

# PRESIDENT M'KINLEY'S LETTER ACCEPTING THE

**P**RESIDENT M'KINLEY'S letter of acceptance is probably the most important unofficial document issued in this country in a quarter of a century. The President takes the country into his confidence and throws a new light upon the history of the past two years. Irrespective of its caustic arraignment of the critics of the administration and its forceful clinching of the fact that Bryanism means the "immediate" destruction of the gold standard and substitution thereof of free silver coinage at the ratio of 16 to 1, the letter is important in the historic sense because it gives the American people their first knowledge of the statesmanship and conditions connected with recent epoch-making events.

The President, although by nature a mild and conciliatory man, can be aroused to a point of dangerous combativeness, and when the mood is on him he becomes one of the most effective debaters we have had in this country for many years. In his letter he wastes no time in what might be called preliminary sparring, but, having definitely located the enemy's vital spot, which is the free silver heresy, he strikes at it with force and precision. The financial question, he says, may not be the paramount issue, but it is the immediate issue. "It will admit of no delay and will suffer no postponement." For has not the Democratic party declared for the "immediate" coinage of silver at a ratio of 16 to 1? And is there any doubt that Mr. Bryan, who insisted upon the insertion of the silver plank in the platform, against the advice of the best men in the party, will use every means, if he is elected, to carry his principles into practice?

After paying the tribute of his regret that the Democratic party by its nominee and its reiterated of the free silver plank of 1896 has made it necessary for the voters to reaffirm their decision of four years ago in favor of the existing gold standard, President McKinley boldly picks up the gauntlet on the issue of imperialism. What that issue is he states most happily in a single paragraph near the end of his letter. After he has marshaled the facts which place the whole controversy in the clearest possible historical light before the reader, he says:

The American question is between duty and desertion—the American verdict will be for duty and against desertion, for the Republic against both anarchy and imperialism.

As a campaign document the letter is regarded as phenomenally strong. But it is more than a campaign document. It is a contribution to history. The President deals candidly with the American people. He is not afraid to tell them what he has done or why he did it. He deals in facts rather than in arguments.

## TEXT OF THE LETTER.

**President's Views on Free Silver and the Philippine Question.**  
Executive Mansion, Washington, D. C., Sept. 8.—To the Hon. Henry Cabot Lodge, Chairman Notification Committee—My Dear Sir: The nomination of the Republican national convention of June 10, 1896, for the office of President of the United States, which, as the official representative of the convention, you have conveyed to me, is accepted. I have carefully examined the platform adopted and give it my hearty approval.

Upon the great issue of the last national election it is clear. It upholds the gold standard and endorses the legislation of the present Congress by which that standard has been effectively strengthened. The stability of our national currency is, therefore, secure so long as those who adhere to this platform are kept in control of the government.

## Same Issues Involved.

In the first battle, that of 1896, the friends of the gold standard and of sound currency were triumphant and the country is enjoying the fruits of that victory. Our antagonists, however, are not satisfied. They compel us to a second battle upon the same lines on which the first was fought and won.

While regretting the reopening of this question, which can only disturb the present satisfactory financial condition of the government and visit uncertainty upon our great business enterprises, we accept the issue and again battle the sound money forces to join in winning another and we hope a permanent triumph for an honest financial system which will continue inviolable the public faith.

## All Loyal to Silver.

As in 1896, the three silver parties are united under the same leader, who, immediately after the election of that year, in an address to the bimetalists, said:

"The friends of bimetalism have not been vanquished; they have simply been overcome. They believe that the gold standard is a conspiracy of the money changers against the welfare of the human race—and they will continue the warfare against it."

The policy thus proclaimed has been accepted and confirmed by these parties. The silver Democratic platform of 1896 continues the warfare against the so-called gold conspiracy when it expressly says:

"We reiterate the demand of that (the Chicago) platform of 1896 for an American financial system made by the American people for themselves, which shall restore and maintain a bimetallic price level; and as part of such system the immediate restoration of the free and unlimited coinage of silver and gold at the present ratio of 16 to 1, without waiting for the aid or consent of any other nation."

## The Paramount Issue.

No issue is presented. It will be noted that the demand is for the immediate restoration of the free coinage of silver at 16 to 1. If another issue is paramount, this is immediate. It will admit of no delay and will suffer no postponement.

Turning to the other associated parties, we find in the Populist national platform adopted at Sioux Falls, S. D., May 30, 1896, the following declaration:

"We pledge anew the People's party never to cease the agitation until this financial conspiracy is blotted from the statute book, the Lincoln greenback restored, the bonds all paid and all corporation money forever retired. We reaffirm the demand for the reopening of the mints of the United States for the free and unlimited coinage of silver and gold at the present legal ratio of 16 to 1. The immediate increase in the volume of silver coins and certificates thus created to be substituted, dollar for dollar, for the bank notes issued by private corporations under special privilege, granted by law of March 14, 1890, and prior national banking laws."

## Declare Their Hostility.

The platform of the silver party adopted at Kansas City, July 6, 1896, makes the following announcement:

"We declare it to be our intention to lend our efforts to the repeal of this currency law, which not only repudiates the ancient and time-honored principles of the American people before the Constitution was adopted, but is violative of the principles of the Constitution itself; and we shall not cease our efforts until there has been established in its place a monetary system based upon the free and unlimited coinage of silver and gold into money at the present legal ratio of 16 to 1 by the independent action of the United States, under which system all paper money shall be issued by the government, and all such money coined or issued shall be a full legal tender in payment of all debts, public and private, without exception."

## Combine Against Gold.

In all three platforms these parties announce that their efforts shall be unceasing until the gold act shall be blotted from the statute books and the free and unlimited coinage of silver at 16 to 1, shall take its place.

The relative importance of the issues I do not stop to discuss. All of them are important. Whichever party is successful will be bound in conscience to carry into administration and legislation its several declarations and doctrines. One declaration will be as obligatory as another, but all are not immediate.

It is not possible that these parties would treat the doctrine of 16 to 1, the immediate realization of which is demanded by their several platforms, as a mere matter of expediency in the event that they should be clothed with power. Otherwise their profession of faith is insincere. It is therefore the imperative business of those opposed to this financial heresy to prevent the triumph of the parties whose union is only assured by adherence to the silver issue.

## Facing Grave Perils.

Will the American people, through indifference or fancied security, hazard the overthrow of the wise financial legislation of the last year and revive the danger of the silver standard, with all of the inevitable evils of shattered confidence and general disaster which justly alarmed and aroused them in 1896?

The Chicago platform of 1896 is reaffirmed in its entirety by the Kansas City convention. Nothing has been omitted or recalled; so that all the perils then threatened are presented anew with the added force of a deliberate reaffirmation. Four years ago the people refused to place the seal of their approval upon these dangerous and revolutionary policies, and this year they will not fail to record again their earnest dissent.

## Faithful to Pledges.

The Republican party remains faithful to its principle of a tariff which supplies sufficient revenues for the government and adequate protection to our enterprises and producers, and of reciprocity, which opens foreign markets to the fruits of American labor and furnishes new channels through which to market the surplus of American farms. The time-honored principles of protection and reciprocity were the first pledges of Republican victory to be written into public law.

The present Congress has given to Alaska territorial government for which it had waited more than a quarter of a century; has established a representative government in Hawaii; has enacted bills for the most liberal treatment of the pensioners and their widows; has revived the free homestead policy.

In its great financial law it provided for the establishment of banks of issue with a capital of \$25,000,000 for the benefit of villages and rural communities, bringing the opportunity for profitable business in banking within the reach of moderate capital. Many are already availing themselves of this privilege.

## Some Convincing Figures.

During the past year more than \$10,000,000 of United States bonds have been paid from the surplus revenues of the treasury, and in addition \$25,000,000 of 2 per cent interest, called by the government, are in process of payment. Pacific Railroad bonds issued by the government in aid of the roads in the sum of nearly \$44,000,000 have been paid since Dec. 31, 1895. The treasury balance is in satisfactory condition, showing on Sept. 1, 1896, \$125,419,000, in addition to the \$150,000,000 gold reserve in the treasury. The government relations with the Pacific railroads have been substantially closed, \$124,421,000 being received from these roads, the greater part in cash and the remainder with ample securities for payments deferred.

Instead of diminishing, as was predicted four years ago, the volume of our currency is greater per capita than it has ever been. It was \$21.10 in 1896. It had increased to \$26.50 on July 1, 1896, and \$28.55 on Sept. 1, 1896. Our total money on July 1, 1896, was \$1,506,434,000; on July 1, 1896, it was \$2,002,425,400, and \$2,000,083,042 on Sept. 1, 1896.

## Prosperity in General.

Our industrial and agricultural conditions are more promising than they have been for many years; probably more so than they have ever been. Prosperity abounds everywhere throughout the republic. I rejoice that the Southern as well as the Northern States are enjoying a full share of these improved national conditions and that all are contributing so largely to our remarkable industrial development.

The money lender receives lower rewards for his capital than if it were invested in active business. The rates of interest are lower than they have ever been in this country, while those things which are produced on the farm and in the workshop, and the labor producing them, have advanced in value.

Our foreign trade shows a satisfactory and increasing growth. The amount of our ex-

ports for the year 1896 over those of the exceptionally prosperous year of 1895 was about half a million dollars for every day of the year, and these sums have gone into the homes and enterprises of the people. There has been an increase of over \$50,000,000 in the exports of agricultural products, \$92,082,220 in manufactures and in the products of the mines of over \$10,000,000.

## Big Gains in Trade.

Our trade balances cannot fail to give satisfaction to the people of the country. In 1895 we sold abroad \$615,432,676 of products more than we bought abroad. In 1896 \$529,874,813 and in 1897 \$544,471,701, making during the three years a total balance in our favor of \$1,689,779,190—nearly five times the balance of trade in our favor for the whole period of 108 years from 1790 to June 30, 1897 inclusive.

Four hundred and thirty-six million dollars of gold have been added to the gold stock of the United States since July 1, 1896. The law of March 14, 1890, authorized the refunding into 2 per cent bonds of that part of the public debt represented by the 3 per cent due in 1898, the 4 per cent due in 1907 and the 5 per cent due in 1904, aggregating \$840,000,000. More than one-third of the sum of these bonds was refunded in the first three months after the passage of the act, and on Sept. 1 the sum had been increased more than \$38,000,000, making in all \$378,578,050, resulting in a net saving of over \$8,378,520.

## Government Saving Money.

The ordinary receipts of the government for the fiscal year 1896 were \$79,627,000 in excess of its expenditures.

While our receipts both from customs and internal revenue have been greatly increased, our expenditures have been decreasing. Civil and miscellaneous expenses for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1896, were nearly \$14,000,000 less than in 1895, while on the war account there is a decrease of more

than \$95,000,000. There was required \$8,000,000 less to support the navy this year than last, and the expenditures on account of Indians were nearly two and three-quarters million dollars less than in 1895.

The only two items of increase in the public expenses of 1896 over 1895 are for pensions and interest on the public debt. For 1896 we expended for pensions \$136,294,923, and for the fiscal year 1896 our payments on this account amounted to \$140,877,316. The net increase of interest on the public debt of 1896 over 1895 required by the war loan was \$263,408.25.

Bonds Speedily Taken.  
While Congress authorized the government to make a war loan of \$100,000,000 at the beginning of the war with Spain, only \$200,000,000 of bonds was issued, bearing 3 per cent interest, which were promptly and patriotically taken by our citizens.

Unless something unforeseen occurs to reduce our revenues or increase our expenditures, the Congress at its next session should reduce taxation very materially.

Fifty years ago we were selling government bonds bearing as high as 5 per cent interest. Now we are redeeming them with a bond at par bearing 2 per cent interest. We are selling our surplus products and lending our surplus money to Europe.

Europe Is Our Debtor.  
One result of our selling to other nations so much more than we have bought from them during the past three years is a radical improvement of our financial relations. The great amounts of capital which have been borrowed of Europe for our rapid material development have remained a constant drain upon our resources for interest and dividends and made our money markets liable to constant disturbances by calls for payment or heavy sales of our securities whenever money stringency or panic occurred abroad. We have now been paying these debts and bringing home many of our securities and establishing countervailing credits abroad by our loans and placing ourselves upon a sure foundation of financial independence.

In the unfortunate contest between Great Britain and the Boer states of South Africa the United States has maintained an attitude of neutrality in accordance with its well-known traditional policy. It did not hesitate, however, when requested by the governments of the South African republics, to exercise its good offices for a cessation of hostilities.

Did What We Could.  
It is to be observed that while the South African republics made the request of other powers, the United States is the only one which complied. The British government declined to accept the intervention of any power.

Ninety-one per cent of our exports and imports are now carried by foreign ships. For

ocean transportation we pay annually to foreign ship owners over \$165,000,000. We ought to own the ships for our carrying trade with the world, and we ought to build them in American shipyards and man them with American sailors. Our own citizens should receive the transportation charges now paid to foreigners.

I have called the attention of Congress to this subject in my several annual messages. In that of Dec. 6, 1897, I said: "Most desirable from every standpoint of national interest and patriotism is the effort to extend our foreign commerce. To this end our merchant marine should be improved and enlarged. We should do our full share of the carrying trade of the world. We do not do it now. We should be the laggard no longer."

In my message of Dec. 5, 1899, I said: "Our national development will be one-sided and unsatisfactory so long as the remarkable growth of our inland industries remains unaccompanied by progress on the seas. There is no lack of constitutional authority for legislation which shall give to the country maritime strength commensurate with its industrial achievements and with its rank among the nations of the earth."

The past year has recorded exceptional activity in our shipyards, and the promises of continual prosperity in shipbuilding are abundant. Advanced legislation for the protection of our seamen has been enacted. Our coast trade, under regulations wisely framed at the beginning of the government and since, shows its results for the past fiscal year unequalled in our records or those of any other power.

Need of the Canal.  
"We shall fail to realize our opportunities, however, if we complacently regard only matters at home and blind ourselves to the necessity of securing our share in the valuable carrying trade of the world."

I now reiterate these views.

Kept Faith with Cuba.  
We have been in possession of Cuba since the first of January, 1898. We have restored order and established domestic tranquillity. We have fed the starving, clothed the naked, and ministered to the sick. We have improved the sanitary condition of the island. We have stimulated industry, introduced public education, and taken a full and comprehensive enumeration of the inhabitants.

The qualification of electors has been settled and under it officers have been chosen for all the municipalities of Cuba. These local governments are now in operation, administered by the people. Our military establishment has been reduced from 43,000 to less than 6,000.

An election has been ordered to be held on the 15th of September under a fair election law already tried in the municipal elections, to choose members of a constitutional convention, and the convention, by the same order, is to assemble on the first Monday of November to frame a constitution upon which an independent government for the island will rest. All this is a long step in the fulfillment of our sacred guarantees to the people of Cuba.

Plans for Porto Rico.  
We hold Porto Rico by the same title as the Philippines. The treaty of peace which ceded us the one conveyed to us the other. Congress has given to this island a government in which the inhabitants participate, elect their own legislature, enact their own local laws, provide their own system of taxation, and in these respects have the same power and privilege enjoyed by other territories belonging to the United States and a much larger measure of self-government than was given to the inhabitants of Louisiana under Jefferson. A district court of the United States for Porto Rico has been established and local courts have been inaugurated, all of which are in operation.

The generous treatment of the Porto Ricans accords with the most liberal thought of our own country and encourages the best aspirations of the people of the island. While they do not have instant free commercial intercourse with the United States, Congress complied with my recommendation by removing, on the 1st day of May last, 85 per cent of the duties and providing for the removal of the remaining 15 per cent on the 1st of March, 1902, or earlier if the legislature of Porto Rico shall provide local revenues for the expenses of conducting the government.

Island Is Profited.  
During this intermediate period Porto Rican products coming into the United States pay a tariff of 15 per cent of the rates under the Dingley act and our goods going to Porto Rico pay a like rate. The duties thus paid and collected both in Porto Rico and the United States are paid to the government of Porto Rico and no part thereof is taken by the national government.

All of the duties from Nov. 1, 1898, to June 30, 1899, aggregating the sum of \$2,250,523.21, paid at the custom houses in the United States upon Porto Rican products, under the laws existing prior to the above mentioned act of Congress, have gone into the treasury of Porto Rico to relieve the destitute and for schools and other public purposes. In addition to this, we have expended for relief, education and improvement of roads the sum of \$1,513,084.95.

Military Force Cut Down.  
The United States military force in the islands has been reduced from 11,000 to 1,500, and native Porto Ricans constitute for the most part the local constabulary.

Under the new law and the inauguration of civil government there has been a gratifying revival of business. The manufactures of Porto Rico are developing; her imports are increasing; her tariff is yielding increased returns; her fields are being cultivated; free schools are being established. Notwithstanding the many embarrassments incident to a change of national conditions, she is rapidly showing the good effects of her new relations to this nation.

For the sake of full and intelligent understanding of the Philippine question and to give to the people authentic information of the acts and aims of the administration, I present at some length the events of importance leading up to the present situation. The purposes of the executive are best revealed and can best be judged by what he has done and is doing.

Every Move for Peace.  
It will be seen that the power of the government has been used for the liberty, the peace and the prosperity of the Philippine people, and that force has been employed only against force which stood in the way of the realization of these ends.

And, with thrift and economy, lay something by for the days of infirmity and old age.

Practical civil service reform has always had the support and encouragement of the Republican party. The future of the merit system is safe in its hands.

During the present administration as occasions have arisen for modification or amendment in the existing civil service law and rules, they have been made. Important amendments were promulgated by executive order under date of May 23, 1899, having for their principal purpose the exception from competitive examination of certain places involving fiduciary responsibilities or duties of a strictly confidential, scientific or executive character, which it was thought might better be filled by noncompetitive examination or by other tests of fitness in the discretion of the appointing officer.

## Value of Merit System.

It is gratifying that the experience of more than a year has vindicated these changes in the marked improvement of the public service.

The merit system, as far as practicable, is made the basis for appointments to office in our new territory.

The American people are profoundly grateful to the soldiers, sailors and marines who have in every time of conflict fought their country's battles and defended its honor. The survivors and the widows and orphans of those who have fallen are justly entitled to receive the generous and considerate care of the nation.

Few are now left of those who fought in the Mexican war, and while many of the veterans of the Civil War are still spared to us their numbers are rapidly diminishing and age and infirmity are increasing their dependence. These, with the soldiers of the Spanish war, will not be neglected by their grateful countrymen. The pension laws have been liberal. They should be justly administered, and will be. Preference should be given to the soldiers, sailors and marines, their widows and orphans, with respect to employment in the public service.

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Every Move for Peace.  
It will be seen that the power of the government has been used for the liberty, the peace and the prosperity of the Philippine people, and that force has been employed only against force which stood in the way of the realization of these ends.

On the 25th day of April, 1898, Congress declared that a state of war existed between Spain and the United States. On May 1, 1898, Admiral Dewey destroyed the Spanish fleet in Manila Bay. On May 19, 1898, Maj. Gen. Merritt, U. S. A., was placed in command of the military expedition to Manila and directed among other things to immediately "publish a proclamation declaring that we come not to make war upon the people of the Philippines nor upon any part or faction among them, but to protect them in their homes, in their employments, and in their personal and religious rights. All persons who, either by active aid or by honest submission, co-operate with the United States in its efforts to give effect to this beneficent purpose will receive the reward of its support and protection."

Some Fortunes of War.  
On July 3, 1898, the Spanish fleet in attempting to escape from Santiago harbor was destroyed by the American fleet, and on July 17, 1898, the Spanish garrison in the city of Santiago surrendered to the commander of the American forces.

Following these brilliant victories, on the 12th day of August, 1898, upon the initiative of Spain, hostilities were suspended, and a protocol was signed with a view to arranging terms of peace between the two governments. In pursuance thereof I appointed as commissioners the following distinguished citizens to conduct the negotiations on the part of the United States: Hon. William R. Day of Ohio, Hon. William P. Frye of Minnesota, Hon. George Gray of Delaware and Hon. Whitelaw Reid of New York.

Forced Into Conflict.  
In addressing the peace commission before its departure for Paris, I said:

"It is my wish that throughout the negotiations interested to the commission the purpose and spirit with which the United States accepted the unwelcome necessity of war should be kept constantly in view. We took up arms only in obedience to the dictates of humanity and the fulfillment of high public and moral obligations. We had no design of aggrandizement and no ambition of conquest."

"Through the long course of repeated representations which preceded and aimed to avert the struggle and in the final arbitrament of force this country was impelled solely by the purpose of relieving grievous wrongs and removing long existing conditions which disturbed its tranquility, which shocked the moral sense of mankind and which could no longer be endured."

High Sense of Duty.  
"It is my earnest wish that the United States in making peace should follow the same high rule of conduct which guided it in facing war. It should be as scrupulous and magnanimous in the concluding settlement as it was just and humane in its original action. \* \* \* Our aim in the adjustment of peace should be directed to lasting results and to the achievement of the common good under the demands of civilization rather than to ambitious designs. \* \* \*

"Without any original thought of complete or even partial acquisition, the presence and success of our arms at Manila impose upon us obligations which we cannot disregard. The march of events rules and overrules human action. Arowing unreservedly the purpose which has animated all our efforts, and still solicitous to adhere to it, we cannot be unmindful that without any desire or design on our part the war has brought us new duties and responsibilities which we must meet and discharge as becomes a great nation on whose growth and career, from the beginning, the Ruler of Nations has plainly written the high command and pledge of civilization."

Shirked No Responsibility.  
On Oct. 28, 1898, while the peace commission was continuing its negotiations in Paris, the following additional instruction was sent:

"It is imperative upon us that as victors we should be governed only by motives which will exalt our nation. Territorial expansion should be our least concern; that we shall not shirk the moral obligations of our victory is of the greatest."

"It is undisputed that Spain's authority is permanently destroyed in every part of the Philippines. To leave any part in her feeble control now would increase our difficulties and be opposed to the interests of humanity. \* \* \* Nor can we permit Spain to transfer any of the islands to another power. Nor can we invite another power or powers to join the United States in sovereignty over them. We must either hold them or turn them back to Spain."

Only One Honorable Course.  
"Consequently, grave as are the responsibilities and unforeseen as are the difficulties which are before us, the President can see but one plain path of duty, the acceptance of the archipelago. Greater difficulties and more serious complications—administrative and international—would follow any other course."

"The President has given to the views of the commissioners the fullest consideration, and in reaching the conclusion above announced, in the light of information communicated to the commission and to the President since your departure, he has been influenced by the single consideration of duty and humanity. The President is not unmindful of the distressed financial condition of the United States may show some concern from its sense of generosity and benevolence rather than from any real or technical obligation."

Could Not Abandon Them.  
Again, on Nov. 13, I instructed the commission:

"From the standpoint of indemnity, both the archipelago (Porto Rico and the Philippines) are insufficient to pay our war expenses, but aside from this, do we not owe an obligation to the people of the Philippines which will not permit us to return them to the sovereignty of Spain? Could we justify ourselves in such a course, or could we permit their return to some other power? Will it or not, we have the responsibility of duty which we cannot escape. \* \* \* The President cannot believe any division of the archipelago can bring us any thing but embarrassment in the future. The trade and commercial side, as well as the indemnity for the cost of the war, are questions we might yield. They might be waived or compromised, but the questions of duty and humanity appeal to the President so strongly that he can find no appropriate answer but the one he has here made out."

Terms of the Treaty.  
The treaty of peace was concluded on Dec. 10, 1898. By its terms the archipelago, known as the Philippine Islands, was ceded by Spain to the United States. It was also provided that "the civil rights and political

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than \$95,000,000. There was required \$8,000,000 less to support the navy this year than last, and the expenditures on account of Indians were nearly two and three-quarters million dollars less than in 1895.

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It is to be observed that while the South African republics made the request of other powers, the United States is the only one which complied. The British government declined to accept the intervention of any power.

Ninety-one per cent of our exports and imports are now carried by foreign ships. For

ocean transportation we pay annually to foreign ship owners over \$165,000,000. We ought to own the ships for our carrying trade with the world, and we ought to build them in American shipyards and man them with American sailors. Our own citizens should receive the transportation charges now paid to foreigners