

Colonel Wetmore's Speech.

The following speech was delivered on July 4 at Columbia, Mo., by Col. M. C. Wetmore of St. Louis. It shows that there is at least one man of considerable means who retains his confidence in the people and his love for the early ideals of the nation. Col. Wetmore is a business man, but no republican orator delivered as appropriate an address on the nation's anniversary:

"Any man who can make a speech on anything ought to be able to say something on this day of all days to the democracy of America. The democrats of the country have made the Fourth of July what it has been in the past, and if it is to signify in the future what it has in the past, it must surely be done by the democratic party. If in this country all men are to be free and equal, that great conservative party which laid the foundation stone of our government must again take charge of the destinies of the people. The greatest man that this country or any other country ever produced was born one hundred and fifty-eight years ago, over on the red hills of Virginia. He was not only great in mind, and liberal in spirit, but he had the sublime courage of his convictions, and was the first man of all the millions who preceded him who dared to announce the grand principle of the equality of man and that governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed. For these two great principles the democratic party has ever contended, sometimes for long periods with ill success, but with an unconquerable faith in the right they have battled, scorning defeat and becoming stronger in adversity. What a great people and what a mighty moral power would be ours if we would live strictly up to the teachings of the Declaration of Independence, having in view at all times the immortal words of Jefferson, that "all men are created equal." From the beginning of the government that has been democratic doctrine. What relation the sentiments and principles of the Declaration of Independence will bear to the government of the future time alone can tell. That we are drifting from its teachings at the present time no candid man will deny. That our law givers and the interpreters of our laws have seen fit to set up their judgments in opposition to the plain terms of our constitution is so plain that it can scarcely be denied by the most bitter partisan. Their excuse for manifest violations is that circumstances are different from what they were when the constitution was adopted; when that grandest body of men ever assembled on earth wrote what some liberal-minded Englishman declared was an inspired document. It must be plain to any thinking person that if the constitution can be set aside, then we are left as a ship without a rudder, tossed first in one direction and then in another, until finally it is smashed to pieces on the breakers. If we are to be left to the mercy of the majority, no matter what party may have control of the government, we are at once placed under the most perfect tyranny. It has often been said, and I believe with truth, that there is no monarch so severe as a majority without something to hold in check the instinct of tyranny which springs eternal in the human breast. If there is any person here who doubts the statement I am going to make, that the present national administration has in

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many cases violated the constitution, I want to cite him one instance as proof that he has not kept himself well informed. The 13th amendment to the constitution of the United States reads as follows:

"1st. Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime, whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States or any place subject to their jurisdiction.

"2nd. Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation."

The Sulu Islands of the Philippine archipelago were transferred by Spain to the United States pretty nearly three years ago. At the time Spain ceded by treaty those islands to the United States slavery existed there, and although we claim to have had supreme jurisdiction there, slavery still exists and is likely to continue to exist for years to come. The Sultan of Sulu acknowledges the supremacy of the United States in the islands, and when General Bates concluded his treaty and exacted allegiance of the Sultan, it was stipulated that the rights of the subjects of the Sultan of Sulu as enjoyed under the rule of Spain were not to be molested, and many of the institutions to be protected. These included polygamy and slavery. I am aware that the president made the statement that the stipulation, in regard to slavery, was not expected by him, and that he had notified General Bates that the treaty must be changed in that regard. But there has never been any change in the treaty as made by General Bates, and no one in this country knows that anything in the matter has ever been done; and certain it is that slavery exists in those islands the same as it has for the past three hundred years. A commission appointed by the president, of which Judge Taft was the chairman, lately visited Sulu and had an interview with the Sultan and many of his most influential subjects, and when they made a report of their visit they acknowledged that slavery still existed there, and then in the most matter of fact way recommended as a policy of wisdom that no interference with the institution of the Mohammedans in that group of islands should be made for the present. It was some time ago reported by parties who had visited Sulu that some visitors of the neighboring islands offered \$300 apiece for certain slaves who had in some manner offended their pride and dignity and they wished to purchase them for the purpose of putting them to death; and whilst the Sultan did not accept their offer, the refusal was probably made for the reason that the Sultan thought the price was not up to the standard. Our republican friends will not undertake to deny that the Sulu islands are subject to the jurisdiction of the United States, and have been for some time. The flag of our country is there raised in token of sovereignty, and the star-spangled banner, that flag we have always looked up to as a protector of liberty and freedom, floats over islands that our friends of the administration claim belong to us, and which islands contain thousands upon thousands of people held in bondage as property. There is no escape for the republicans, and they must shoulder the responsibility of making our flag protect slave-holders on land which they claim as absolutely belonging to us. Reading the 13th amendment of our great Bill of Rights, there is no opportunity for any distinctions between states and territories. Article first of the 13th amendment, which I have before quoted, is so plain that there is no escaping this conclusion. "Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime, whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States or any place subject to their jurisdiction." So we are brought face to face with the fact

that the constitution has been set aside and that these islands are governed by the president of the United States, who, in fact, if not in name, is the emperor, and can enforce any laws or conditions that may seem to him best, in our recently acquired possessions. "Oh, the star-spangled banner, long may it wave, o'er the land of the free and the home of the brave."

There are many instances wherein the present administration has set the constitution aside for a matter of expediency. How long the people of this country will submit to the violations of the fundamental law of their country remains to be seen. That this administration is absolutely under the domination and control of the concentrated money power of the country, will scarcely be denied by any intelligent and well informed person. In their platform of 1900 the republicans tried to make the country believe that they would crush out or control the trusts; yet we are aware of the fact that more monetary trusts, and combinations of manufacturing and railroad interests, have been formed since the election in 1900 than ever existed before, and no matter how they may try to deny it, the republican party is the father of the trust system. The trusts are organized in the interests of the few, and against the interests of the many. The intention of the organizers is to crush out all competition. This in many instances, and in many kinds of business, has already been done. Any young man who starts in a business career now does not have the same opportunity that his father had a generation ago. He may perhaps obtain a position as clerk or other employe of a trust, but there is a board over his head on which is plainly written: "Thus far you may climb, but no higher." The trusts are violators of the constitution, which guarantees to all citizens of the United States equal rights and privileges under the law. They are utterly opposed to the spirit and sentiment of the Declaration of Independence, which breathes in every line the doctrine of the rights of man to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. Not only that, but every organizer of a trust is a violator of the laws of congress, enacted especially to prevent "combinations in restraint of trade." I believe the Sherman act, if honestly enforced by honest officers of the law, would destroy every trust, or so cripple it that it would be impossible for it to do business. It is asking too much of the credulity of man, however, to believe that attorney generals from the great states of New Jersey and Pennsylvania, and who have been the representatives and legal advisers of trusts, will exhibit great zeal in the work of driving their benefactors out of business. But it is constantly dinned into our ears that the country is prosperous, and that all opponents of the policies of the administration are "calamity howlers." True it is that wealth in this country is increasing beyond the dreams of avarice. The genius, intelligence and skill of American workmen have placed this country at the very head of the industrial nations of the earth, and the daring enterprise of our merchants and manufacturers have made American products known all over the world. The nation, taken as a whole, is prosperous. But is that the test? If so, it matters not if men, women and children are dying every day in the slums of the great cities from the countless diseases of poverty, while the unscrupulous promoters of trusts build palaces costing millions and revel in unbounded luxury. Mr. Rockefeller is reported to have said that his company pays out over twenty-two millions of dollars every year as wages to its employes, and that he considers that the best form of giving. Leaving out the insolence of the assumption of "giving" what has been earned as wages, let us compare this amount, paid out to the tens of thousands of

employes of the Standard Oil company, with Mr. Rockefeller's personal income from his vast wealth. This income has been estimated at \$24,000,000 per year, or more than the total sum expended as wages. It is not that the wealth of the country is not increasing as rapidly as could be desired, nor even that the majority of the people are not making money, but it is the injustice of allowing a few men to monopolize the profits that should go to the many, and of protecting them in their infamous business by the machinery of the law. Inequality of distribution is the evil which must be remedied.

Many people argue from the results of the elections in 1896 and 1900 that the power of the trusts cannot be broken, and that we must submit to the inevitable. Shall we so tamely yield? To believe that the people are ready to bow their necks to the yoke, and permit a chosen few to do all their business and all their thinking for them, to "benevolently assimilate," in other words, the bulk of the national wealth, is to lose faith in their self-governing capacity. In that event, well might Admiral Dewey say that the Philippines are more fit for self-government than the Americans, for the former at least have been fighting for their liberties. Will the American people surrender theirs more easily?

But trusts are not the only menace to the old national life. The policy of empire is finding support in high places. The supreme court of the United States is the most august tribunal in the world. Its history has been most glorious, and men who have worn its robes have ranked among the greatest jurists that ever lived. But this court, august as it is, is not beyond criticism. Neither is it the court of last resort in this country. The people may be appealed to. What do we see? Congress, created by the provisions of the constitution, and in which instrument its powers are defined and limited, may, according to a late decision, disregard those limitations, and practically make and unmake constitutions. It can clothe the president with the power of an emperor, and make the executive as omnipotent and uncontrolled as the British parliament; except as to certain rights guaranteed by the constitution to the citizens of the organized states, and only "perhaps" as to them. The creature has become greater than the creator. Instead of resting securely under the solemn guarantees of a written constitution, we are told that we may safely trust to the discretion of congress and the executive. That has been the argument of kings since history began. Is the conscience of the American people benumbed? Are they willing to see slavery reestablished under American authority; to see the guarantees of the constitution set aside whenever the exigencies of party policy require, and the whole structure of government of the people, by the people and for the people de-

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