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INTERNATIONAL ISOLATION OF THE UNITED STATES.<sup>1</sup>

THE "Civic duties," Mr. President, upon which I have the honor of being asked to address you this evening, are doubtless those which attach to American citizens in their private capacities. Those duties are both many and diverse. There are those which are due to a town or city, there are others which are due to a particular state or commonwealth, there are others which are due in respect of the nation at large. As my invitation here was coupled with a suggestion that I speak to some theme connected with my experience in the public service, I shall ask your attention to a subject related to national affairs and in particular to the national foreign policy. It may cross your minds, perhaps, that the foreign relations of the government are about the last things upon which the private citizen can exert himself to advantage — and so far as specific cases and particular occasions are concerned, the thought is an entirely just one. Those cases and those occasions must necessarily be left to the discretion of the administration in power, which, as alone possessed of all the material facts, is alone qualified to deal with them. But, though the instances for their application must be dealt with by the constituted authorities, there is nothing in the principles of foreign policy which is secret, or unknowable, or which justifies their not being understood. Domestic policy concerns more nearly a greater number of persons and

is therefore more likely to be generally investigated and apprehended. Domestic policy and foreign policy, however, touch at innumerable points, and the more the latter is likely to be overlooked by the public at large, the greater the importance that it should be carefully studied by the more thoughtful portion of the community. The private citizen can influence it, of course, and should as far as he can, by his action at the polls. But no citizen does his whole duty upon a public question merely by his vote even if he votes right, and when the issue presented relates to a great principle of foreign policy, his vote is probably the least potent of the weapons at his command. In a free country, the real ruler in the long run is found to be public opinion — those who apparently fill the seats of power are simply the registers of its edicts — and he who would most thoroughly fulfill the obligations of citizenship either generally or as regards any particular juncture or subject-matter must organize and bring to bear enlightened public opinion — by private or public speech, through the press, or through the other various channels appropriate to that end. Perhaps the importance of such enlightened public opinion as well as the lamentable absence of it was never more strikingly demonstrated than by the circumstances attending what has come to be known as the Venezuela Boundary incident. On the one hand, there was the great mass of the people enthusiastically indorsing the stand of the govern-

<sup>1</sup> Address delivered at Sanders Theatre, Harvard College, March 2, 1898.

ment — yet at the same time only most dimly and imperfectly comprehending what the government had done or why it had done it. On the other hand, among the natural and proper and would-be leaders of public sentiment, there were many equally hot against the government; who continued to denounce it long after the British prime minister had admitted the government to be acting within its right and in accord with its traditional policy; and who, in some instances, when the American contention had become wholly successful, could think of nothing better to say than that the British were a pusillanimous set after all. Surely, whoever was right or whoever wrong, whether there was error in point of substance or in point of form or no error at all, whatever the merits or whatever the outcome, as an exhibition of current comprehension of the foreign relations of the country, the spectacle presented was by no means edifying. The moral is obvious and the lesson is clear — the foreign policy of the country is one of the things a citizen should study and understand and aim to have studied and understood by the community generally — and I therefore do not hesitate to invite you to consider for a few moments a feature of our foreign policy which may be described as the “international isolation of the United States.”

What is meant by the phrase “international isolation” as thus used is this. The United States is certainly now entitled to rank among the great Powers of the world. Yet, while its place among the nations is assured, it purposely takes its stand outside the European family circle to which it belongs, and neither accepts the responsibilities of its place nor secures its advantages. It avowedly restricts its activities to the American continents and intentionally assumes an attitude of absolute aloofness to everything outside those continents. This rule of policy is not infrequently associated with another which is known as the Mon-

roe doctrine — as if the former grew out of the Monroe doctrine or were, in a sense, a kind of consideration for that doctrine, or a sort of complement to it. In reality the rule of isolation originated and was applied many years before the Monroe doctrine was proclaimed. No doubt consistency requires that the conduct toward America which America expects of Europe should be observed by America toward Europe. Nor is there any more doubt that such reciprocal conduct is required of us not only by consistency but by both principle and expediency. The vital feature of the Monroe doctrine is that no European Power shall forcibly possess itself of American soil and forcibly control the political fortunes and destinies of its people. Assuredly America can have no difficulty in governing its behavior toward Europe on the same lines.

Tradition and precedent are a potent force in the New World as well as in the Old and dominate the counsels of modern democracies as well as those of ancient monarchies. The rule of international isolation for America was formulated by Washington, was embalmed in the earnest and solemn periods of the Farewell Address, and has come down to succeeding generations with all the immense prestige attaching to the injunctions of the Father of his Country and of the statesmen and soldiers who, having first aided him to free the people of thirteen independent communities, then joined him in the even greater task of welding the incoherent mass into one united nation. The Washington rule, in the sense in which it has been commonly understood and actually applied, could hardly have been adhered to more faithfully if it had formed part of the text of the Constitution. But there can be no question that such common understanding and practical application have given an extension to the rule quite in excess of its terms as well as of its true spirit and meaning. Washington conveyed his

celebrated warning to his countrymen in these words : —

“The great rule of conduct for us in regard to foreign nations is, in extending our commercial relations, to have with them as little political connection as possible. . . .

“Europe has a set of primary interests which to us have none or a very remote relation. Hence she must be engaged in frequent controversies the causes of which are essentially foreign to our concerns. Hence, therefore, it must be unwise in us to implicate ourselves by artificial ties in the ordinary vicissitudes of her politics or the ordinary combinations and collisions of her friendships or enmities.

“Our detached and distant situation invites and enables us to pursue a different course. . . .

“Why forego the advantages of so peculiar a situation? Why quit our own to stand upon foreign ground? Why, by interweaving our destiny with that of any part of Europe, entangle our peace and prosperity in the toils of European ambition, rivalry, interest, humor, or caprice?

“It is our true policy to steer clear of permanent alliances with any portion of the foreign world ; . . .

“Taking care always to keep ourselves by suitable establishments on a respectable defensive posture, we may safely trust to temporary alliances for extraordinary emergencies.”

Now what is it that these utterances enjoin us not to do? What rule of abstinence do they lay down for this country? The rule is stated with entire explicitness. It is that this country shall not participate in the ordinary vicissitudes of European politics and shall not make a permanent alliance with any foreign power. It is coupled with the express declaration that extraordinary emergencies may arise to which the rule does not apply, and that when they do arise temporary alliances with foreign

powers may be properly resorted to. Further, not only are proper exceptions to the rule explicitly recognized, but its author, with characteristic caution and wisdom, carefully limits the field which it covers by bounds which in practice are either accidentally or intentionally disregarded. For example, it cannot be intermeddling with the current course of European politics to protect American citizens and American interests wherever in the world they may need such protection. It cannot be such intermeddling to guard our trade and commerce and to see to it that its natural development is not fraudulently or forcibly or unfairly arrested. It is as open to America as to Europe to undertake the colonization of uninhabited and unappropriated portions of the globe, and if the United States were to enter upon such a policy, it would not be implicating ourselves in the ordinary vicissitudes of European politics. In short, the rule of the Farewell Address does not include many important subjects-matter its application to which is commonly taken for granted, and does not excuse the inaction of this government in many classes of cases in which the rule is pleaded as a sufficient justification. Take, for instance, the case of American missions and American missionaries in Turkey, and assume for present purposes that missionaries have been maltreated and their property destroyed under circumstances which call upon Turkey to make reparation. The duty of government to exact the reparation is clear — it can be exonerated from its discharge only by some invincible obstacle, such, for example, as the concert of Europe. Suppose that concert did not exist or were broken, and that by joining hands with some competent Power, having perhaps similar grievances, the government could assert its rights and could obtain redress for American citizens. Does the rule of the Farewell Address inhibit such an alliance in such a case for such a purpose? Nothing can

be clearer than that it does not. To protect American citizens wherever they lawfully are, instead of being an impertinent intrusion into foreign politics, is to accomplish one of the chief ends for which the national government is instituted — and if the government can do its duty with an ally where it must fail without, and even if it can more securely and efficiently do that duty with an ally than it can without, it would be not merely folly, but recreancy as well, not to make the alliance. Again, for another imaginary case, let us go to the newspapers — for pure imaginings, you will readily agree, there is nothing like them. But a few weeks ago they had all the leading Powers of Europe retaliating for the Dingley tariff by an immense combination against American trade — a subject from which their attention was soon diverted by their discovery of a conspiracy among those same Powers for the partition of China. Suppose by some extraordinary, almost miraculous accident the newspapers had guessed right in both cases, and that it were now true not only that China is to be divided up among certain European states but that those states propose and are likely, by all sorts of vexatious and discriminating duties and impositions, to utterly ruin the trade between China and this country. Does the rule of the Farewell Address apply to such a case? Are the interests involved what Washington describes as the primary interests of Europe and would resistance to the threatened injury be participation in the ordinary vicissitudes of European politics? These questions can be answered in but one way, and nothing can be plainer than that the right and duty of such resistance would be limited only by the want of power to make the resistance effectual and by its cost as compared with the loss from non-resistance. Doubtless, whatever our rights, it would be folly to contend against a united Europe. Doubtless also, as we fence out all the

world from our own home markets, we ought not to count upon finding any nation to aid us in making the trade with China open to us as to all other nations on equal terms. It is conceivable, however, that such an ally might be found, and if it were found and the alliance were reasonably sure to attain the desired end at not disproportionate cost, there could not be two opinions as to its propriety. An illustration drawn from actual facts may be more impressive than any founded upon the conjectures of press correspondents. In 1884, most, if not all of the Powers of Europe being then engaged in extending their sovereignty over portions of the African continent, Germany and France coöperated in calling a general Conference at Berlin, and among the Powers invited included the United States, partly no doubt because of our peculiar relation to the Republic of Liberia and partly because of our present and prospective interest in trade with Africa. The declared objects of the Conference were briefly, first, freedom of commerce at the mouth and in the valley of the Congo; second, free navigation of the Congo and Niger rivers; and third, definition of the characteristics of an effective occupation of territory — it being understood that each Power reserved the right to ratify or not to ratify the results of the Conference. Our government, finding nothing in the objects of the Conference that was not laudable, accepted the invitation. The Conference took place, this country being represented by our minister to Germany, who acquitted himself with distinguished ability. Indeed, not only did the Conference accomplish the general purposes named in the invitations to it, but, owing to the special initiative of the United States minister, the area of territory covered was largely extended, propositions were adopted for the neutralization of the region in case of war between the Powers interested and for mediation and arbitration between

them before an appeal to arms, and instead of taking the form of a treaty the results of the Conference were embodied in a declaration called the "General Act of the Berlin Conference." Nevertheless, though signed by all the other parties to the Conference, and though we are so largely responsible for its provisions, the Act still remains without the signature of the United States. It was antagonized by resolutions in the House of Representatives because of its supposed conflict with the rule of the Farewell Address. It has never been submitted to the Senate on the hypothesis that it engages us "to share in the obligation of enforcing neutrality in the remote valley of the Congo" — an hypothesis which, if well founded, might properly be considered as making the arrangement an improvident one for the United States. So long as the United States is without territory in the region covered by the Berlin Act, its guaranty of the neutrality of the territory of any other Power would seem to lack the element of reciprocal benefit. But in no event can the Berlin Act be fairly brought within the rule of the Farewell Address, and if the Act does not bear the interpretation put upon it as respects the guaranty of the neutrality of territory, or if we should hereafter found a colony, a second Liberia for example, in the Congo region, the signing of the Act by the United States would violate no established principle of our foreign policy, would be justified by our interests, and would be demanded on the simple grounds that the United States should not hesitate to bind itself by a compact it had not hesitated to share in making, and should not enjoy the fruits of a transaction without rendering the expected consideration.

The Washington rule of isolation, then, proves on examination to have a much narrower scope than the generally accepted versions give to it. Those versions of it may and undoubtedly do

find countenance in loose and general and unconsidered statements of public men both of the Washington era and of later times. Nevertheless it is the rule of Washington, and not that of any other man or men, that is authoritative with the American people, so that the inquiry what were Washington's reasons for the rule and how far those reasons are applicable to the facts of the present day is both pertinent and important. Washington states his reasons with singular clearness and force. "This nation," he says in substance, "is young and weak. Its remote and detached geographical situation exempts it from any necessary or natural connection with the ordinary politics or quarrels of European states. Let it therefore stand aloof from such politics and such quarrels and avoid any alliances that might connect it with them. This the nation should do that it may gain time — that the country may have peace during such period as is necessary to enable it to settle and mature its institutions and to reach without interruption that degree of strength and consistency which will give it the command of its own fortunes." Such is the whole theory of the Washington rule of isolation. Its simple statement shows that the considerations justifying the rule to his mind can no longer be urged in support of it. Time has been gained — our institutions are proven to have a stability and to work with a success exceeding all expectation — and though the nation is still young, it has long since ceased to be feeble or to lack the power to command its own fortunes. It is just as true that the achievements of modern science have annihilated the time and space that once separated the Old World from the New. In these days of telephones and railroads and ocean cables and ocean steamships, it is difficult to realize that Washington could write to the French Ambassador at London in 1790, "We at this great distance from the northern parts of Eu-



rope hear of wars and rumors of wars as if they were the events or reports of another planet." It was an ever present fact to his mind, of course, and is of the first importance in connection with this subject, that notwithstanding our remoteness from Europe, not merely one, as now, but three of the great Powers of Europe had large adjoining possessions on this continent — a feature of the situation so vital and so menacing in the eyes of the statesmen of that day as to force Jefferson to buy Louisiana despite the national poverty and despite plausible, if not conclusive, constitutional objections. Nothing can be more obvious, therefore, than that the conditions for which Washington made his rule no longer exist. The logical, if not the necessary result is that the rule itself should now be considered as non-existent also. Washington himself, it is believed, had no doubt and made no mistake upon that point. That he was of opinion that the regimen suitable to the struggling infancy of the nation would be adapted to its lusty manhood is unsupported by a particle of evidence. On the contrary, there is authority of the highest character for the statement that he entertained an exactly opposite view and "thought a time might come, when, our institutions being firmly consolidated and working with complete success, we might safely and perhaps beneficially take part in the consultations held by foreign states for the common advantage of the nations." Without further elaboration of the argument in favor of the position that the rule of the Farewell Address cannot be regarded as applicable to present conditions — an argument which might be protracted indefinitely — the inquiry at once arising is, What follows? What are the consequences if the argument be assumed to be sound? Let us begin by realizing that certain results which at first blush might be apprehended as dangerous do not necessarily follow and are not likely to follow.

It is a mistake to suppose, for example, that if the doctrine of the Farewell Address had never been formally promulgated or if it were now to be deemed no longer extant, the United States would have heretofore embroiled itself or would now proceed to embroil itself in all sorts of controversies with foreign nations. We are now, as always, under the restraint of the principles of international law, which bid us respect the sovereignty of every other nation and forbid our intermeddling in its internal affairs. The dynastic disputes of European countries have been, and would still be, of no possible practical concern to us. We covet no portion of European soil, and, if we had it, should be at a loss what to do with it. And it may be taken for granted with reasonable certainty that no Executive and Senate are likely to bind us to any foreign Power by such an alliance as Washington deprecated — by a permanent alliance, that is, offensive and defensive, and for all purposes of war as well as peace. The temptation sufficient to induce any administration to propose such a partnership is hardly conceivable — while an attempt to bring it about would irretrievably ruin the men or the party committed to it, and would as certainly be frustrated by that reserve of good sense and practical wisdom which in the last resort the American people never fail to bring to bear upon public affairs.

On these grounds, it is possible to regard the isolation rule under consideration as having outlived its usefulness without exposing ourselves to any serious hazards. But it is to be and should be so regarded on affirmative grounds — because the continuance of its supposed authoritativeness is hurtful in its tendency — hurtful in many directions and to large interests. To begin with, it is necessarily unfortunate and injurious, in various occult as well as open ways, that a maxim stripped by time and events of its original virtue should con-

tinue current in the community under the guise of a living rule of action. The greater the prestige of such a maxim by reason of its age or its origin, the greater the mischief. Human affairs take their shape and color hardly more from reason and selfish interest than from imagination and sentiment. A rule of policy originating with Washington, preëminently wise for his epoch, ever since taught in schools, lauded on the platform, preached in the pulpit, and displayed in capitals and italics in innumerable political manuals and popular histories, almost becomes part of the mental constitution of the generations to which it descends. They accept it without knowing why and they act upon it without the least regard to their wholly new environment.

The practical results of such an ingrained habit of thought, and of the attempt to govern one set of circumstances by a rule made for another totally unlike, are as unfortunate as might be expected, and might be illustrated quite indefinitely. The example most deserving of attention, however, is found in the commercial policy of the government. What Washington favored was political isolation, not commercial. Indeed he favored the former with a view to its effect in promoting and extending commercial relations with all the world. Yet contrary to the design of its author, the Washington rule of isolation has unquestionably done much to fasten upon the country protectionism in its most extreme form. Washington and his coadjutors in the work of laying the foundations of this government contemplated protection only as incident to revenue. Our first really protective tariff was that of 1816 and was the direct result of European wars which put us in a position of complete isolation, both political and commercial. As we would take sides neither with France nor with England, both harried our sea-going commerce at will, while the Jeffersonian embargo put the

finishing touches to its destruction by shutting up our vessels in our own ports so as to keep them out of harm's way. During this period of thorough isolation — which lasted some seven years and ended only with the close of the war of 1812 — our manufacturing industries received an extraordinary stimulus. Woolen mills, cotton mills, glass works, foundries, potteries, and other industrial establishments of various sorts “sprang up,” to use the figure of a distinguished author, “like mushrooms.” When the advent of peace broke down the dam behind which British stocks had been accumulating, the country was flooded with them, and our manufacturers found themselves everywhere undersold. In this situation, and upon the plea of nourishing infant industries, the tariff act of 1816 originated and what is called the “American system” had its birth. Never since abandoned in principle though from time to time subjected to more or less important modifications of detail, that system found in the civil war a plausible if not a sufficient excuse for both greatly enlarging and intensifying its action, and has now reached its highest development in the tariff legislation of last year. How largely the protective theory and spirit have been encouraged by the Washington rule of political isolation as generally accepted and practiced is plain. Political isolation may in a special case coexist with entire freedom of commercial intercourse — as where a country is weak and small and its resources, natural and artificial, are too insignificant to excite jealousy. Such was the case with the United States immediately after the war of independence, when its inhabited territory consisted of a strip of Atlantic seaboard and its people numbered less than four million souls. But a policy of political isolation for a continental Power, rapidly rising in population, wealth, and all the elements of strength, and able to cope with the foremost in the struggle for the trade of the world, naturally fosters, if it

does not entail, a policy of commercial isolation also. The two policies are naturally allied in spirit and in the underlying considerations which can be urged in their defense, and being once adopted render each other mutual support. Political isolation deliberately resolved upon by a great Power denotes its self-confidence and its indifference to the opinion or friendship of other nations; in like manner the commercial isolation of such a Power denotes its conviction that in matters of trade and commerce it is sufficient unto itself and need ask nothing of the world beyond. In the case of the United States, the policy of political seclusion has been intensified by a somewhat prevalent theory that we are a sort of chosen people; possessed of superior qualities natural and acquired; rejoicing in superior institutions and superior ideals; and bound to be careful how we connect ourselves with other nations lest we get contaminated and deteriorate. This conception of ourselves has asserted itself in opposition to international arrangements even when, as in the case of the "General Act of the Berlin Conference" already referred to, the only object and effect were to open a new region to commerce and to give our merchants equal privileges with those of any other country. We accept the privileges but at the same time decline to become a party to the compact which secures them to us as to all nations. The transaction is on a par with various others in which, with great flourish of trumpets and much apparent satisfaction at the felicity of our attitude, we tender or furnish what we call our "moral support." Do we want the Armenian butcheries stopped? To any power that will send its fleet through the Dardanelles and knock the Sultan's palace about his ears, we boldly tender our "moral support." Do we want the same rights and facilities of trade in Chinese ports and territory that are accorded to the people of any other country? We loudly hark

Great Britain on to the task of achieving that result, but come to the rescue ourselves with not a gun, nor a man, nor a ship, with nothing but our "moral support." But, not to tarry too long on details, what are the general results of these twin policies — of this foreign policy of thorough isolation combined with a domestic policy of thorough protection? So far as our foreign relations are concerned, the result is that we stand without a friend among the great Powers of the world and that we impress them, however unjustly, as a nation of sympathizers and sermonizers and swaggerers — without purpose or power to turn our words into deeds and not above the sharp practice of accepting advantages for which we refuse to pay our share of the price. So far as the domestic policy called the "American system" is concerned, we present a spectacle of determined effort to hedge ourselves round with barriers against intercourse with other countries which, if not wholly successful, fails only because statutes are no match for the natural laws of trade. We decline to enter the world's markets or to do business over the world's counter. Instead, we set up a shop of our own, a sort of department store; to the extent that governmental action can effect it, we limit all buying and selling and exchanges of products to our own home circle; and, in the endeavor to compass that end, we have raised duties on imports to a height never dreamed of even in the stress of internecine war. In only one important particular does protectionism still lack completeness. The voice of the farmer is heard in the land complaining that he is proscribed and making the perfectly logical demand — said to have been favored in the last Congress by eighteen Senators and voted for by twelve — that his principal industries should be protected as well as any others. Why not? It is merely a question of methods. We cannot protect the farmer by customs duties on articles which never enter our



ports. But we can do it by export bounties on those articles — an obvious method of reaching the end in view and the method really proposed. It would be worth considering as another method, whether the government should not simply buy and burn the farmer's redundant crops — a method equally beneficial to the farmer, less costly to the people at large because dispensing with the machinery incident to bounty payments, more consonant with our general policy of commercial isolation, and less likely to be offensive to foreign countries who may not care to serve as dumping-grounds for our surplus products. To governmental action in furtherance of the policy of commercial isolation and having special reference to the interests of capital, has naturally been added kindred action looking to the protection of labor. The Chinese laboring class we proscribe *en bloc*. We bar out any alien workman, who, aspiring to better his condition by coming to these shores, takes the reasonable precaution of contracting for employment before he makes the venture. By recently proposed and apparently not preventable legislation on the same lines, this land of ours, so long the boasted refuge of the oppressed and downtrodden of the earth, is now to be hermetically sealed against all to whom an unkind fate has denied a certain amount of education. Thus is a governmental policy, originally designed to protect domestic capital, now reinforced by a like policy for the protection of domestic labor, so that, were the tendency of the twin policies of commercial and political isolation to be unchecked and were not natural laws too strong for artificial restraints, we might well stand in awe of a time when in their intercourse with us and influence upon us the other countries of the earth would for all practical uses be as remote as Jupiter or Saturn. Finally, one other feature of the situation must not be overlooked. While protectionism in this country has waxed

mighty and all-pervading — our foreign shipping industry has languished and declined until it has become a subject of concern and mortification to public men of all parties. Time was when we built the best ships afloat and disputed the carrying trade of the world with Great Britain herself. Now we not only make no serious attempt to carry for other countries but are looking on while only about twelve per cent. of our own foreign commerce embarks in American bottoms. What is the cause? Here are seven to eight thousand miles of coast, fronting Europe to the east and Asia to the west, belonging to seventy millions of people, intelligent, prosperous, adventurous, with aptitudes derived from ancestors whose exploits on the seas have resounded through the world and have not yet ceased to be favorite themes of poetry and romance. Why is it that such a people no longer figures on such a congenial field of action? The answer is to be found nowhere else than in the working of the twin policies we are considering — of commercial combined with political isolation. Under the former policy, when sails and timber gave way to steam and iron, protectionism so enhanced the cost of the essentials of steamship construction that any competition between American shipyards and the banks of the Clyde was wholly out of the question. Under the latter, the policy of political isolation, the public mind became predisposed to regard the annihilation of our foreign merchant service as something not only to be acquiesced in but welcomed. How could it be otherwise? If to stand apart from the group of nations to which we belong and to live to ourselves alone is the ideal we aim at, why should we not view with equanimity, or even with satisfaction, the loss of an industry which provides the connecting links between ourselves and the outer world? Though that loss was at first and for a considerable period in apparent accord with the popular

temper, there is now a revulsion of sentiment, and a demand for the rehabilitation of our foreign merchant marine which seems to be both strong and general. Yet the predominance of political and commercial isolation ideas could not be better illustrated than by the only proposed means of reaching the desired end which seems to have any chance of prevailing. It is but a few years ago that one of the oldest and most eminent of Boston merchants appeared before a congressional committee to ask for such a change of the laws that American papers could be got for a vessel of American ownership, though not of American build. He was in the shipping business and wanted to stay in it, he could buy foreign vessels at much lower cost than that for which he could procure American vessels, he must have the foreign vessels if he was to compete with rival ship-owners, and he appealed to the government simply to nationalize his property — to let him have American registers for vessels which had become American property. He was an American — with the true American spirit — who wanted to do business under the American flag and who found it exceedingly distasteful to do business under any other. Yet his appeal was vain, his proposition was scouted as of novel and dangerous tendency, and it was even insinuated that its author, instead of being animated by patriotic impulses and purposes, had succumbed to the blandishments of foreigners and was insidiously endeavoring to promote their interests. Doubtless the same proposition made to Congress to-day would meet the same fate. The desire to resurrect our extinct foreign merchant service no doubt prevails in great and perhaps increasing force. But, so far as present indications are to be relied upon, the object is to be accomplished not by liberalizing our commercial code, but by intensifying its narrow and stringent character. Protectionism is to have a wider scope and to

include a new subject-matter, and the shipping industry is to be resuscitated and fostered by bounties and subsidies and discriminating tonnage duties levied upon all alien vessels that enter our ports. Thus, and by this process, the twin policies of political and commercial isolation will be exploited as beyond the imputation of failure or of flaw; as working in complete accord to great public ends; as keeping foreigners and foreign countries at a distance on the one hand while on the other artificially stimulating a particular industry at the expense of the whole American people. Clearly, what with import duties for the manufacturer, export bounties for the farmer, tonnage taxes for the ship-builder, racial and literary exactions for the laborer, and political isolation for the whole country, we ought soon to be far advanced on the road to the millennium — unless indeed we have unhappily taken a wrong turn and are off the track altogether.

A noted Republican statesman of our day, a protectionist though not of the extreme variety, is said to have remarked, "It is not an ambitious destiny for so great a country as ours to manufacture only what we can consume or produce only what we can eat." But it is even a more pitiful ambition for such a country to aim to seclude itself from the world at large and to live a life as insulated and independent as if it were the only country on the foot-stool. A nation is as much a member of a society as an individual. Its membership, as in the case of an individual, involves duties which call for something more than mere abstention from violations of positive law. The individual who should deliberately undertake to ignore society and social obligations, to mix with his kind only under compulsion, to abstain from all effort to make men wiser or happier, to resist all appeals to charity, to get the most possible and enjoy the most possible consistent with the least

possible intercourse with his fellows, would be universally condemned as shaping his life by a low and unworthy standard. Yet, what is true of the individual in his relations to his fellow men is equally true of every nation in its relations to other nations. In this matter, we have fallen into habits which, however excusable in their origin, are without present justification. Does a foreign question or controversy present itself appealing however forcibly to our sympathies or sense of right — what happens the moment it is suggested that the United States should seriously participate in its settlement? A shiver runs through all the ranks of capital lest the uninterrupted course of money-making be interfered with; the cry of “Jingo!” comes up in various quarters; advocates of peace at any price make themselves heard from innumerable pulpits and rostrums; while practical politicians invoke the doctrine of the Farewell Address as an absolute bar to all positive action. The upshot is more or less explosions of sympathy or antipathy at more or less public meetings, and, if the case is a very strong one, a more or less tardy tender by the government of its “moral support.” Is that a creditable part for a great nation to play in the affairs of the world? The pioneer in the wilderness, with a roof to build over his head and a patch of ground to cultivate and wife and children to provide for and secure against savage beasts and yet more savage men, finds in the great law of self-preservation ample excuse for not expending either his feelings or his energies upon the joys or the sorrows of his neighbors. But surely he is no pattern for the modern millionaire, who can sell nine tenths of all he has and give to the poor, and yet not miss a single comfort or luxury of life. This country was once the pioneer and is now the millionaire. It behooves it to recognize the changed conditions and to realize its great place among the Powers of the

earth. It behooves it to accept the commanding position belonging to it, with all its advantages on the one hand and all its burdens on the other. It is not enough for it to vaunt its greatness and superiority and to call upon the rest of the world to admire and be duly impressed. Posing before less favored peoples as an exemplar of the superiority of American institutions may be justified and may have its uses. But posing alone is like answering the appeal of a mendicant by bidding him admire your own sleekness, your own fine clothes and handsome house and your generally comfortable and prosperous condition. He possibly should do that and be grateful for the spectacle, but what he really asks and needs is a helping hand. The mission of this country, if it has one, as I verily believe it has, is not merely to pose but to act — and, while always governing itself by the rules of prudence and common sense and making its own special interests the first and paramount objects of its care, to forego no fitting opportunity to further the progress of civilization practically as well as theoretically, by timely deeds as well as by eloquent words. There is such a thing for a nation as a “splendid isolation” — as when for a worthy cause, for its own independence, or dignity, or vital interests, it unshrinkingly opposes itself to a hostile world. But isolation that is nothing but a shirking of the responsibilities of high place and great power is simply ignominious. If we shall sooner or later — and we certainly shall — shake off the spell of the Washington legend and cease to act the rôle of a sort of international recluse, it will not follow that formal alliances with other nations for permanent or even temporary purposes will soon or often be found expedient. On the other hand, with which of them we shall as a rule practically co-operate cannot be doubtful. From the point of view of our material interests alone, our best friend as well as most

formidable foe is that world-wide empire whose navies rule the seas and which on our northern frontier controls a dominion itself imperial in extent and capabilities. There is the same result if we consider the present crying need of our commercial interests. What is it? It is more markets and larger markets for the consumption of the products of the industry and inventive genius of the American people. That genius and that industry have done wonders in the way of bursting the artificial barriers of the "American system" and reaching the foreign consumer in spite of it. Nevertheless, the cotton manufacturing industry of New England bears but too painful witness to the inadequacy of the home market to the home supply — and through what agency are we so likely to gain new outlets for our products as through that of a Power whose possessions girdle the earth and in whose ports equal privileges and facilities of trade are accorded to the flags of all nations? But our material interests only point in the same direction as considerations of a higher and less selfish character. There is a patriotism of race as well as of country — and the Anglo-American is as little likely to be indifferent to the one as to the other. Family quarrels there have been heretofore and doubtless will be again, and the two peoples, at the safe distance which the broad Atlantic interposes, take with each other liberties of speech which only the fondest and dearest relatives indulge in.

Nevertheless, that they would be found standing together against any alien foe by whom either was menaced with destruction or irreparable calamity, it is not permissible to doubt. Nothing less could be expected of the close community between them in origin, speech, thought, literature, institutions, ideals — in the kind and degree of the civilization enjoyed by both. In that same community, and in that coöperation in good works which should result from it, lies, it is not too much to say, the best hope for the future not only of the two kindred peoples but of the human race itself. To be assured of it, we need not resort to *a priori* reasoning, convincing as it would be found, nor exhaust historical examples, numerous and cogent as they are. It is enough to point out that, of all obstacles to the onward march of civilization, none approaches in magnitude and obduracy "the scourge of war" and that the English and American peoples, both by precept and by example, have done more during the last century to do away with war and to substitute peaceful and civilized methods of settling international controversies, than all the other nations of the world combined have done during all the world's history. It is not too much to hope, let us trust, that the near future will show them making even more marked advances in the same direction, and, while thus consulting their own best interests, also setting an example sure to have the most important and beneficent influence upon the destinies of mankind.

*Richard Olney.*

## THE DREYFUS AND ZOLA TRIALS.

THE echoes of these great trials have come to our ears much enfeebled by their long journey across the Atlantic. Unintelligible cablegrams, and a few stray newspaper articles based on one or another trifling feature supposed to be serviceably dramatic, constitute our knowledge of an agitation which has shaken France to the centre, which has intensely excited the whole continent of Europe, which has involved possibilities of political and social revolution, which has led to the serious suggestion of racial crusades and massacres, and which the philosophical historian writing an hundred years hence will find a vastly more significant, more expressive feature of this age than a whole budget of Venezuelan episodes or Cuban questions. These trials have been the exponent or the explosion, as you will, of anti-Semitism and of militarism.

For the French nation, the point of interest has been, not the treason, but the Jew. No one upon this side of the water, unless he has read the French daily newspapers most industriously, can form an idea of the savage, merciless onslaught which they have combined to make upon the unfortunate race. They have stimulated that which needed no stimulation, — the blind rage, mingled with dread and cupidity, which often means bloodshed. For many years past anti-Semitism has been rapidly advancing in France, somewhat less rapidly in other Continental countries. This Dreyfus case is only a measure whereby we can gauge the height to which the race hatred has risen. Will it now subside? The only cheering indication is the present violence, such as usually foreruns reaction. The state of feeling is mediæval, but probably the demonstration will stop short of the St. Bartholomew which some of the fanatics have dared to mention.

Nevertheless, in France to-day it is perilous to be a Jew.

Yet, in spite of the fierce support given by the anti-Semites, the small band of distinguished citizens who condemned the proceedings in the Dreyfus case would have forced the government either to submit to a revision or to show that conclusive evidence which it professed to have, had it not been for the element of "our dearest blessing, the army." The political life of the Cabinet flickered dubiously until the cry of "Vive l'armée!" was raised, and then all was safe. "Vive l'armée" might involve not only "Down with Jews," "Down with Dreyfus and Zola," but also "Down with law and justice." No matter; down let them go, and let the ruins make an altar for Esterhazy, wretch and probably enough traitor, but an officer, and not a Jew. As one French officer, who seemed in his private opinion to hold Dreyfus innocent, gallantly said, "The verdict of the court-martial is for me as conclusive as the word of God." Precisely this has been the position in which the French government has been sustained by the French people. The principle has been laid down that the generals of the French army are not only trustworthy, but infallible. Not many generations ago the French ventured to set aside the Sermon on the Mount, but to-day they cannot set aside the finding of a board of army officers. The secret proceedings in the Dreyfus case, the limitations established for and during the Zola trial, offend our sense of justice; but the former are probably a necessary part of militarism, and the latter were in part proper, and in other parts they awake the old discussion as to the merits of French and Anglo-Saxon systems of criminal procedure.

The whole business, in whatever aspect we regard it, undoubtedly soothes