

now moral to cross an ocean seven thousand miles wide and swallow up the land of nations that do not adjoin us, merely because they are too weak to withstand us?

On another page he spoke of this method of securing land by conquest in even harsher terms. He said: "This belligerent, or, more properly speaking, piratical way of looking at neighboring territory, was very characteristic of the west, and was at the root of the doctrine of 'manifest destiny.'" "Manifest destiny" at that time was a belligerent and piratical doctrine; can it be Christian and benevolent now? On page 266 of Mr. Roosevelt's book the author very clearly outlined the difference between the American method of expansion and the European policy of imperialism. He said:

Of course no one would wish to see these or any other settled communities now added to our domain by force; we want no unwilling citizens to enter our union; the time to have taken the lands was before settlers came into them. European nations war for the possession of thickly settled districts which, if conquered, will for centuries remain alien and hostile to the conquerors; we, wiser in our generation, have seized the waste solitude that lay near us, the limitless forests and never ending plains, and the valleys of the great, lonely rivers; and have thrust our own sons into them to take possession; and a score of years after each conquest we see the conquered land teeming with a people that is one with ourselves.

He recognized that it was contrary to the principles of a republic to incorporate unwilling citizens into the union; he recognized that people taken by conquest would "for centuries remain alien and hostile to the conquerors." If he knew this then how could he so forget his knowledge of history as to think that the Filipinos would soon be friends to their conquerors? Are we less "wise" now than when he wrote?

Attention is called to the change that has come over the president merely as an illustration of the fact that republican policies today are in violation of history and of human nature, as well as in violation of the doctrines promulgated by the very same republicans before the thirst for empire overcame them?

When Mr. Roosevelt discussed the subject of imperialism seventeen years ago he used American language to defend American principles; when Mr. Roosevelt speaks as a republican president of the United States, exercising in the Philippines the same power that the king of England exercises in India, he uses European language to defend European principles.

The doctrine of "manifest destiny" is merely a piece of hypocrisy used to excuse a policy which cannot be defended on principle. It would be better and more candid for the republican leaders to defend imperialism as the habitual drunkard defends his intoxication, by saying that the appetite is stronger than the will.

A Remarkable Document.

The trial of Corporal Kreider at Manila brings to light the existence of a document which conveys a lesson more important than the one drawn from it by republican editors. Young Kreider was tried for treason because his name appeared on the following appeal circulated among the American soldiers:

To Whom It May Concern.—Dear Fellow Countrymen: After many months among the Filipino people, studying their customs and characters, we, the undersigned, have come to the conclusion that the time has arrived for us to break the silence and let you know the real truth, so that you will see the folly of continuation of fighting these people who are defending their country against the cruel American invasion in the same manner in which our forefathers did against England in those glorious days of our grand and noble liberator, General George Washington.

Since the day we were led by our conscience and presented ourselves to the Philippine authorities we have received the best of

treatment, and we are enjoying a life of luxury without having to put our lives in danger as do you, who still remain in the American ranks fighting for an unjust cause, which sooner or later must surely prove disastrous, as it did to the Spanish, notwithstanding that they knew the country and customs of the people better than the Americans do.

For above-mentioned reasons and also that the war may soon end, we ask the men of the American army stationed in these islands to present themselves to the Philippine authorities as we did, thereby showing yourselves to be true Americans upholding the policy of Washington and the Monroe doctrine against the ambitious policy of President McKinley, who for two years has carried on this cruel war, spilling the innocent blood of thousands of American soldiers, and with what object? To fill the pockets of Mark Hanna and several other American capitalists who have been for years, and are now, ruling America today, or, in other words, changing your blood for gold and robbing many a loving mother or wife of son or husband, thereby making many a once happy home sad and miserable.

Before we close let us tell you that near every town there are always stationed forces of Filipino troops to whom, should you so desire, you can present yourselves with or without your rifle, and to avoid danger it is best to hide it in a secure place, and after you have presented yourself inform the Filipino officer or chief of the guerrillas and they will recover it and pay you some money in return.

With this we conclude, wishing you the best of fortune. We remain yours most sincerely,

HARRY HORAL ALMAN, Company K.
JOHN BLAKE, Trumpeter, Company B, Twenty-eighth U. S. Infantry.
FRANK L. CLARK, Company F, Twenty-first U. S. Infantry.
J. THOMAS KREIDER, Corporal, Thirty-eighth U. S. Volunteers.
CHARLES BUCHANAN, Company B, Twenty-eighth U. S. Volunteers.
HARRY RICHTER, Sixth U. S. Artillery.
CHARLES WRIGHT, Hospital Corps.
FITZHUGH SMITH.
JOHN RYAN, Fourth Regiment.

Kreider's defense was that the document was drawn by Filipinos and that the Americans who signed it did so under duress. A military commission found Kreider guilty of treason and sentenced him to life imprisonment. General Chaffee refused to approve the findings of the military court and released the accused with a reprimand. The general thus admonished the offender:

While no treasonable intent or overt act is established against the accused by competent evidence, it, however, remains to be remarked that it is the duty of every American soldier to face impending danger of death rather than sign a treasonable proclamation, even if it be prepared, as was the one in this case, by the enemy. Nor should he do any other act that might have even a seeming of giving the enemy encouragement. The true soldier not only takes the risks of battle, but all other risks of life growing out of any and all incidents of war, and accepts the chance of life or death rather than do ought to injure his country's cause or dishonor the uniform he wears.

General Chaffee is sound in his argument. No amount of duress could justify an American soldier in signing such a document. It has been said that no one need be a slave who knows how to die, and so, it may be added, no one can be compelled to sign a treasonable appeal until he becomes afraid of death. The soldiers in the Philippines went there voluntarily and in going they assumed the risks which attend military service. The sentiments expressed by General Chaffee will be generally commended; but there is another phase of the subject which ought not to escape attention. Who wrote the remarkable document which the American prisoners were forced to sign? The Filipinos? Dare the republicans admit it? It is charitable to exonerate the Americans, but how will the republicans reconcile that document with the theory that the Filipinos are savages? The authors of that appeal seem to know something of American history; they are evidently acquainted with our struggle for independence, and they recognize that our present Philippine policy is utterly inconsistent with our traditions and our

principles of government. It ought to make republican leaders blush to think that the "inferior people" who are, according to the president, a thousand years behind us, understand imperialism better than these same republican leaders. Or can it be that republican leaders understand imperialism, but pretend ignorance?

How long will honest and conscientious republicans close their eyes to the moral and political degradation involved in imperialism?

Trusts Retard Progress.

The above heading was suggested by a traveling man (and The Commoner entertains a high opinion of the energy and intelligence of traveling men) who gave some illustrations in support of the proposition. He called attention to a certain manufacturer who, while he was engaged in an independent industry, made great improvements in the product of his factory, and thus gave his wares a high standing among dealers. When he joined with others in forming a trust for the control of that industry, improvement stopped. After awhile this particular factory was shut down, and the trust no longer felt it necessary to improve the quality of the goods. Meanwhile, the trust raised the price of the goods about 33 per cent, thus lessening the demand for them and reducing the labor necessary to produce them. After a while some independent factories started up, and, spurred on by the necessity which competition creates, they began improving the quality of their product. The trust reduced prices more than 25 per cent in order to kill off the new enterprises. What the result will be remains to be seen. Whether the independent factories will be able to survive depends partly upon the financial ability of the owners of the independent enterprises and partly upon their power to withstand temptation. After the trust has shown its power to destroy the profits of the independent enterprises it will probably offer a price sufficiently large to induce the individual manufacturers to give up the contest and pocket the profits. The trust can afford to do this, for by raising prices it can soon collect from the whole people all that it paid to destroy competition and afterwards it will have the field to itself until some new competitor has to be bought off.

The point made by the travelling man is a good one, namely, that competition results in the constant improvement of the product, while monopoly makes this constant improvement unnecessary. This is a fact to be considered by those who regard trusts as an economic development. They are not an economic development. A monopoly in private hands is not an economic development, for economy in production is more than offset by the deterioration in quality which follows when the manufacturer is relieved from the stimulus of competition and only concerned about the amount of profit he can get out of the product.

The First Volume.

This issue marks the close of the first year of The Commoner's existence. The paper was started after mature deliberation on the part of its editor and publisher, and the success it has achieved is a vindication of his belief that there is a place in the field for a periodical like The Commoner. Its success has exceeded the most sanguine expectations, and The Commoner concedes this gratifying result to be due in large measure to the fact that the people are reading and thinking for themselves, and eagerly seeking for light upon disputed questions.

The Commoner desires at this time to express thanks for the splendid assistance that has been accorded by those who are interested in the promulgation of the principles advocated by this publication. It is The Commoner's earnest desire that during the succeeding years it will be more worthy of their support.