

## ANTI-IMPERIALISM.

Address by Chairman J. Sterling Morton  
at the Anti-Imperialist Meeting in  
Chicago, Tuesday Oct. 17, 1899.

Each day is a page and every year a chapter in that vast volume of Time called a Century. In our generation the final pages of the concluding chapter of the nineteenth century are written.

After more than eighteen hundred years of Christianity, of intellectual growth, and of a constantly improving civilization, in which the tender kindness and loving teachings of the gentle Nazarene have been thrown like light into the uttermost parts of the earth, we witness the most phenomenal paradox in governments which the race has ever experienced. The mailed hand of a great empire, directed by the benevolent mind of the Czar of Russia, inscribes peace on earth and good will to man across the closing pages of the nineteenth century, as its earnest and sincere aspiration. The government of Russia, a government with the largest standing army in the world, declares for disarmament and proposes universal peace. But the great republic of the United States, founded by Washington, Hamilton, Franklin, Jefferson, and their compatriots, declares for war, conquest, subjugation and annexation. Russia would be the peace-maker; the United States the war-maker. In all history there is not another so striking and inexplicable an antithesis. Never before in the annals of the world have been recorded two such departures by established governments from the revered principles, policies and the cherished traditions of their founders. Imperialism turns from war and conquest to exalt peace; but democracy seemingly drifts towards despotism and would hold conquered peoples as subjects and their domains as provinces.

Under these circumstances this assembly of citizens has been convoked. They have come together to take counsel, not as partisans to promote the power of a political organization, but as American citizens, as patriots to promote the welfare of their countrymen and to advise for the better establishment and safer perpetuation of this government by the people.

They have the right to thus peaceably assemble, and, without taunt or disparagement of those who may differ with them, to make solemn inquiry as to what is the best course for this republic when, as now, there may come danger to its most vital principles through the subversion of either its legislative or its executive powers.

That there are thousands of patriotic citizens of the United States who don't believe that it is wise to acquire distant, insular domains and attempt to make them a part of this republic, no one can doubt. The phrase "United States" originally distinctly conveyed the idea of a government made up of several

separate states which were erected out of contiguous or adjacent territory. There could never have been created a federal government of the United States out of separated islands like those in the Gulf of Mexico and those in the Pacific Archipelago. And the question now is: Can the United States absorb, assimilate and control such islands and govern them and their millions of people, and maintain a republican form of government? Can the United States continue and stand upon the consent of part of the governed and upon the subjugation of the other part?

Article VI of the Constitution of the United States says:

"This Constitution, and the laws of the United States which shall be made in pursuance thereof; and all treaties made, or which shall be made, under the authority of the United States, shall be the supreme law of the land; and the judges in every state shall be bound thereby, anything in the constitution or laws of any state to the contrary notwithstanding."

The treaty of Paris which gave the United States sovereignty over the Philippine islands is therefore to be observed and obeyed "as the supreme law of the land." It is obeyed by those who protested against its ratification. And it ought to be almost revered by all those who with intense fervor advocated its passage by the senate.

The preamble of the Constitution says:

"We, the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquillity, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America."

To acquire insular territory in the Pacific Ocean, inhabited by from eight millions to ten millions of people of another race, who live under a tropical sun is not "to form a more perfect union." To take these Filipinos by force of arms and benevolently assimilate them, is not "to establish justice." It is not "to insure domestic tranquillity." It is not "to provide for" but to imperil "the common defense." It is not "to promote the general welfare." It will not tend "to secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity." And yet for these purposes our forefathers "ordained and established this Constitution for the United States of America."

We are assembled here for the purpose of avoiding dangers to the sacred instrument and the institutions which it has established and fostered. In the language of Victor Hugo:

"The nineteenth century glorifies the eighteenth. The eighteenth proposed, the nineteenth concludes. And my last word shall be, tranquil but inflexible, of

peace and progress. This day force is called violence. It begins to be judged. War is arraigned. Civilization, upon complaint of the human race, orders the trial, and draws up the great criminal indictment of conquerors and captains. This witness, History, is summoned. The reality appears. Factitious brilliancy is dissipated. In many cases the hero is a species of assassin. The peoples begin to comprehend that increasing the magnitude of a crime can not be its diminution; that if to kill is a crime, to kill much can not be an extenuating circumstance; that if to steal is a shame, to invade can not be a glory. The peoples begin to comprehend that homicide is homicide, that bloodshed is bloodshed; that it serves nothing to call one's self Caesar or Napoleon, and that in the eyes of the eternal God the figure of a murderer is not changed because instead of a gallows cap there is placed upon his head an emperor's crown. War is not good. It is not useful to make corpses. No, oh mothers who surround me, it can not be that war, the robber, should continue to take from you your sons. No, it can not be that women should bear children in pain, that men should be born, that people should plow and sow, that the farmer should fertilize the fields and the workmen enrich the city, that industry should produce marvels, that genius should produce prodigies, that the vast human activity should, in presence of the starry sky, multiply efforts and creations, all to result in that frightful international exposition which is called a battlefield.

"Let us stop the effusion of human blood. Let the eighteenth century come to the help of the nineteenth. The philosophers, our predecessors, are the apostles of the true. Let us invoke those illustrious shades. Let them before monarchies meditate wars, proclaim the right of man to life, the right of conscience to liberty, the sovereignty of reason, the holiness of labor, the beneficence of peace; and since Night issues from the thrones, let the Light come from the tombs."

**FREIGHT RATES.** The state historical society of Nebraska will convene in January, 1900, at the University in Lincoln. Early methods of transportation from the Missouri river to the mountains and the cost thereof, together with rates from St. Louis by river to Sioux City, and intermediate points, will be fully discussed and illustrated.

THE CONSERVATIVE has just been permitted to read an article for that occasion, upon the topic of transportation, from William Fulton, Esq., of Kansas City. Mr. Fulton is a gentleman of exceptionally good memory and great felicity for facts and figures. The paper which he has kindly prepared for the state historical society is exceedingly interesting and very valuable.