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General Miles on Judge Parker

Finley Anderson, a Civil war veteran, recently wrote to General Nelson A. Miles a letter in which General Miles was congratulated because of his stand in favor of Judge Parker's election. Replying to Mr. Anderson, General Miles wrote as follows:
Cold Spring, Putnam Co., N. Y.
Oct. 10, 1904.

Col. Finley Anderson,
New York City,
My Dear Colonel:

Your letter recalls other days, when two millions of our comrades were engaged in a great war, and more than half a million of the flower of American manhood went to untimely graves. I realize that our comrades of that momentous period, our comrades of the "war of civilization" on our Western frontier and those of the recent Spanish war, will ever cherish an intense interest in the welfare and honor of the republic. I also realize that all our fellow citizens are about to exercise the rights and privileges of the elective franchise, many of them for the last time, and many of their sons and grandsons for the first. Whether they be in the public service or in civil life, the act is a sacred duty—more important and potential than any other act of political responsibility. It is a duty too serious to be influenced and controlled by partisan sympathy, lust for office, selfish ambition, control of power or even personal and private interests. The perpetuity and welfare of democratic institutions is superior to any other interest, for they involve the very liberties and blessings which our fathers established and we had the privilege of preserving.

Your letter is similar to many communications that I have received from comrades in all parts of the country. In replying thereto I feel that in expressing my opinion of the present condition of national affairs to the hundreds of thousands of men who have given the best years of their lives to the service of the republic, I am addressing a body of supremely earnest and conscientious patriots, and therefore I prefer to speak thus openly through them to all our fellow citizens in every section of the Union.

Ever since our government was established by the fathers, it has been maintained by eminent statesmen, heroic patriots and loyal citizens through all the vicissitudes of the past century. It sprang into existence from the turmoils of war and chaos and immediately became the grandest world power on the globe, in the sense of its moral strength, simplicity or design and purity of purpose. Our Constitution was formed with the full appreciation of the practical truth of the principle of the minimum of power and the maximum of liberty consistent with order and safety to society—a phrase which expresses the true end of all civil government.

On March 20, 1790, Count d'Estaing, the sole admiral of France and president of the French Society of Cincinnati, wrote to General Washington, then president of the United States, and in the course of his letter said: "The name of Caesar among the Romans was considered as the first of all noble titles—and the emperors of Germany decorate themselves with it to this day; Caesar enslaved his country—you have liberated yours."

It was the avowed intention and prayer of Washington and the founders of the Constitution to establish a government that could be so administered with such integrity and wisdom that in time our people would have the glory of recommending it to the peoples of the earth who were then strangers to it. Their intention was not to force this system of government upon the peoples of other countries, but rather by a splendid ex-

ample to influence other nations to adopt a similar form of liberal government. This design has been eminently successful in promoting the greatest blessings that any people have ever enjoyed and the development of the sparsely populated colonies of the Atlantic coast into the mightiest republic of eighty millions of freemen. And not only this, but sixteen other countries, south of the Rio Grande, have thrown off the yoke of foreign oppression and adopted constitutions copied after ours, and now their fifty millions of people are in the enjoyment of privileges similar to our own.

We have now reached the parting of the ways, and the question whether we shall continue that glorious career which our fathers inaugurated and our comrades, living and dead, preserved, or whether we shall take that other course which has been fatal to other republics in the world's history, must be determined by the sovereign act of our people on the 8th of next November. Our fathers, in establishing the government, with consummate wisdom created three great co-ordinate branches—the legislative, executive and judicial. The history of our country shows that for more than one hundred years political parties have existed; and now to assume that there is but one party, composed of approximately one-half of the voters, that is fit or qualified to administer the executive branch of the government, and that even in that party there is but one man qualified to hold the highest position, is utterly unwarranted, and, in fact, a serious reflection upon the intelligence and patriotism of the American citizen.

I assume that members of one party are just as conscientious, sincere and honest as those of the other, and have just as much right to their opinions and will perform their political duties with as much integrity. If we have reached the condition in which there is but one party of class that can be trusted with the duties of the executive department and only one individual to exercise the powers of the highest position, then we have reached a condition of aristocracy and imperialism that is only found or tolerated in despotic countries.

Long-continued control of any government, whether municipal, state or national, tends to corruption, arrogance, conceit, selfishness and despotism; and it is only by the lawful action of the citizens in changing the officials, examining the books, investigating the wants of the people and providing for their welfare, that a wise and good administration of public affairs can exist, or has a right to exist, in a republican government. It has been by this method that great evils in the national government as well as in the state and municipal governments have been eradicated, and should there be a change in the coming election by which the executive and the house of representatives should be entrusted to other citizens, there will undoubtedly be a careful examination of official transactions, and of the true state of the people's interests, a better administration of public affairs, and in many respects an improvement in the business conduct of the government.

The humane, benevolent and generous purpose with which our people, without regard to political opinions or affiliations, unanimously espoused the cause of those struggling Cuban patriots for independence, will ever be one of the glories of our history; yet, unfortunately, that very act allured our people for a time to a reckless expenditure of public money and an extravagant idea of territorial expansion, regardless of the rights of the people of other countries. Such a purpose was purely undemocratic and

un-American. It is not unusual that humane measures are perverted to selfish purposes and carried beyond the limits of wise discretion. That sentiment of unlimited expansion and the colonization of subjugated people is as dangerous to a republic as it has

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