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UNCLE SAM'S FOREIGN POLICY.

A Chat With Senator Charles F. Manderson on Cuba, Spain, Venezuela, England and Other Foreign Questions.

An Aggressive Foreign Policy Demanded—Why the United States Should Buy Cuba—Our Relations to England and What Would Happen in Case of War—Our Western Farmers and Their Great Competition—Li Hung Chang's Visit to America and Its Probable Effect Upon the Chinese—Some Remarkable Statements as to Japan and Japanese Labor—How Asia Will Force a Prohibitive Tariff and Bimetallism Upon the World—The International Struggle For Commercial Supremacy—A Big War Bound to Come, Etc.

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Special Correspondence of the NEWS.

OMAHA, May 9th, 1896.

I HAVE COME from Chicago to Omaha to have a talk with General Charles F. Manderson, the ex-United States Senator from Nebraska. Senator Manderson voluntarily retired from Congress at the close of his last term, and he is now at the head of the legal department of the Burlington railroad system, having charge of all the business west of the Missouri river. He lives here in a beautiful three-story brick in the most fashionable part of the city and leads a more comfortable life in many respects than he did at Washington. There is a large vacant lot just opposite his house, in which some of his favorite fast horses may be seen grazing, and in the second story of the brick stable at the back of his yard there is a carpenter's bench, at which he amuses himself with the saw and plane every morning before going down to work. Senator Manderson's home is beautifully furnished. It is, in fact, a very museum of curios picked up by him in his travels and of momentoes of his varied career. Among the most interesting of his household goods are his autograph letters and pictures of the famous men of the United States with whom he had been associated. Photographs of the greatest of our Senators look down upon you from the walls of the sitting room, and upon a side table is his "den" I saw a characteristic photograph of Senators Manderson, Allison and Hale chatting together and evidently discussing some of the great questions before the country, or, what is more likely, telling fish stories. We chat with Senator Manderson covered a wide range. He is a man of ideas. He has for the past twelve years been closely concerned with public matters and public men, and he is noted as one of the shrewdest of our political observers. He is one of the few public men who are not afraid to express their opinions, and when during his remarks I reminded him that such statements were rather radical for a presidential or vice-presidential candidate he replied:

SENATOR MANDERSON ON THE PRESIDENCY.

"As to that, I am not a presidential candidate enough to hint, and I hope the time will never come as hardly in my honest that I will not dare to give my opinion as an American citizen. You remember the politician who concluded his speech by saying: 'Fellow citizens, there is my sentiments, and if them sentiments don't suit you they can be changed.' Now I don't mean to say that my sentiments cannot be changed, but they can be changed only by convincing arguments. I have my own views and I have never yet hesitated to express them, nor to correct them when convinced that they were wrong."

"What is your idea as to the probable outcome at St. Louis?"

"I am not imbued with the spirit of prophecy. I think, however, that as far as Governor McKinley is concerned the question as to whether he can be nominated will be settled before the sitting of the convention. If he should triumph no one will rejoice more than myself. I have been acquainted with him from early manhood. He will not only make a strong candidate, but he will make a good president."

"Suppose, Senator, he should not be nominated on the first ballot?"

"Then the battle royal will be between one of the great eastern candidates—Speaker Reed or Governor Morton—and a western man, with Senator Allison in the lead. The time might come when some of the lesser lights might shine with increased vigor."

"How about Harrison, Senator, and how about Boies?"

"President Harrison," replied Senator Manderson, "while never converting would probably convert if the nomination came to him without personal exertion. As for me, I am neither a seeker nor 'going into a decline.' I am like any other man, and, let, as Senator Cullom expressed it, 'that I am a human being.' As to my having been an aggressive candidate for the presidency, this statement is not true. For the past two years I have been urged by my friends to enter the contest for the nomination. I received letters by the hundreds from all parts of the country and personal appeals from leading republicans throughout Nebraska asking me to allow my name to be placed on the list of candidates. I resisted to the third until last January, when I succumbed to the blandishments that were astounding to me by simply saying that I would neither seek nor decline."

"How about this 'favorite son' story, and the charge that you are in a combination to defeat McKinley?"

"That nonsense," replied Senator Manderson, "is absolutely false. I have neither directly nor indirectly had any communication, by letter or verbally, with the agents of any 'favorite son' conspiracy, and if I know myself I believe I would be more content with the nomination of McKinley, Reed, Morton or Allison than I would with my own nomination. I would say, however, that the responsibilities of the presidency have grown so great as they are likely to be within the next four years, and that any man sensitive to his own shortcomings and conscious of its ability, or even a man of aggressive self-reliance, should shrink from their assumption."

AN AGGRESSIVE FOREIGN POLICY DEMANDED.

"It seems to me," continued Senator Manderson, "that we have before us today greater problems than any with which we have yet had to deal. We are on the eve of a change. The day has come when the United States must inaugurate a vigorous foreign policy. Already questions of this kind are piling themselves one on top of the other. During the administration of President Cleveland we have had the Hawaiian question, the Cuban situation and the proposed building of the Nicaragua canal. There is today no European power that is not active and aggressive in reaching out for commercial supremacy. The nations of the world are now striving not for glory or renown, but for commercial supremacy and commercial advantage. This is the day of the politics of the pocket book, and if the United States would hold its own it will be forced, out of the very nature of things, for its own advancement and supremacy, to enter upon an aggressive policy. We cannot longer live within ourselves. The drawing together of the nations of Europe by the modern processes absolutely prohibits it. We must run now to keep what we get of our own markets and must see all means to obtain our share of the foreign markets."

HOW ASIA WILL FORCE BIMETALLISM.

"But, Senator, is it not a question of the currency as well as the markets? What is your idea of the financial question? I find many here never seen in Nebraska.

"I am not in favor of the free coinage of silver," said Senator Manderson. "I want to see more silver used because it is one of our greatest products, and because as a silver-producing nation we can rank the world. To believe, however, that we can enter upon the free and unlimited coinage of silver single handed and without reference to the other nations of the world, is a delusion and a snare. The international conditions are such, however, that I believe bimetallism on some safe basis will soon be forced by the united action of continental Europe and this country."

"What makes you think so?" asked.

"I think so," replied the Senator, "because of the competition which we are now having from all parts of the world. Not only along agricultural lines, but in manufacturing, we are meeting with competition such as was never thought of before. Our cotton has now to fight for its place with that of India and Egypt in the markets of Europe. Our wheat finds have to compete with the plains of South Russia, the steppes of Siberia and the peasant farms of North Hindostan. Our meat products are sold side by side with those of the Argentine Republic and Australia, and there is scarcely an agricultural product of ours which has not to fight for its mining as never before."

ASIATIC LABOR VERSUS AMERICAN.

"As to manufacturing," Senator Manderson continued, "within the past few years a new Richmond has entered the field. The Japanese, the Yankees of Asia, have become manufacturers to a startling degree. They are already competing with our cotton and woolen goods, and the cheapest rugs and matting now sold in our markets come from Japan. I understand that an American watch factory has lately been established there, which makes copies of American watches with interchangeable works, and I met a man a few days ago who said that a friend of his had bought a silk hat in Yokohama at one of our best makes in Boston. It cost in Japan the same as in Boston, and it was copied to a tap, even to the putting of the name and trademark of the American manufacturer inside it. The Japanese are the most wonderful imitators of the world, and I believe that they have inventive genius as well. I heard of an instance of their wonderful skill from General Capron, the man whom General Grant sent to Japan at the request of the mikado to teach the Japanese our science of agriculture. He was, you know, at one time at the head of our bureau of agriculture. Well, he made the journey, and upon his return he told me some interesting things about the Japanese. One, I remember, was as to some carpenter's tools which he carried with him. Among these there was a very fine set of augers. Now the Japanese had never seen anything of this kind. They had cut square holes instead of making round ones, and they looked upon the augers and their work with admiration. The general was holding an American auger and the Japanese were watching him very earnestly. "Suddenly the old gentleman [illegible] himself in the eye of a gimlet myself. [illegible] Immediately the Japanese were down into his box, but [illegible] they could be found his own tools in the [illegible] were disgusted and by their [illegible] was another set of augers, copied exactly even to the scratches upon the handle. This gives some idea of what the Japanese can do. Their ability is not confined to lace, pottery and textile fabrics. They are equally good workmen in iron and steel. Their wages are so low that they can compete with any country in manufacture. When you remember that unskilled Japanese labor brings them 1 to 15 cents a day and that skilled workmen receive from 15 to 40 cents a day you can see the difference. When you reflect that there are forty millions of Japanese you will realize the enormous competition which may come from that country alone."

SILVER AND PROTECTIVE TARIFF.

"Can we not put a protective tariff keep such products out of the United States?"

"It might as to some things, but not as to all," replied Senator Manderson. "We should have to make the tariff so that it would be prohibitory and the result would be that it would cut off our revenue. Again, you know Japan is on a silver basis and business is done there upon that standard. I believe the result will be that we not only have protective tariffs here, but also in Europe, and that connected with them there will be a bimetallic agreement which will regulate the use of silver the world over. England will be loth to enter into any such agreement, but the other nations of Europe and the United States will adapt it and the English will have to come in.

WHAT LI HUNG CHANG'S VISIT WILL DO.

"The Japanese picture of the question," Senator Manderson went on, "is, however, only a small part of the possibilities of Asiatic competition. The great giant of the far east is China. It has more than 400,000,000 people, and it has been through its government by Japan rudely aroused from its slumbers. China will soon enter the world's markets as the greatest of the manufacturing nations. Wages in that country are cheaper than in Japan, and their natural resources are even greater. Li Hung Chang, the greatest of Chinese statesmen and perhaps the most progressive man in the empire, is now in Russia, where he has gone to attend the coronation of the czar. He will soon leave there, and will travel through Europe. He will visit the United States and will go home across the Pacific. This is the man whom General Grant called the Bismarck of China. He has already a number of modern factories in China, and he will be quick to see the possibilities of his people in making goods for the foreign markets. His return to China will probably start a revolution, which will flood the world with cheap goods of all kinds."

UNCLE SAM SHOULD BUY CUBA.

Senator Manderson and myself visited Cuba some years ago as the guests of Senator Sherman. This was shortly after the death of Vice President Hendricks, and Senator Sherman, according to the then law, was the acting Vice President of the United States. During the trip a plot was made by some Cuban brigands to kidnap Senator Sherman and party, which only failed through a late change in the plans as to a certain excursion. I referred to this, and asked Senator Manderson what he thought the United States ought to do as to Cuba. He replied:

"I believe that the Spanish rule in Cuba has been one of terrible oppression and outrageous misrule. Havana has for years been tottering under the load of a dissolution that is ruinous. The streets of the city are filthy, and the reason for this has, I am told, in the fact that the municipal taxes are taken by the [illegible] officers and sent to Spain to [illegible] used for the improvements of the city, for which purpose they were collected. I don't think much of the character of the native population of Cuba. It is to a large extent a mixture of the Indian, the negro and the South American, and it does not seem to be made up of desirable material. As to the present revolution, however, it may turn out, there is no doubt in my mind but that Spain is bound to lose the island. She might to use it on account of the way in which she has misgoverned it. Cuba should be one of the most fertile and productive countries of the world, but its industries have been destroyed, its lands have been devastated and its people have been ruined by this war, caused by Spanish oppression."

WHAT WE SHOULD DO WITH CUBA.

"Suppose Spain should lose Cuba—where would it go?"

"I can tell you where it ought to go," replied Senator Manderson. "It ought to go to the United States. Cuba is the key to the Gulf of Mexico and to all our southern coasts. The islands of the Caribbean sea stand like outposts in the Gulf of Mexico. We must in some way or other obtain some of them, and we should get them if possible by peaceful means. As it is, there is no European power, however magnificent, that does not own one or more of these islands. England, France, Germany, Spain, Denmark—each have their outposts there, which in the event of war would form their coaling and victualing stations. Cuba is the most valuable of all the islands, and it is of vital strategic and commercial importance to us. If we had it it would soon be entirely changed by means of Yankee enterprise and Yankee money, and I have hoped that the policy to be pursued would be one that would result in our purchasing it.

"As Cuba is today, its population is such that we might not wish to admit it to the Union on an equality of statehood. It could be given a sale provincial government, however, I mean a government something like that of our territories, or it could be held as an outlying district, as we today hold Alaska. It strikes me that Spain might be glad to sell it, and it would be far better for us to buy the island than to acquire it in some other way. If Cuba should obtain her independence and establish a republic capable of maintaining itself under the protection of the United States, that perhaps might be desired. But in such a case the island would probably soon ask for admission into the Union as a separate state, and it would be difficult to resist her appeal."

A BIG WAR SOON TO COME.

"Speaking of war, Senator, all the great nations seem to be going about with chips on their shoulders. To what do you attribute this war spirit?"

"It is difficult to find a reason for it," was the reply. "It seems to be found everywhere. Europe is in a state of ferment. The aggressiveness of the different powers is seeking commercial supremacy in different parts of the world, and especially in Africa, is very likely to cause international conflicts. I believe that some of the great rulers of the world would be glad to wage war. Such a war spirit is not strange, however. If you will look in history you will find that the desire for war springs up periodically the world over. After twenty or thirty years of peace there always arises among nations an inclination to fight somebody, and this inclination generally breaks out in war. It seems to be one of the rules of the development of nations."

"Do you think a war between the United States and England a possibility?"

"I don't think there is a probability just now of any such event," said Senator Manderson. "There is always a possibility of our having war with any power. It is always the unexpected that happens as to war. There may come matters of insult or aggression that are beyond the reach of apology or reparation. The honor of a nation is like that of an individual. It is easily touched, and insults which are not appeased by proper apologies and by quick reparation are sure to bring about war. I doubt much whether such differences will arise between us and the English, for when our interests are in many respects antagonistic, we have so much in common that there will always be mutual sacrifices to prevent it."

"Suppose such a war should come, what would be the result?"

"That is difficult to predict," replied Senator Manderson. "England is the great naval power of the world. Our warships are pigmies compared with hers. Her great battle ships could lay waste our ocean cities and under their bombardment would remove a tribute which it would be difficult for us to pay. She could undoubtedly punish us severely until we got our second wind, but with the combination of the strength I have no doubt but that we would ultimately succeed, though we might be lamed by the contest."

Frank G. Carpenter

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J. T. Kingsbury, Chemist
Utah Agl. Coll.