela responsible for those which were apparently well founded. Venezuela then promised a satisfactory solution through her congress, but the latter simply reverted to the commission. Venezuela declined further discussion and refused to settle by diplomatic means, which, continues the memorandum, is not in accordance with international law; and, as the whole attitude of the Venezuelan government indicates an endeavor to refuse to settle foreign claims in accordance with international law, and as Germans have been lately treated by Venezuelan troops with especial violence, which, if unpunished, might create the impression that Germans will be left unprotected to the mercy of foreign tyranny, the imperial charge d'affaires at Caracas handed to the government on December 7 an ultimatum demanding the immediate payment of the war claims to 1900, and a satisfactory statement regarding the fixing and guaranteeing the amount of the claims arising from the recent civil war. At the same time, according to this memorandum, the German claims in connection with the building of the slaughter house at Caracas and the claims of the German Great Venezuelan Railway company for guaranteed interest must be settled. The ultimatum concludes, says the memorandum, with a notice that if a satisfactory reply is not forthcoming, Germany, to its regret, will be compelled to take measures to obtain satisfaction.

The Venezuelan side of the controversy is presented in an open letter from President Castro to the people of Venezuela. This letter reviews at length the relations of Venezuela to the foreign powers, but that part of it does not appear in the published dispatches. We quote what does appear in them.

Foreign cablegrams relate that certain foreign nations, among them Great Britain and Germany, have allied themselves together to carry out acts of violence and aggression against Venezuela, and their manner of obtain-

ing the resumption of the payment of interest on the public debt was to be suspected as a consequence of the revolution that I lately crushed. It is inconceivable that nations which entertain cordial and friendly relations with Venezuela should prefer to resort to force rather than follow the diplomatic path, especially when the supposed difference comes fully within the jurisdiction of our laws. Had Venezuela refused to fulfill her fiscal engagements and had justice and diplomacy exhausted their resources against such an attempt, only then could such extreme acts be expected, but this will never happen.

President Castro further explains that his government has not increased the debt of Venezuela and that he paid for all that was ordered during the revolution, including the German and other railroad freight charges occasioned by the transportation of troops. Those acts, he says, should prove the honesty of his administration and what foreigners may expect of him. "Peace is not far off," he adds, "and with it the fulfillment of all promises." In an interview, published in the United States on the 10th, President Castro discusses the crisis as follows:

The Venezuelan government has not received any ultimatum, properly speaking, but rather simultaneous requests from Great Britain and Germany. The claims Great Britain asks this government to settle are small, and up to the present time we have not been aware of them. Never having been presented, Venezuela has consequently never refused to settle them. Great Britain's action, therefore, is without justification. The Venezuelan government cannot decide on foreign claims before the revolution has been entirely crushed. At present the only aim of the government is the reestablishment of public order, and other questions must necessarily be subservient to this object. Nevertheless, to prove Venezuela's desire to settle all pending claims fairly, the government issued a decree during the last session of congress, dated November 28, creating a committee to which all pending claims should be referred. No claims have been presented to this committee, and no claims have been rejected. There has been no denial of justice. Why, then, should foreign chancelleries intervene, thereby ignoring our laws and endeavoring to violate our national sovereignty? We cannot understand this action.

Being asked what he intended to do in view of the present attitude of the powers, Mr. Castro replied: "Enforce our rights; explain to the world that Venezuela has laws, and prove that we have never denied our

engagements." To the question: "What reply will the Venezuelan government make to the requests handed it by the German and British envoys?" he replied: "The Venezuelan government is astonished that after the notes which were transmitted to it by the diplomatic representatives of Germany and Great Britain these envoys should leave Caracas without awaiting the reply of the Venezuelan government."

The attitude of the American government is explained by the Washington representative of the Chicago Record-Herald, a Republican paper, as follows:

The President was long ago made fully acquainted with the purposes of both European governments in their joint action and the limitations under which they should proceed were definitely understood. All the military and naval plans of both powers were laid before the government. This is an unheard-of proceeding, because, in view of the terms under which they were to act, it amounts to practically an unequivocal acceptance of the Monroe doctrine and a recognition of the right of the United States to prevent any territorial aggression on the western hemisphere. This government, however, will be prepared for contingencies. The navy department could on short notice send into those waters a fleet far stronger than the combined naval forces of Germany and Great Britain, but no warship will be sent if it can be avoided. The country's policy has been to hold distinctly aloof from both sides.

Germany has on hand at home a serious parliamentary struggle, the beginning of which was noted last week (p. 552). It is over the protective tariff bill, which a coalition majority is trying to rush through the reichstag without reasonable consideration and against the obstructive tactics of the Socialist and the People's parties. On the 4th the majority held the reichstag in continuous session from ten in the morning until 11:30 at night—the longest session in its history—in order to prevent the Socialist members from attending and addressing mass meetings which they had called for the purpose of denouncing the tariff bill. This part of the Socialist plan of opposition was thereby frustrated; but 27 mass meetings, enormous in numbers, were held throughout Berlin nevertheless. The session of the reichstag meanwhile was extremely disorderly. According to the dis-