

as the law goes, there is nothing to prevent the Americans treating the Filipinos and Porto Ricans as the Russians are treating the Finns. The thoroughfare of imperialism, which is the thoroughfare of autocracy, is declared legally open to the descendants of the signers of the declaration of independence. A curious issue, this, to 120 years of triumphant democracy. Scoffers will welcome it as a proof that the "great experiment," as Carlyle prophesied, does not promise to be so very great or so very novel after all. By what complex process the judges of the supreme court reached their decision it is impossible to tell; but there is the past to show that on occasion the members of the tribunal which all Americans rightly reverence may not be able to put their political opinions altogether aside. This reflex action of public opinion upon the judiciary, dangerous as it is, is unavoidable in a nation which enjoys the privilege or disability of living under a written constitution. Times change and new conditions arise, and confusion becomes only worse confounded, if the instrument of government refuses to accommodate itself to progress. The Americans, as Mr. Bryce observes, have more than once been obliged to bend their constitution in order to avoid being forced to break it. This time, however, they have bent it without the provocation. It is not progress which the constitution has been stretched to cover, but retrogression; not the advancement of humanity, but that disheartening product of our times, the militarism of a democracy. The American constitution never showed its amazing elasticity on behalf of a poorer cause.

We deplore the decision with all our heart. It can only give fresh encouragement to the already ominously large party which seems bent on shaping American destinies after the worst models of the old world. If ever there was a country whose sole mission seemed to be the building up of an orderly, prosperous and intelligent commonwealth, of developing a new and higher type of civilization, that country was America. The force that the nations of Europe waste in arming themselves against one another, Americans have turned to "fruitful strifes and rivalries of peace," to subduing their vast continent, to making it, what it is now, a homogeneous and unconquerable

whole. Not one of the causes that make colonization a necessity for the powers of the old world is applicable to the United States. Stupendous as is their population, they still have room enough and to spare for twice their present numbers. There is no population question, no labor question, no question of a submerged tenth to make an outlet for emigration imperative. Their foreign commerce is large, for a European nation it would be immense, but it represents barely four per cent. of the value of the interstate trade. It will be generations before their new possessions bring in a tithe of what has been already sunk in them. And as for the fantastic notion that imperialism will steady the national character and bring a better tone into domestic politics—we confess to some scepticism as to the possibility of reforming Tammany Hall by way of Luzon. If American politics are parochial, it is the Americans who have made them so. Unless they annex a quarter of the world they will never find problems more pressing, more complex, more worthy of the finest statesmanship than those now clamoring for solution on their own continent. But, after all, it is the headlong fall in the moral scale that is most to be lamented, the turning of the back on all that has been the special glory and distinction of the country in order to join in the barbaric scramble for the waste places of the earth. It is not in a year, or even in a decade, that the evil fruits of imperialism mature. But that sooner or later America will repent her wild outburst is inevitable.

CHRISTIAN CITIZENSHIP AND THE FOURTH OF JULY.

An extract from a sermon preached in St. James' Episcopal Church, Greenville, Miss., June 23, 1901, by Rev. Quincy Ewing. Reported for The Public.

If any of us doesn't like the declaration of independence unemasculated, with its soul and character left in it; if he considers it as it stands, not a good document, but a bad one, not a true document, but a false one; why, let him say so. Let him "take no stock" in the Fourth of July; and he may, if he follows this course, lay just claim to Christian citizenship—he saves his honesty. But the man who professes to glory in the day which commemorates the adoption of the great declaration, and repudiates its essential and most distinctive propositions, can hardly lay claim to Christian citizenship in this republic, if Christian citizenship implies thor-

oughgoing honesty on the part of him who claims it; and I think it does.

We may as some other sort of citizens, but we cannot as Christian citizens—impliedly honest—celebrate the adoption of the declaration of independence as it left the pen of Jefferson and was voted for by the colonial congress July 4, 1776; and applauded the shooting to death of an incipient republic, and the denial of rights to one of our territories that we accord to others, on July 4, 1901.

Convince me that this nation has finally, for all time to come, repudiated the declaration of independence, and I could only celebrate the Fourth day of July honestly—in accordance with my emotions—by stretching the blackest crape I could find across my front door, the crape of mourning for a dead nation that I had loved—dead with that soul-death which possesses all nations and individuals who repudiate their souls!

But I do not think it will be necessary for any honest citizen of this republic to bespeak his emotions in black crape on the Fourth day of July. The nation is not finally dead; it is only sleeping. The soul of Christianity still lives, though traitors to it have worn the mitre and the triple-crown. Chartered into active life and conquering power by the Sermon on the Mount, the Lord's Prayer, and the sovereign definition of religion as love of God and love of man—Christianity has survived not one Judas, but millions, and is potent and alive enough to survive billions more. So I doubt not the soul of this republic will survive all traitors who seek to deliver it to death. It is sleeping now; they are wide-awake. The day must come when it will wake, and they will sleep—not with their fathers, for as citizens of this republic they are fatherless.

The declaration of independence which chartered this nation's soul into active life and conquering power, is not dead, nor is it outgrown; and on the Fourth day of July all Christian citizens of the republic may celebrate it gladly and honestly, recalling the spirit of the colonial congress of '76, and looking to the future, to another congress, in which that spirit shall rule supreme!

THE AMERICAN EMPIRE. For The Public.

Less than 14 decades ago the parliament of England passed a law to tax the American colonies, explaining, in justification of the act, that the proceeds of the taxation would be used in, and for the benefit of the colonies.