

To the American People.

The Anti-Imperialist leagues of the United States have been silent since the presidential election, but not because they have less faith in their cause or believe the battle lost. They had hoped that those who voted for Mr. McKinley, while disapproving his policy in the West Indies and the Philippines, would see that their votes were misinterpreted, and would make their disapproval known and felt. They had hoped that congress would claim its place in our government, and would insist that the principles of freedom must be recognized and applied wherever our country holds sway. They had hoped that the supreme court would with no uncertain voice declare that no human being under our control could be without the rights secured by our constitution, and that neither president nor congress, nor both together, could exercise absolute power over men entitled to the protection of our flag.

These hopes have not been realized. Where Benjamin Harrison nobly led, too few have followed. The war in the Philippines has been prosecuted with unrelenting cruelty until the resistance of unhappy islands seems to have been crushed. Many thousands of their bravest men have been killed, or have died of disease, during the contest, and today the president exercises a power as despotic as the czar's over the whole Filipino nation. Congress has abdicated its function, has given these people into the president's hands, and has adjourned without attempting to deal with the questions presented by the islands. Already it has learned that free government is hard and absolutism easy—a dangerous lesson in a republic. Liberty and absolutism cannot exist together.

Three years ago congress by joint resolution declared "that the people of the island of Cuba are and of right ought to be free and independent"—that they were then independent, and were justly entitled to be independent. This country intervened to establish their independence, and by the same resolution promised not to exercise sovereignty, jurisdiction or control over said island, except for the pacification thereof." Today the president is the absolute ruler of Cuba. He spends the revenues of the island as he pleases. No constitution, no law, fetters his power. At his instance congress has violated the nation's pledge. The "independent" Cuban people have been told that they will not be allowed to establish any government in their own land, unless they surrender in part the control of their finances and foreign affairs; unless they give to this country the possession of strategic points on their territory; and unless in addition they give to it the right to intervene in their domestic affairs whenever in the judgment of our authorities the occasion shall demand such intervention. They are offered no option to refuse these demands, which are backed by the presence of American troops on their soil. Thus to the whole world our course has become an example of national perfidy. The enforced submission of the Cubans to these unjust requirements has made the stain on our national record indelible.

The supreme court has spoken, but has left the law in doubt. Some of its members have given their countenance to views urged by the administration, of which their associate, Mr. Justice Harlan, says: "If the principles thus announced should ever receive the sanction of a majority of this court, a radical and mischievous change in our system of government will be the result. We will in that event pass from the era of constitutional liberty, guarded and protected by a written constitution, into an era of legislative absolutism."

Where such a revolution is threatened, and when congress and the supreme court both fail, there is no help save in the people. If they would avert the impending calamity they must help themselves. Let us not be misled by names. Imperialism is not a question of crowns and sceptres, of names and titles. It is a system of government.

Where a man or body of men, an emperor, a president, a congress, or a nation, claims the absolute right to rule a people, to compel the submission of that people by brute force, to decide what rights they shall have, what taxes they shall pay, what judges shall administer their laws, what men shall govern them—all without responsibility to the people thus governed—this is imperialism, the antithesis of free government. As Mr. Justice Harlan says: "The idea that this country may acquire territories anywhere upon the earth, by conquest or treaty, and hold them as mere colonies or provinces, and the people inhabiting them to enjoy only such rights as congress chooses to accord them, is wholly inconsistent with the spirit and genius as well as with the words of the constitution."

In organized society there is no liberty that is not constitutional liberty. Even in America, where we have only to fear the abuse of power by our own fellow-citizens, we all rely on constitutions, national and state, to protect our rights. We cannot conceive an American community without these safeguards. Do not the inhabitants of Luzon need against us the protection that we need against ourselves? It has ever been the American method to incorporate acquired territory with representation; it is now proposed to revert to the Roman method and hold conquered territory by force without representation. This policy which we oppose gives to the Filipinos and Porto Ricans no constitutional rights, no American citizenship, no hope of statehood, no voice in the congress which rules them; it leaves them without a country, the subjects of a republic. To believers in free government this policy is monstrous.

"Let it be remembered," said the Continental congress, "that it has ever been the pride and boast of America that the rights for which she contended were the rights of human nature." When this country denies to millions of men the rights which we have ever claimed, not only for ourselves, but for all men, its policy is suicidal. As Lincoln said: "Those who deny liberty to others deserve it not themselves, and under a just God cannot long retain it." Indifference to liberty anywhere breeds indifference to liberty everywhere. No man can defend despotic methods abroad and long retain his loyalty to democracy at home. The common speech of those who support our new policy gives us daily examples of this truth. We cannot have citizens and subjects under the same flag. "A house divided against itself cannot stand." For—

"Laws of changeless justice bind oppressor with oppressed,

And close as sin and suffering joined we march to fate abreast."

We insist that constitutional liberty shall be the inalienable right of every man who owes allegiance to our flag; that freedom shall belong to man and not to place; that our constitution shall be no respecter of persons, colors, or races; that it shall recognize the equal rights of all. Ours is the policy of liberty. Ours is the cause for which the American revolution was fought and which triumphed again in the civil war. It is the cause of human freedom now threatened in the house of its friends. It makes little difference under what name we rally to its support. Daniel Webster said:

"Arbitrary governments may have territories and distant possessions because arbitrary governments may rule them by different laws and different systems. . . . We can do no such thing: They must be of us, part of us, or else strangers."

With Benjamin Harrison, we are "unable to rejoice in the acquisition of lands and mines and forests and commerce, at the cost of the abandonment of the old American idea that a government of absolute powers is an intolerable thing, and, under the constitution of the United States, an impossible thing." We agree with him that this view "will not limit the power of territorial expansion; but it will lead us to limit the use of that power

to regions that may safely become part of the United States, and to peoples whose American citizenship may be allowed."

We urge all lovers of freedom to organize in defense of human rights now threatened by the greatest free government in history. Even if our government may exercise arbitrary power over millions of men in disregard of the constitution—which we deny—it can never be right for it to exercise such power. Right is higher than might. Let every citizen study the facts and make his conclusion known, combining with his neighbor to influence congress to stand true to the principles of the Declaration by which this government was founded and under which it has grown so great. The gravest danger our country has known till now has come from a denial of those principles. The incoming congress is not yet committed to the policy of incorporating the island peoples into our system without rights. Let it resume its place in the government in defense of the inalienable rights of man.

We appeal from those who for the moment exercise the power of the nation to the people who are the nation—that nation which, on July 4, 1776, was "conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal."

AMERICAN ANTI-IMPERIALIST LEAGUE,
By George S. Boutwell, President, and W. J. Mize,
Secretary.

NEW ENGLAND ANTI-IMPERIALIST LEAGUE,
By Albert S. Parsons, Chairman Executive Committee, and Erving Winslow, Secretary.

ANTI-IMPERIALIST LEAGUE OF NEW YORK,
By Ernest H. Crosby, President, and E. W. Ordway, Secretary.

AMERICAN LEAGUE OF PHILADELPHIA,
By George G. Mercer, President, and Samuel Miliken, Secretary.

WASHINGTON ANTI-IMPERIALIST LEAGUE,
By W. A. Croffut, President.

CINCINNATI ANTI-IMPERIALIST LEAGUE,
By Charles B. Wilby, Chairman Executive Committee.

MINNEAPOLIS ANTI-IMPERIALIST LEAGUE,
By Henry J. Fletcher, President.

We concur in the above address: Carl Schurz, New York; Charles H. Aldrich, Chicago, ex-solicitor-general, U. S.; Leonard Woolsey Bacon, Conn.; John Beatty, Columbus, O.; James L. Blair, St. Louis; Horace Boies, Iowa; Donelson Caffery, Louisiana; D. H. Chamberlain, Massachusetts; Samuel L. Clemens, New York; C. R. Codman, Massachusetts; Louis R. Ehrich, Colorado; William H. Fleming, Georgia; Frederick W. Gookin, Chicago; Arthur C. A. Hall, P. E., bishop of Vermont; Moses Hallett, Denver; Edward Holton James, Seattle, Wash.; William D. Howells, New York; Henry U. Johnson, Indiana; Henry W. Lamb, Boston; Daniel S. Lord, Chicago; J. Laurence Laughlin, Chicago; Henry B. Metcalf, Rhode Island; J. Sterling Morton, Nebraska; Charles Elliot Norton, Cambridge, Mass.; Warren Olney, San Francisco; George L. Paddock, Chicago; Robert Treat Paine, jr., Boston; Wheeler H. Peckham, New York; Henry Wade Rogers, New Haven; James R. Ryan, bishop of Alton; Edwin Burritt Smith, Chicago; Rufus B. Smith, Cincinnati; Charles B. Spahr, New York; J. L. Spalding, bishop of Peoria; Moorfield Storey, Boston; Charles M. Sturges, Chicago; William G. Sumner, New Haven; John J. Valentine, San Francisco; Herbert Welsh, Philadelphia; Horace White, New York; C. E. S. Wood, Portland, Ore.; Sigmund Zeisler, Chicago.

Washington Times: The total number of vessels passing through the Suez canal in 1900 was 3,441, of which 1,935 were British, 462 German, 285 French, 232 Dutch, 162 Austrian, 100 Russian, 82 Italian, 63 Japanese, 34 Spanish, 28 Turkish, 30 Norwegian, 27 Danish, 22 American, 7 Belgian, 3 Portuguese, 2 Swedish, 2 Greece and 1 Argentine. The passengers numbered 282,000, this being the highest number on record except that of 1896.