

FREE SILVER, TRUSTS, AND THE PHILIPPINES *

THERE are several great issues at stake in this campaign, but of course the greatest issue of all is the issue of keeping the country on the plane of material well-being and honor to which it has been brought during the last four years. I do not claim that President McKinley's admirable administration and the wise legislation passed by Congress which he has sanctioned are solely responsible for our present well-being, but I do claim that it is this administration and this legislation which have rendered it possible for the American people to achieve such well-being. I insist furthermore that the one and only way to insure wide-spread industrial and social ruin would be now to reverse the policy under which we have so prospered, and to try that policy of financial disgrace and economic disaster which we rejected in '96. Our opponents now advance the most extraordinary arguments that have ever been advanced in a presidential campaign by any party on behalf of its presidential nominee. They have reaffirmed specifically their entire '96 platform, and yet they insist vigorously that all they considered of most vital importance in '96 shall now be relegated to a subordinate place; and more extraordinary still, they actually ask that Mr. Bryan and a Democratic House be elected, because the Senate will remain Republican anyhow, so that the President and the House won't be able to do much harm.

Think of it, gentlemen! This is the position actually

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taken by not a few of our opponents, and especially by the men who know that Mr. Bryan's financial policy is utterly ruinous, but who want to give themselves some excuse for voting against President McKinley, because forsooth President McKinley has been too active in upholding the honor of the flag. Mr. Bryan himself is sufficiently strident when he talks about those figments of disordered brains, militarism and imperialism; yet he coos as mildly as a sucking dove when he whispers his unchanged devotion to free silver. Now it is worth while remembering that if the question of the unsettlement of our currency is raised in any campaign, it must be one of the paramount questions. The other day in accepting the Populistic nomination Mr. Bryan was careful to point out how little he and they differed in essentials on the greenback question. He is quite right. Both are believers in fiat money; what particular kind of fiat money is necessarily a minor detail. It makes no difference whether free silver or fiat money is championed as the first or second issue so long as it is championed at all, save that to subordinate it as an issue removes the last justification for raising the issue at all. The one element more essential than any other to the prosperity of a great civilized nation is a sound and stable currency. The only possible excuse for jeopardizing the prosperity of the whole nation by attacking its system of currency is a conviction so intense that the issue must of necessity be a burning one. If our opponents do not regard the silver issue as a paramount issue, then they have been guilty of gross wrong to their fellow countrymen in raising it at all.

As a matter of fact, it *is* paramount, and the attitude of the Populistic Democracy in trying to keep it out of sight east of the Mississippi, while insisting upon their

adherence to it west of the Mississippi, is in itself enough to discredit them in the eyes of all good citizens, whether Republicans or genuine Democrats. Moreover, the attitude is entirely futile. The leaders among our opponents are doubtless uneasily conscious that their free-silver policy would be disastrous to the welfare of our country; but having played the part of demagogues they must now reap the fruits of their action. If they came into power, their mere possession of power would throw this country into convulsions of disaster. They would be obliged to make war upon the principles of sound finance. The victory of Mr. Bryan would mean such a strengthening of the foes of honest money as to powerfully impress every wavering mind in the Senate, so that free-silver legislation could probably pass both houses; and no secretary of the treasury who would accept office under Mr. Bryan could do anything but follow a course of action which would plunge our financial system into chaos. If the farmer, the business man, and the wage-worker want prosperity to continue, they must make up their minds that the incoming of Mr. Bryan would mean terrible and wide-spread disaster.

A word as to trusts. Beyond a question the great industrial combinations which we group in popular parlance under the name of trusts have produced great and serious evils. There is every reason why we should try to abate these evils and to make men of wealth, whether they act individually or collectively, bear their full share of the country's burdens and keep as scrupulously within the bounds of equity and morality as any of their neighbors. But wild and frantic denunciation does not do them the least harm and simply postpones the day when we can make them amenable to proper laws. Hasty legislation of a violent type is either wholly

ineffective against the evil, or else crushes the evil at the expense of crushing even more of good. We need to approach the subject both with a firm resolution to abate the evils and in a spirit of hard common sense as we search for the means of abating them. One of the first things to obtain is publicity. We must be able by law to find out exactly what each corporation does and earns. This mere publicity itself will effect something toward remedying many evils. Moreover, it will give us a clearer idea as to what the remaining evils are, and will therefore enable us to shape our measures for attacking the latter with good prospects of success. Immoderate attack always invites reaction and often defeat. Moderation combined with resolution can alone secure results worth having.

Let me point out to you that within the last two years we have in New York established a franchise tax under which the corporations which owe most to the State, but who had hitherto largely escaped taxation, have been required to pay their just share of taxation. This law has resulted in putting upon the assessment books nearly two hundred millions of property which had theretofore escaped taxation. It represents ten times over more than our opponents ever did in that State, or so far as I know in any other State, have done to remedy the inequalities which can justly be complained of; and yet we did it without any demagogic outcry, and we did it in no anarchic spirit; but simply as the friends of order and liberty, of property and individual rights, who intended temperately but firmly to insist upon justice for all. In other words, we made our performance square with our promise. Contrast this with what our opponents in that State did. The leader of the Democratic party in my State and the gentleman

who ran against me for governor on an antitrust platform and who served on the Committee on Resolutions at Kansas City which drew up their present platform, are both of them very loud in their denunciation of trusts. They say a great deal more against them than I should say, because I am hampered by the fact that I want to have my deeds always make good my words. When we come to deeds, however, we find that in a particularly flagrant trust, the Ice Trust, the two gentlemen referred to stand foremost among the stockholders, the same stockholders including a number of the New York City officials, and this in spite of the fact that the city itself has dealings with the trust. Such a condition of affairs calls for but scant comment from me. You can hope for but little from men who in other words play the demagogue about trusts, but you can hope for infinitely less when these very men join to public denunciation of trusts private ownership in them.

In many points there is a curious similarity between this campaign of 1900 and the campaign of 1864 when President Lincoln was re-elected. Not since the close of the Civil War have we ever had an administration which did so much to uphold the honor and interest of America as President McKinley's, and not since the close of the Civil War, not even in 1868 or 1896, has it been of such vital consequence to overwhelm a political party as it now is, for the success of our opponent would mean to the country a disaster fraught with the gravest consequence. There is a close similarity between the arguments used by the Populistic Democracy at the moment, and by their analogues, the Copperheads of 1864; and exactly as in 1864 so now we appeal for the support of all good citizens. We have a right to ask that the old line Democrats will stand with us, for the

old line Democracy always championed hard money and expansion. Moreover, more fortunate than in 1864 we can now appeal to all good men North and South, East and West, to the sons of the men who wore the blue and the sons of the men who wore the gray alike. Not only was the Spanish War the most righteous foreign war undertaken by any nation during the lifetime of the present generation, but it welded this country once and for all into an undivided nation. Our generals included not only men who fought on the Union side in the Civil War, but men who had with equal gallantry and equal devotion to what they deemed their duty, borne arms for the South—men like Joe Wheeler, Fitzhugh Lee, and many another whom I could mention. All alike were Americans and the country cared nothing where they came from, because it took equal pride in them all. That Dewey was born in Vermont concerned them no more than that Hobson was born in Alabama, or that Funston came from Kansas and Hale from Colorado. As we in the time of the war appealed to all men who were good Americans, so now in preserving the results of the war, in justifying what we did two years ago, we appeal again to all good men whatever their political affiliations have been in the past, whether they come from the North or the South, the Atlantic or Pacific coast, to stand with us because we stand for the honor and interest of our common country.

In 1864 the Democratic platform denounced the further prosecution of the Civil War just as the Kansas City platform denounces the further prosecution of the war in the Philippines to-day. Moreover in 1864 the platform contained precisely the same frantic assertion that civil liberty and private rights had been trampled on and that justice and liberty demanded an immediate

effort for the cessation of hostilities. Much of what is put in the two platforms could be interchanged on this point, and in 1864 there was the same hypocritical sympathy expressed for the soldiers and sailors that is expressed again in 1900; in each case the expression of sympathy for the soldier coming in as a tag to a declaration of hostility to the cause for which the soldier was fighting, a declaration which was certain infinitely to increase the work and danger of the soldier. The chairman of the convention in 1864 made a speech in which he declared that every lover of civil liberty throughout the world was interested in the success of the Copperhead party. This is just the same type of appeal that is being made now, and it is just as baseless in one case as it was in the other. In 1864 the name of liberty was invoked to secure the continuance of slavery. In 1900 it is invoked to secure the abandonment of American honor and to throw the Philippines under the rule of a corrupt and tyrannous oligarchy. In 1864 the cry of imperialism was raised exactly as it is now raised, with just as little basis. The Indianapolis *Sentinel*, for instance, declared that if Mr. Lincoln was re-elected there would be "no longer a republic in the United States but a consolidated empire." On every hand Lincoln was denounced as a tyrant, a shedder of blood, a foe of liberty, a would-be dictator, a founder of an empire—one orator saying: "We also have our Emperor Lincoln, who can tell stale jokes while the land is running red with the blood of brothers." Even after Lincoln's death the assault was kept up, and in 1868 the same party declared that if Grant was inaugurated as President the American people would "meet as a subjugated and conquered people amid the ruin of liberty and the shattered Constitution." Of course in 1864 militarism

as a threat was worked with infinitely more apparent justification than it can now be worked. We did have big armies in the field then, whereas now our army, including not merely the regulars but volunteers, is not half as large relatively to the population of the country as is the New York City police force relatively to the population of that city. To appeal now to the average man to beware lest he groan under the burden of the soldier is a good deal less rational than to appeal to him in New York or Chicago to beware lest he groan under the weight of the members of the Fire Department. We have a regular army practically no larger in proportion to the population than it was a century ago. We use it just as we use the police force and Fire Department in great cities, and it is not a whit more dangerous to our liberties and does not add as much to our burdens as either of these.

Now a word specifically as to the Philippines. It is in connection with the Philippines that Mr. Bryan has chiefly harped upon the "consent of the governed" theory. As a matter of fact we cannot too clearly keep in mind that the success of the Aguinaldian rebels would mean not liberty for all Filipinos, but liberty for a certain bloodthirsty section to oppress a great majority of their fellow countrymen. Under Spanish rule the Filipinos were treated with intolerable cruelty. The Aguinaldian leaders have, wherever their power has extended, continued a system almost as bad. The chief victims of this system have been not the Americans but their fellow Filipinos; for their hatred and cruelty have been exhibited chiefly at the cost of their fellow countrymen who have had the good sense and genuine patriotism to realize that the true interests of the islands lay in the American Government. So far as I am aware not

one competent witness who has actually known the facts believes the Filipinos capable of self-government at present, or believes that such an effort would result in anything but a horrible confusion of tyranny and anarchy. Judge Taft, President Schurman, Professor Worcester, Bishop Potter, and all our army officers are a unit in this point. The institutions of a free republic cannot at a leap be transplanted into wholly alien soil among a people who have not the slightest conception of liberty and self-government as we use those words. You might as well try to transplant a full-grown oak into alien soil.

Remember that to surrender the Philippines now to a little band of military usurpers would be to surrender the islands to bloodshed and misery. Our stay in the islands is the condition precedent of peace. With us expansion means, as it always has meant, peace. When we took New Mexico it meant that we gave to that territory peace, and saved it from the quarter of a century of bloody fighting which followed for old Mexico. When we expanded west of the Mississippi it meant that we put a stop to the tribal warfare which had endured for ages among Sioux and Crow, Cheyenne and Pawnee. So now the establishment of our rule in the Philippines means to give the islands peace, and it is the only chance they have of getting peace or of getting good government. To contract instead of expand means cruel war, cruel despotism for the islands which we would abandon. We have a right to ask the support of every lover of peace, of every believer in peace, for the righteous policy we have pursued in the Philippines. No statesman worthy of the name, no patriot or philanthropist who is entitled to a moment's hearing before the bar of mankind will maintain that the principles of the Declaration of Independence mean that no man throughout the

world, no matter what his crimes or his limitations, is to be excused from the observance of law and order if he happens to think that lawlessness and disorder suit him best. As has been shown again and again, neither Jefferson, the author of the Declaration of Independence, nor Lincoln, the man who did most to make the facts of our national life correspond with that same doctrine, ever dreamed for a moment of giving it such interpretation. Lincoln in one of his great speeches at Springfield, June 26, 1857, thus alluded to the framers of the Declaration of Independence: "They did not mean to assert the obvious untruth that all were then actually enjoying equality, nor yet that they were about to confer it immediately upon them. In fact they had no power to confer such a boon. They meant simply to declare the right, so that the enforcement of it might follow as fast as circumstances would permit. They meant to set up a standard maxim for free society which should be familiar to all and revered by all; constantly looked to, constantly labored for, and even though never perfectly attained, constantly approximated, and thereby constantly spreading and deepening its influence and augmenting the happiness and value of life to all peoples."

I received the other day a letter from Captain Moffett, of the First Dakota Volunteers, giving his experience with the prisoners in Manila prison when that city was captured. Of the fifteen hundred prisoners, eleven hundred were released. It appeared that they had been tortured and wronged in the most terrible way, and most of them had not even been tried for the crimes they were alleged to have committed. Over half of them were probably entirely innocent. I cannot even enumerate the tortures habitually used by the Spaniards

to these Filipino prisoners, and when I read such letters as these of Captain Moffett, and such letters as that I shall quote from the gallant son of a gallant Confederate officer, my blood boils at the foul slanders of the men who dishonor the name of America by attacks on our policy and our soldiers in the Philippines. The simple truth is that we rescued those islands from the hideous tyranny of the Spaniards and the anarchy of the corrupt and bloody insurgent chiefs. We are now rapidly establishing a stable government, and wherever we have succeeded in establishing that government, we have already given to the natives such justice and liberty as neither they nor their forefathers have ever known throughout the ages. No blacker wrong could be done them than to turn them back to their own devices to work out their own destruction.

I have spoken of the cruelties committed by the insurgent natives especially upon those natives who refused to join in the insurrection. Many of the officers whom I knew before Santiago write me about affairs in the Philippines. I cannot as a rule make public their names. From one series of letters, however, I desire to quote to you certain extracts. They are written by as gallant and honorable a man as ever breathed, a Democrat, a Southerner, a son of a most gallant Confederate officer. In them he writes as follows:

“We have worked and planned to get these people, who cared to be friendly and accept our protection, to come into town. We succeeded. Many of the Filipinos came in and were given houses. Those without food were supplied, the sick were doctored, etc. Now it is the earnest endeavor of all the insurgents to burn the town, kill or carry off the people, men, women, and children. They treat their prisoners with great cruelty.

There is terrible suffering among the Amigos when we cannot protect them. I hear continually and believe they are waiting for the November election and will be active until then. Our troops entered a new town not long ago and called in the chief local officer for a talk. The matter was laid fairly before him as to whether he wished to join with us or go with the insurrectos. Being a thinking man he hesitated a few moments, and then fairly took the breath from the officer by asking him whether Bryan or McKinley would be elected this fall. He joined us only after being assured that there was no possibility of Bryan's being elected. I would certainly vote the straight Republican ticket if I were home."

"I cannot understand how our own country should do so much to encourage the insurrection and cause the loss of so much life. In this island I know that the army of insurrectos and guerillas is kept alive by people at home. Bryan's campaign is most closely followed. The speeches of public men who oppose expansion and in doing so praise the 'Filipino bravely struggling for his liberty' are translated into the several dialects and issued as circulars. From an intelligent prisoner the other day I learned that the people were assured that Bryan would be elected and that our ships would be withdrawn and the massacre of Americans would be the order of the day. If you doubt this I wish you would see their barbarous mutilation of the prisoners and wounded that they take. I do believe that if Bryan and his sympathizers cannot make their campaign without such acts and speech as are traitorous to the government in time of war, it would be more generous and noble to hold their opinions in abeyance until we can straighten out this tangle. If Bryan is defeated and the country gives

the administration the right support we can finish up this job here without great loss of American life and without great punishment to the natives.”

“This town, one of the worst on the islands, is now practically on a self-sustaining basis and the municipal affairs managed by the natives themselves. I begin to believe things will shape up here within a few months. We made an expedition last month to the mountains to the relief of some Americanista natives held prisoners by the insurrectos. We found them, and their condition and place of confinement were horrible beyond description. Their crime was living in a town protected by American troops, and the cruelty with which they were treated was equal to the sort inflicted by our Indians in their worst days. Their favorite punishment is to break the legs of their prisoners with sticks, or making them sit down on live coals of fire. Wouldn't they make a fine class to govern here? The insurrectos governed this island (Leyte) for about a year and a half before we came. Their plan was to sell the offices to the highest cash bidder and each purchaser sold the offices under him in like manner. The same plan held good of the municipal offices. Naturally the most intelligent natives are now on our side, and I believe firmly that the best classes will become capable of an intelligent administration of their internal affairs.”

Now, with these extracts fresh in your mind, I wish you to remember that our opponents' proposition is that we should turn over to unspeakable torture at the hands of those who have been fighting us, the men, women, and children who have been friendly to us and who have trusted in our honor and power. It seems to me difficult to stigmatize such a proceeding in sufficiently hard

language. The proposition is not to give the Filipinos the right to govern themselves, but to give the Filipino bandits who have been fighting us the right to work their wicked will on their fellow countrymen who have been friendly to us. Such an act would be not merely one of culpable folly and weakness, but one of the basest treachery and inhumanity.

I have in my possession letters from Mr. George F. Becker, the geologist, who was out in the Philippines for considerably over a year, and during a large part of the time acted as a staff-officer to General James Franklin Bell. In June, 1899, Mr. Becker while visiting a lignite deposit in the Island of Negros under the escort of some California volunteers was attacked by the insurgents. A savage fight ensued and the insurgents were repulsed, their leader, General Vicente Ornedo, being killed. Upon his person was found a list of Filipinos who were to be killed by the insurgents if victorious. The list of slaughter thus coolly made up contained the name of the wife of a Swiss gentleman at whose ranch they had just spent the night. Mr. Becker quotes instance after instance of the assassination of friendly natives by the hostiles. These outrages were much more common than outrages against the Americans, although I need not recall to you that on February 15, 1899, Aguinaldo's government issued an order, quoted in General Otis's annual report, for the massacre of all Americans and Europeans in Manila.

I have spoken above of General Bell. In one of his letters the following phrase occurs: "The dismal incompetence of the Filipinos for self-government is much more apparent [now than it was then]. It would probably be impossible to find any fairly competent white observer in the islands who regards the natives as able to

maintain order here or to protect the persons and property of foreigners. Their lack of appreciation of the idea of freedom as understood by Americans has been illustrated by astoundingly arbitrary and cruel decrees which were put into force so far as practicable, and by the cold-blooded assassination of one of their ablest generals.”

To give to such men the right to oppress others in the name of liberty would be the merest travesty on the principles of right.

No men can profess the doctrines our political foes profess as regards the Philippines without being speedily lured into positions even more destructive of the national honor. The extremists among them of every grade have actually been attacking the President for what he has done in China, and one of their leaders even had the wild folly to state that the Boxer outbreak in China was due to our possession of the Philippines. This sapient gentleman might just exactly as well have stated that our occupation of the Philippines produced disturbances in the rings of Saturn. It is noteworthy that the first result of the militarism complained of in the Philippines has been to enable the President to take the lead in protecting our minister and our missionaries in China. It is difficult to know which to admire most—the cool-headed moderation with which the President throughout the Chinese difficulty has refused to allow this country to take a vindictive attitude or to do more than exact justice, or, on the other hand, the steadfast and unswerving resolution with which he is insisting that this justice must be obtained.

My fellow citizens, the truth as regards the present situation is simply and clearly that the American people now have to decide whether or not they will play the

part of a great nation nobly and well. It is with the nation as with the individual. None of us respects the man whose aim in life is to avoid every difficulty and danger and stay in the shelter of his own home, there to bring up children unable to face the roughness of the world. We respect the man who goes out to do a man's work, to front difficulties and overcome them, and to train up his children to do likewise. So it is with the nation. To decline to do our duty is simply to sink as China has sunk. If we are to continue to hold our heads high as Americans, we must bravely, soberly, and resolutely front each particular duty as it arises, and it is because of the great truth contained in this principle that we appeal to every man, Northerner and Southerner, Easterner and Westerner, whether his father fought under Grant or under Lee, whatever political party he may have belonged to in the past — to stand with us now when we ask that the hands of President McKinley be upheld, and that this nation instead of shrinking in unmanly terror from its duty, shall stride forward, to use its giant strength for the upholding of our honor and the interests of mankind in doing that part of the world's work which Providence has allotted to us.