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Much as Mr. Balfour's methods in the Venezuelan case resemble pettifogging, one must concede the marvelous cleverness with which he has utilized them to baffle Mr. Roosevelt.

Mr. Roosevelt has studiously endeavored to save the Monroe doctrine by evading a direct issue upon it. But Mr. Balfour, with the cunning of a Tombs lawyer, has led him into a position where the direct issue seems unavoidable except by an absolute back down.

The first and supreme opportunity was missed by Mr. Roosevelt when he acquiesced in the "pacific" naval demonstration of the allies for the collection of public debts from the harassed and bankrupt South American republic. A word of friendly protest then would in all probability have prevented the Anglo-German expedition and broken up the disgraceful alliance. Or, failing that, it would at any rate have put Great Britain and Germany into the awkward position of defying the wishes of a powerful and friendly nation and of committing the first overt act of hostility.

But another, though much inferior, opportunity arose, and of this Mr. Roosevelt did essay to take advantage. The "pacific" blockade of Venezuela could be objected to without directly raising the issue of the Monroe doctrine, and Mr. Roosevelt set in motion the appropriate diplomatic processes. It was here that Mr. Balfour's pettifogging came into play. Both Great Britain and Ger-

many had all along insisted that they were not making war upon Venezuela. The ultimatums were but civil notices to settle. The seizure of the Venezuelan vessels was "not a measure of war" but only a provisional something or other to "enforce ordinary courtesy." The bombardment of Cabello was strictly "pacific," and so the blockade was to be. But when Mr. Roosevelt intimates the unwillingness of the United States to recognize a blockade not made in the prosecution of war, Mr. Balfour suddenly abandons his "pacific" masquerade, concedes that there is no such thing in international law as a "pacific" blockade, and declares that actual war exists. To be sure, there has been no formal declaration of war; but how, blandly asks Mr. Balfour, can you seize ships and bombard forts, unless there is war?

So the blockade is to be made effective as a war measure, and the United States, no longer able to object that it is unlawful, but forced by Mr. Balfour into the position of a neutral, are obliged to warn away their merchant ships from Venezuela and to look on while the European powers make wanton war upon her, reserving the right to interfere only if Venezuela territory is occupied "permanently," whatever that may happen to mean, and in contravention of the Monroe doctrine. How Mr. Roosevelt can any longer conserve the Monroe doctrine except by casting the United States in the role of an aggressor, and raising that issue directly, it is very difficult to see.

Without at this time discussing the merits of the Monroe doctrine, one or two observations regarding it are necessary in view of the kind of comment the newspapers and some public men

are making. It is urged, for instance, that if the United States is to guard the American republics from European conquest, it ought to make itself responsible for their good behavior. The absurdity of this contention is transparent. The United States guards the States of the Union against all foreign aggression, yet it is not responsible to anyone for their good behavior. So long as their behavior is within their reserved rights of sovereignty, the United States are not answerable for them, yet will not permit a foreign attack upon them. Though no foreign power can collect debts with warships of any of the States, the United States makes no guarantee of any State debt. Why, then, should the Monroe doctrine, which makes the United States the self-assumed guardian of neighboring republics, impose upon them any obligations to answer for debts or other shortcomings of those republics?

The fact is that defaults by these small republics in the payment of their debts, are among the contingencies that have entered into the bargains under which their debts have fallen into foreign hands. The bonds of Venezuela have been bought by foreign speculators for a song because they might be paid, or they might not. Possibility of default and repudiation was among the factors that fixed the market value. To say that non-payment of such debts constitutes an outrage upon the nations whose speculative citizens hold them, and that it justifies war, either pacific or bellicose, is to say what is not only absurd, but what is apt to be malignantly so.

Prof. Jenks's report to the secretary of war on the question of Chinese labor in the Philippines has attracted the attention and excited the