

The Nebraska Independent.

VOL. XIII.

LINCOLN, NEBRASKA, JUNE 27, 1901.

NO. 5.

THE FOURTH OF JULY

One year and one week ago, the matter on this page was printed in The Independent. It seems meet and appropriate that it should be reproduced in this Fourth of July edition. Events have proven that the forebodings then entertained were well founded. The principles promulgated in the Declaration of Independence and the holding to them as the ideals of the American people, brought, in a little over a hundred years, this nation from a scattered population of 2,500,000 up to one of 76,500,000. Its influence upon the world to the moulding of governments, to the inspirations for liberty, in the spread of education, religion and science, were greater than that of any nation that ever before existed. During all these years we taught our children that all men were born free and equal, that governments derived their just powers from the consent of the governed, that taxation without representation was tyranny, and, like our fathers, we pledged to each other, with a firm reliance upon the protection of divine providence, our lives, our fortunes and our sacred honor in their defense.

Since this page was printed a year ago, millions of American citizens have been seduced from these principles and prominent men in this city and all the cities of the union go about openly denouncing and repudiating these high ideals. They declare that the principles set forth in the Declaration of Independence are false and fraudulent, that wars of conquest are right, that government by force, taxation without representation, the holding in subjection conquered, unwilling subjects, are all proper and to be defended, and everything that was repudiated by Washington and Jefferson was wrong and everything promulgated by George III. was right.

Prominent citizens of Lincoln—men holding official positions—have recently announced that Weyler was right when he inaugurated his reconcentration policy of starvation of women and children in Cuba and that the United States government should, if necessary, pursue the same policy. They deny the right of self-government and openly declare that might makes right. If these statements are denied, The Independent is prepared to prove them by the testimony of more than a dozen of the best known citizens of Lincoln.

The question now is: Shall we abolish the celebration of the Fourth of July, or shall we prove ourselves to be the most conscientious and brass-faced set of hypocrites that the world ever saw? After having declared by the acts of the administration and by solemn decisions of the highest judicial tribunal in the land that we may wage wars of conquest, hold subject peoples by military force, tax them without representation, try them without a jury, and govern them without their consent; shall we get up on a platform and before all the people read:

"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness; that to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed."

Will we, having repudiated every one of these things, prove ourselves the most conscientious and brass-faced set of hypocrites among mankind by continuing to call the people together on the anniversary of the adoption of these principles by our fathers and publicly declare that we still "hold these truths to be self-evident?" Did the world ever before behold such a sight as that?

It is evident that men who have brought about the repudiation of the Declaration of Independence, feel that the further celebration of the Fourth of July is hypocrisy and would like to see it abolished along with the instrument that promulgates such notions, from the fact that they have given great encouragement to the establishing of another national holiday which shall take its place to be called "Flag Day" which was celebrated with much pomp in many places this year. A flag has no principles written upon it that may prove disagreeable while the written Declaration of Independence has.

Particular attention is called to the lines in the Declaration which are printed in red. These are the parts of it that have been repudiated by the McKinley administration and the supreme court. It will be seen that when these things are eliminated from the document that the life and power of it are all taken out.

The address of Justice Brewer, one of the dissenting judges, which follows, and the Declaration appeared in The Independent as they are here reproduced on June 28, 1900. It is said the Anglo-Saxon race has manifested a capacity to govern well; that we are of that race, and that, therefore, we would well govern the Philippine islands as colonies. I do not question the capacity of the race well and wisely to govern others. I object to the Philippine policy because it antagonizes the principles upon which this government was founded, which have controlled its life up to the present time, and the perfection of which has been the hope and inspiration of every true American.

Very few nations, very few individuals, live up to their high ideals, but surely the Declaration of Independence has been the ideal of our life, and we have striven to make it more and more real. Now, government by force is the very antipodes of this, and to introduce government by force over any portion of the nation is to start the second quarter of the second century of our life upon principles which are the exact opposite of those upon which we have hitherto lived. It is one thing to fall of reaching your ideal; it is an en-

tirely different thing to deliberately turn your back upon it.

The test of government is not in the outward mechanical display of order, but in the capacity to develop the best men, and we have lived in the faith that government by consent of the governed develops the best men. We have not let the wise men rule the ignorant, the learned the unlearned, the rich the poor, but we have appealed

always to "the plain people" as the ones in whose judgment to rely, and upon whose shoulders should rest the burden of government.

Ideas are, after all, the eternal force. Human life and destiny are controlled by them. They may seem today of little significance, but around them gather material interests, and tomorrow their power is disclosed. Government by consent and govern-

ment by force, no matter how well the government may be administered, are two essentially antagonistic principles. Doubtless no immediate conflict will follow. We may see a large measure of prosperity; but are we not sowing the seeds which in the days to come will grow up into a harvest of trouble for our children and our children's children? A necessity of colonial possessions

is an increase in our regular army, and the first increase proposed is from 30,000 to 100,000 men. It is a strange commentary that at the close of the nineteenth century the head of the most arbitrary government in the civilized world, the czar of the Russias, is inviting the nations of the world to a decrease in their arms, while this, the freest land, is proposing an increase in its. Yet such seems to be the

imperative need, if we enter upon the system of colonial expansion.

Now, the great economic problem in this country is not how can a few men make more money and pile up larger fortunes, but how can the great body of the people make a fair and comfortable living? The right to work is again and again insisted upon as more important than the right to vote, and the cry of the right to work is suppl-

mented by the cry that the state furnish work to all who cannot obtain it elsewhere.

Are we likely to aid in solving this problem by bringing into our national life 10,000,000 or 12,000,000 of unskilled Malay laborers? We have shut the doors against the Chinese. Are they any worse than the Malay? Shall we introduce in this nation more cheap labor? I do not wonder at the action of the federation of labor in protesting against a new competition of cheap labor as well as an increase of the army, with its consequent increase of burden and taxation on the employed laborer.

But there is money in it. And after all this is really the most potent factor in the proposed reaching out after the islands of the Orient. The wealth of Ormus and of Ind is today, as in the days of Milton, the expectation and the dream of many. Possession of the Orient, with its accumulated wealth of centuries, dazzles the imagination and confuses the judgment. The haze of mystery hangs over that vast domain. Wealth untold is believed to be there, ready to be appropriated by any dominant power. All the nations and tribes come within Lord Salisbury's definition of dying nations, and must soon be divided between and appropriated by the living and growing nations. China is held out as a dying nation, filled with inexhaustible wealth and why should not we share in its appropriation? What a picture this is! The eagle of liberty standing like a buzzard to grow fat over an expected corpse.

Ill fares the land to hastening ills a prey, Where wealth accumulates and men decay.

The Caesars saw the spears of their victorious legions flash in the sunlight of every known land, and in their triumphant return they brought with them the accumulated wealth of all the nations they had subdued. The splendor of imperial Rome, overshadowing the world, but the wealth thus obtained without value given undermined the empire, and the glory of Rome is simply a memory. Napoleon beheld the shining star of destiny; and then? Does human nature change through the centuries? We stand today facing the temptation which comes from the possibility of rapidly accumulating wealth. What right have we to anticipate that the same result will not follow if we pursue the same course of taking what we have not fully earned?

The problem we have sought to work out in this nation is that of government of any by and for the people. A great nation upon that principle seems possible only under a federal system, a system which delegates all matter of local interest to the several states, and exercises through the national government only those powers and functions which make for the general welfare. We have wonderfully prospered in administering such system in a compact, continental territory, each part of which has been possessed and controlled by a race capable of self-government.

This is no trifling question and is not answered by any gush about duty and destiny—in fact, all this talk about destiny is wearisome. We make our own destiny. We are not the victims, but the masters of fate, and to attempt to unload upon the Almighty responsibility for that which we choose to do is not only an insult to Him, but to ordinary human intelligence.

We are told we have become so great and powerful that the world needs us, but what the world most needs is not the touch of our power, but the blessing of our example. It needs the bright example of a free people not disturbed by any illusions of territorial acquisition, of pecuniary gain or military glory, but content with their possessions and striving through all their abilities, activities and industries of their wisest and most earnest to make the life of each individual citizen happier, better and more content.

Two visions rise before me: One of a nation growing in population, riches and strength; reaching out the strong hand to bring within its dominion weaker and distant races and lands; holding them by force for the rapid wealth they may bring—with perhaps the occasional glory, success and sacrifice of war; a wondrously luxurious life into which the fortunate few shall enter; an accumulation of magnificence which for a term will charm and dazzle, and then the shadow of the awful question whether human nature has changed, and the old law, that history repeats itself, has lost its force, whether the ascending splendor of imperial power is to be followed by the descending gloom of luxury, decay and ruin.

The other of a nation where the spirit of the Pilgrim and the Huguenot remains the living and controlling force, affirming that the Declaration of Independence, the Farewell Address of the father of his country and the Monroe doctrine shall never pass into innocuous desuetude; devoting its energies to the development of the inexhaustible resources of its great continental territory; solving the problem of universal personal and political liberty, of a government by the consent of the governed, where no king, no class and no race rules, but each individual has equal voice and power in the control of all, where wealth comes only as the compensation for honest toil of hand or brain, where public services is private duty; a nation whose supreme value to the world lies not in its power, but in its unfailing loyalty to the high ideals of its youth, its forever lifting its strong hand, not to govern, but only to protect the weak; and thus the bright shining which brightens more and more into the fadeless eternal day.

The Foundation of American Liberty, THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE.

The Unanimous Declaration of the Thirteen United States of America:

When, in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth the separate and equal station to which the laws of nature and of nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights; that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness. That, to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed;

That, whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or abolish it, and to institute a new Government laying its foundation on such principles, and organizing its powers in such form as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly, all experience hath shown that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object, evinces a design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such Government and to provide new Guards for their future security.

Such has been the patient sufferance of these Colonies, and such is now the necessity which constrains them to alter their former Systems of Government. The history of the present King of Great Britain is a History of repeated injuries and usurpations, all having in direct object the establishment of an absolute Tyranny over these States. To prove this, let Facts be submitted to a candid world:

He has refused his Assent to Laws the most wholesome and necessary for the public good.

He has refused his Assent to Laws the most wholesome and necessary for the public good, and, when so suspended, he has utterly neglected to attend to them.

He has refused to pass other Laws for the accommodation of large districts of people, unless those people would relinquish the right of Representation in the Legislature, a right inestimable to them, and formidable to tyrants only.

He has called together legislative bodies at places unusual, uncomfortable, and distant from the depository of their Public Records, for the sole purpose of fatiguing them into compliance with his measures.

He has dissolved Representative Houses repeatedly, for opposing with manly firmness, his invasions on the rights of the people.

He has refused, for a long time after such dissolutions, to cause others to be elected whereby the Legislative Powers, incapable of Annihilation, have returned to the People at large for their exercise, the State remaining in the meantime exposed to all the dangers of invasion from without and convulsions within.

He has endeavored to prevent the population of these States, for that purpose obstructing the Laws for the Naturalization of Foreigners, refusing to pass others to encourage their migration hither, and raising the conditions of new Appropriations of Lands.

He has obstructed the Administration of Justice, by refusing his Assent to Laws for establishing Judiciary Powers.

He has erected a multitude of New Offices, and sent hither swarms of Officers to harass our People and eat out their substance.

He has kept among us in times of peace, Standing Armies, without the Consent of our Legislatures.

He has affected to render the Military independent of, and superior to the Civil Power.

He has combined with others to subject us to a jurisdiction foreign to our constitution and unacknowledged by our laws, giving his Assent to their acts of pretended Legislation:

For protecting them, by a mock Trial, from Punishment for any Murders which they should commit on the Inhabitants of these States;

For cutting off our Trade with all parts of the world;

For depriving us, in many cases, of the benefits of Trial by Jury;

For transporting us beyond Seas to be tried for pretended offenses;

For abolishing the free System of English Laws in a neighboring Province, establishing therein an Arbitrary government, and enlarging its Boundaries, so as to render it at once an example and fit instrument for introducing the same absolute rule into these Colonies;

For taking away our Charters, abolishing our most valuable Laws, altering, fundamentally, the Form of our Governments;

For suspending our own Legislatures, and declaring themselves invested with Power to legislate for us in all cases whatsoever.

He has abdicated Government here, by declaring us out of his Protection and waging War against us.

He is, at this time, transporting large armies of foreign mercenaries to complete the works of death, desolation and tyranny, already begun, with circumstances of Cruelty and perfidy scarcely paralleled in the most barbarous ages, and totally unworthy the Head of a civilized nation.

He has constrained our fellow citizens, taken Captive on the high Seas, to bear Arms against their Country, to become the executioners of their friends and Brethren, or to fall themselves by their Hands.

He has excited domestic insurrections amongst us, and has endeavored to bring on the inhabitants of our frontiers the merciless Indian Savages, whose known rules of warfare is an undistinguished destruction of all ages, sexes and conditions.

In every stage of these oppressions We have Petitioned for Redress in the most humble terms: Our repeated Petitions have been answered only by repeated injury. A Prince whose character is thus marked by every act which may define a Tyrant, is unfit to be the ruler of a free People.

Nor have We been wanting in attentions to our British brethren. We have warned them, from time to time, of attempts made by their legislature to extend an unwarrantable jurisdiction over us. We have reminded them of the circumstances of our emigration and settlement here. We have appealed to their native justice and magnanimity, and we have conjured them, by the ties of our common kindred, to disavow these usurpations, which would inevitably interrupt our connections and correspondence. They, too, have been deaf to the voice of justice and of consanguinity. We must, therefore, acquiesce in the necessity which denounces our Separation, and hold them, as we hold the rest of mankind, Enemies in War, in Peace, Friends.

We, therefore, the Representatives of the United States of America in General Congress Assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions, do, in the Name and by Authority of the good People of these Colonies, solemnly publish and declare, that these United Colonies are, and of Right ought to be, Free and Independent States; that they are Absolved from all Allegiance to the British Crown, and that all political connection between them and the State of Great Britain is, and ought to be, totally dissolved; and that, as Free and Independent States, they have full Power to levy War, conclude Peace, contract Alliances, establish Commerce, and do all other Acts and Things which Independent States may of right do.

And for the support of this Declaration, with firm reliance on the Protection of Divine Providence we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes, and our sacred Honor.

That the government as now administered under the administration of William McKinley has come into direct antagonism with the Declaration of Independence will be evident to any man who reads the lines printed in red in the above copy. That "governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed," has been a statement held sacred by every patriot. But William McKinley attempts to govern "our colonies" by military commanders and commissioners appointed by himself. He is following exactly in the footsteps of George III in the appointment of judges and in the erection of a multitude of new offices and sending to Porto Rico, Cuba and the Philippines swarms of officers to harass the people and eat out their substance, in quartering large bodies of armed troops among them, in imposing taxes on them without their consent, in depriving them of the right of trial by jury. He has plundered their seas, ravaged their coasts, burnt their towns, and destroyed their lives. That is what William McKinley has done, and the living lines of fire penned by Thomas Jefferson when the foundations of liberty were being laid on this continent, stand today as his arraignment before God and man.