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EDITORIAL

NO NEW DEPARTURE FOR COLOMBIA.

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PEDRO N. OSPINA, the Minister of the Republic of Colombia at Washington, who notified the Department of State that the contemplated visit of the Secretary of State to the South American Republics might be inopportune in so far as it included Colombia, giving as his reason for so holding that the United States remained deaf to the demands of his country “to submit to arbitration questions referring exclusively to the interpretation of public treaties and the compliance with obligations imposed by the universally accepted principles of international law on all civilized nations with another,” has been recalled by his Government.

What the questions are to which Minister Ospina referred, it is well known. They flow from the conduct of the Roosevelt administration in dismembering Colombian territory by intriguing with a secessionary revolution on the isthmus of Panama, and supporting the same with the Naval forces of the land—all, under the pretence of religiously living up to the then existing treaty wherein the United States guaranteed the integrity of the territory of Colombia.

It was to be hoped that Minister Ospina’s note expressed his country’s and his Government’s sentiments. Proceeding from these premises the conclusion is justified that Minister Ospina’s note marked a turning point in the history of Colombia—for the better.

The annals of Colombia are dotted with many an incident little to her credit. Her own national poet Pombo took up one of those incidents, to read his country’s Government a severe lecture. Colombia’s attitude—when the Roosevelt administration trampled under foot the principles of international probity in the matter of Panama—was, under President Reyes’ regime, quite in keeping with the policy more than two generations ago rebuked by Pombo with the contrast between the

conduct of the wife of the Roman Collatine, who preferred death to life when she found herself dishonored, and the conduct of the Senate of the people Granadine (Colombian) which preferred the disgrace of Santander's rule to forfeiture of office. President Reyes preferred cash to honor: he only was in doubt as to the amount.

Not for the sake of Colombia alone, for the sake of the United States also was it to be hoped that Minister Ospina's move denoted a new departure for our sister Republic. The tolerance of Wrong encourages the Wrong-Doer. President Roosevelt's dishonorable brutality at Panama has done lasting injury to our national standard of morals. It lay with Colombia to so deport herself that the injury might be redressed—to her and to us.

The hope that Colombia had at last broken with her unworthy past is dashed by Minister Ospina's recall.

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