

AMERICA'S PART OF THE WORLD'S WORK *

I AM to speak to the toast "The State of New York." In the year that has just closed the great interest that each State has had has been the interest common to all the States, the interest of the nation; and I speak of that which is closest to the hearts of New Yorkers when I speak of that which is closest to the hearts of all Americans within or without New York. The last year has been the year of all others most important to the future of this country since the close of the Civil War. It has seen one of the most righteous wars of modern times brought to a triumphant conclusion. And I am glad to feel, when I am speaking to the Republican Club, that I can take for my text to-night the admirable speech delivered in the Senate of the United States by the Republican senator from the State of New York, Senator Thomas C. Platt, in support of the ratification of the treaty—a speech admirable in temper and in tone, in which all of us as Republicans may take pride; a speech, also, which set forth in the broadest spirit the reasons why all patriotic Americans should desire the ratification of the treaty, no matter what their views might be as to the question of expansion in the abstract. But, indeed, in this matter, while we must shape our national course as a whole in accordance with a well-settled policy, we must meet such an exigency as it arises in a spirit of wise patriotism.

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No sensible man will advocate our plunging rashly into a course of international knight-errantry; none will advocate our setting deliberately to work to build up a great colonial empire. But neither will any brave and patriotic man bid us shrink from doing our duty merely because this duty involves the certainty of strenuous effort and the possibility of danger. Some men of high reputation, from high motives, have opposed the ratification of the treaty just as they had previously opposed the war; just as some other men whose motives were equally high in 1861 opposed any effort to restore the Union by force of arms. The error was almost as great in the one case as in the other, and will be so adjudged by history. But back of the high motives of these men lay the two great impulses—the impulses now in 1899 as in 1861—the impulses of sloth and fear; and well it was for us that the administration and the Senate disregarded them.

We should not lightly court danger and difficulty, but neither should we shirk from facing them, when in some way or other they must be met. We are a great nation and we are compelled, whether we will or not, to face the responsibilities that must be faced by all great nations. It is not in our power to avoid meeting them. All that we can decide is whether we shall meet them well or ill. There are social reformers who tell us that in the far distant future the necessity for fighting will be done away with, just as there are social reformers who tell us that in that long-distant time the necessity for work—or, at least, for painful, laborious work—will be done away with. But just at present the nation, like the individual, which is going to do anything in the world must face the fact, that in order to do it, it must work and may have to fight. And it is only thus that

great deeds can be done, and the highest and purest form of happiness acquired. Remember that peace itself, that peace after which all men crave, is merely the realization in the present of what has been bought by strenuous effort in the past. Peace represents stored-up effort of our fathers or of ourselves in the past. It is not a means—it is an end. You do not get peace by peace; you get peace as the result of effort. If you strive to get it by peace you will lose it, that is all. If we ever grow to regard peace as a permanent condition; if we ever grow to feel that we can afford to let the keen, fearless, virile qualities of heart and mind and body be lost, then we will prepare the way for inevitable and shameful disaster in the future.

Peace is of true value only if we use it in part to make ready to face with untroubled heart, with fearless front, whatever the future may have in store for us. The peace which breeds timidity and sloth is a curse and not a blessing. The law of worthy national life, like the law of worthy individual life, is, after all, fundamentally, the law of strife. It may be strife military, it may be strife civic; but certain it is that only through strife, through labor and painful effort, by grim energy and by resolute courage, we move on to better things.

We now have certain duties in the West and East Indies. We cannot with honor shirk these duties. On the one hand we must undertake them, and on the other we must not fail to perform them in a way that will redound to the advantage of the people of the islands, no less than to our own national renown.

It is, I am sure, the desire of every American that the people of each island, as rapidly as they show themselves fit for self-government, shall be endowed with a constantly larger measure of self-government. But it

would be criminal folly to sacrifice the real welfare of the islands, and to fail to do our own manifest duty, under the plea of carrying out some doctrinaire idea which, if it had been lived up to, would have made the entire North American continent, as now found, the happy hunting-ground of savages. It is the idlest of chatter to speak of savages as being fit for self-government, and though it is occasionally heard from excellent and well-meaning people, people who believe what they say, it usually covers another motive behind—it means that people are afraid to undertake a great task, and cover up their fear by using some term which will give it the guise of philanthropy. If we refrain from doing our part of the world's work, it will not alter the fact that that work has got to be done, only it will have to be done by some stronger race, because we will have shown ourselves weaklings. I do not speak merely from the standpoint of American interests, but from the standpoint of civilization and humanity.

It is infinitely better for the whole world that Russia should have taken Turkestan, that France should have taken Algiers, and that England should have taken India. The success of an Algerian or of a Sepoy revolt would be a hideous calamity to all mankind, and those who abetted it, directly or indirectly, would be traitors to civilization. And so exactly the same reasoning applies to our own dealings with the Philippines. We must treat them with absolute justice, but we must treat them also with firmness and courage. They must be made to realize that justice does not proceed from a sense of weakness on our part, that we are the masters. Weakness in any form or shape, as you gentlemen, who all your lives have upheld the honor of the flag ashore and afloat, know, is the unpardonable sin in dealing with

such a problem as that with which we are confronted in the Philippines. The insurrection must be stamped out as mercifully as possible; but it must be stamped out.

We have put an end to a corrupt mediæval tyranny, and by that very fact we have bound ourselves to see that no savage anarchy takes its place. What the Spaniard has been taught the Malay must learn—that the American flag is to float unchallenged where it floats now. But remember this, that when this has been accomplished our task has only just begun. Where we have won entrance by the prowess of our soldiers we must deserve to continue by the righteousness, the wisdom, and the even-handed justice of our rule. The American administrators in the Philippines, as in Cuba and Porto Rico, must be men chosen for signal capacity and integrity; men who will administer the provinces on behalf of the entire nation from which they come, and for the sake of the entire people to which they go. If we permit our public service in the Philippines to become the prey of the spoils politicians, if we fail to keep it up to the highest standard, we shall be guilty of an act, not only of wickedness, but of weak and shortsighted folly, and we shall have begun to tread the path which was trod by Spain to her own bitter humiliation. Let us not deceive ourselves. We have a great duty to perform and we shall show ourselves a weak and a poor-spirited people if we fail to set about doing it, or if we fail to do it aright. We are bound to face the situations that arise with courage, and we are no less bound to see that where the sword wins the land, the land shall be kept by the rule of righteous law. We have taken upon ourselves, as in honor bound, a great task, befitting a great nation, and we have a right to ask of every citizen, of every true American, that he shall with heart and

hand uphold the leaders of the nation as from a brief and glorious war they strive to a lasting peace that shall redound not only to the interests of the conquered people, not only to the honor of the American public, but to the permanent advancement of civilization and of all mankind.