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Remarks of
Champ Clark

1898

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Hon. Champ Clark*

H. H. R.

CUBA.

The Monroe Doctrine as Interpreted
by a Missouri Democrat.

REMARKS

OF

CHAMP CLARK,
OF MISSOURI,

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DELIVERED IN THE

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,

Thursday, January 20, 1898.

WASHINGTON.

1898.

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Mr. W. A. Smith

CUBA.

The Monroe Doctrine as Interpreted by a Missouri Democrat.

REMARKS

OF

CHAMP CLARK.

The House being in Committee of the Whole on the state of the Union, and having under consideration the bill (H. R. 6449) making appropriations for the diplomatic and consular service for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1890—

Mr. CLARK of Missouri said:

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Surely the time for dilly-dallying and shilly-shallying on the Cuban question is past.

There never was any sense in mincing words about it.

The hour for honest, courageous, unequivocal speech and action is at hand.

OUR DUTY.

This Republic ought to grant belligerent rights to the Cuban patriots. She should recognize the independence of Cuba.

If Spain does not bring the war to a speedy conclusion, the United States ought to expel her from the Western Hemisphere.

These things ought to be done in the cause of humanity. They ought to be done as the beginning of a sound and permanent business policy.

They ought to be done as evidence of our settled determination to be supreme in the affairs of our half of the world.

Man does not live for himself alone. Neither does a nation.

Certainly we owe something to those struggling bravely for freedom at our very doors. They lighted their torch of liberty at our fire. They are only following our example. In a very large measure we are responsible for their conduct.

We were the first rebels or revolutionists in this hemisphere; for let it never be forgotten that the only distinction between a rebel and a revolutionist is that the latter succeeds, while the former fails. It is not a difference of principle, but of results—that is all. [Applause.]

There can be no doubt as to what has been our traditional foreign policy. What our foreign policy is under the McKinley Administration, like the peace of God, passeth all understanding. [Laughter.] There ought to be no question as to our foreign policy in the future. Tersely and bluntly stated, it is this—and it ought to be enforced with iron hand—that we intend, at all hazards and at whatever cost, to thoroughly dominate the western world. [Applause.]

THE MONROE DOCTRINE.

The germ of the Monroe doctrine is found in Thomas Jefferson's letter to President Monroe, bearing date of October 24, 1823, in these words:

The question presented by the letters you have sent me is the most momentous which has ever been offered to my contemplation since that of independence. That made us a nation; this sets our compass and points the course which we are to steer through the ocean of time opening on us. And never could we embark on it under circumstances more auspicious. Our

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first and fundamental maxim should be never to entangle ourselves in the broils of Europe. Our second, never to suffer Europe to intermeddle with cis-Atlantic affairs. America, North and South, has a set of interests distinct from those of Europe and peculiarly her own. She should therefore have a system of her own, separate and apart from that of Europe. While the last is laboring to become the domicile of despotism, our endeavor should surely be to make our hemisphere that of freedom.

Monroe elaborated the idea as follows:

With the movements in this hemisphere we are of necessity more immediately connected, and by causes which must be obvious to all enlightened and impartial observers. The political system of the allied powers is essentially different in this respect from that of America. This difference proceeds from that which exists in their respective governments; and to the defense of our own, which has been achieved by the loss of so much blood and treasure and matured by the wisdom of our most enlightened citizens, and under which we have enjoyed unexampled felicity, this whole nation is devoted. We owe it, therefore, to candor and to the amicable relations existing between the United States and those powers to declare that we should consider any attempt on their part to extend their system to any portion of this hemisphere as dangerous to our peace and safety. With the existing colonies or dependencies of any European power we have not interfered and shall not interfere. But with the governments who have declared their independence and maintained it, and whose independence we have, on great consideration and on just principles, acknowledged, we could not view any interposition for the purpose of oppressing them or controlling in any other manner their destiny by any European power in any other light than as the manifestation of an unfriendly disposition toward the United States.

That is the celebrated Monroe doctrine, as originated by Thomas Jefferson and formulated by James Monroe in his message of December, 1823. When he penned that fateful paragraph Monroe little dreamed that he was laying hold of earthly immortality, but such is the truth of history. We are very much disposed to underrate Monroe, but to our Spanish-American neighbors he is, next to Washington, the great American. We neglect him, but they delight to build monuments to his memory. [Applause.]

His utterance became part of our creed political. We have forced it into the code of international law. Other nations affect to sneer at it theoretically, but they never fail to give heed to it when we assert it in particular cases.

A note from William H. Seward to Louis Napoleon caused that ambitious jingo to withdraw his victorious legions from Mexico when he was in the plenitude of his imperial power and when his arms glittered from China to Peru. [Applause.]

That was the splendid, courageous, and magnanimous manner in which Republicans enforced the Monroe doctrine when their party was in its best estate, when Abraham Lincoln was at its head, and before sordid greed had come to completely dominate that great, historic organization.

How are the mighty fallen! Then the Republican party might have stood against the world. Now none so poor as to do it reverence.

EVILS OF McHANNANISM.

In these days of McHannanism our foreign policy is so feeble, so cringing, so cowardly that even old and decrepit Spain insults our flag, maltreats our citizens, and searches our ships with perfect impunity; and President McKinley, instead of sending men-of-war to protect our honor, assert our supremacy, and teach the insolent and impotent "Dons" a lesson [applause] they would never forget, passes the hat around and invites the American people to contribute alms for the starving and dying Cubans. [Applause.]

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THE MONROE DOCTRINE AS INTERPRETED BY A MISSOURI DEMOCRAT.

The Monroe doctrine has grown with our growth, strengthened with our strength, increased with our territory.

It ought to be enlarged, stretched, expanded, until it becomes an irresistible force in international politics.

In its infancy Mr. Monroe simply notified European nations that new schemes of colonization in this hemisphere would be regarded with an unfriendly eye by this Republic. That was a sufficient assertion of our position so long as we were a feeble folk; but now that we are the most puissant nation on the globe, we should restate our position and should at once signify to all European powers that they retain a foothold in the Western Hemisphere only by our sufferance, that they are mere tenants at will, and that when notified by us they must vacate the premises. [Applause.]

Congress should formulate the Monroe doctrine as we now understand it, and it should be in words about as follows: "The American Republic hereby takes all of North America, Central America, South America, and all the islands of the adjacent seas under the shadow of her protecting wing, guarantees to them any form of government they choose, and warns Europe, Asia, and Africa to keep their hands off the Western Hemisphere on the penalty of being thrashed within an inch of their lives." [Applause.]

That is the Monroe doctrine as interpreted by a Missouri Democrat. [Laughter.] We should extend a moral protectorate over them all. Not one of these Central or South American Republics can maintain its independence without our support. They caught the spirit of freedom from us. They copied their form of government from ours. Round about the young and feeble Republics already established in this hemisphere we should throw our friendship and influence, and we should encourage Cuba and all the rest of the West India Islands to unite themselves into a republic of their own. The habit of representative government is healthy and laudable. It should be fostered by us in every way possible. We should not only lend them our moral support, but should give them physical aid in cases of necessity.

It is high time that we served plain and emphatic notice on all kings, emperors, princes, and potentates that the navies of transatlantic powers shall not be used as collection bureaus for questionable debts, as was done a year or two ago at Corinto, and as was done a month or so ago at Haiti. [Applause.]

THE CUBAN CASE.

The Cuban situation is this: For three years the insurgents have fought with a courage and suffered with a fortitude which have challenged the admiration of all the world, save and except the McKinley Administration. [Applause.]

Three or four hundred thousand people—some of the papers say 600,000—men, women, and children, have died, as much martyrs in the cause of liberty as was Warren, Montgomery, or any other hero who died that we might be free, and yet the McKinley Administration lifts not its finger to stay the slaughter.

Three or four hundred thousand people—some of the papers say 600,000—men, women, and children, are known to be dying by the slow and cruel process of starvation, and the McKinley Administration can think of nothing more effective for their relief than to pose as the Big Beggarman.

The party of Sumner, Chase, and Seward, which proudly vaunted

itself as the friend of man, has become the ally of pestilence, arson, famine, devastation, rape, and murder. [Applause.]

There is but one safe and honest rule of political conduct, and that is to religiously fulfill, when in power after the election, the promises made in order to win the election.

Now, remembering that neither the present Administration nor the majority in this House can be persuaded, provoked, or driven into helping our unfortunate Cuban neighbors, let us see what the St. Louis convention said on the subject. It is what Horace Greeley would have called "mighty rich reading." Here it is:

From the hour of achieving their own independence the people of the United States have regarded with sympathy the struggles of other American people to free themselves from European domination. We watch with deep and abiding interest the heroic battle of the Cuban patriots against cruelty and oppression, and our best hopes go out for the full success of their determined contest for liberty.

The Government of Spain having lost control of Cuba, and being unable to protect the property or lives of resident American citizens or to comply with its treaty obligations, we believe that the Government of the United States should actively use its influence and good offices to restore peace and give independence to the island.

That is what you said in June, 1896, and you intended to be understood as promising to give peace and independence to Cuba. Now, having the power, you do nothing to redeem that promise. You said it because you knew the people demanded it. What occult, what malign, what paralyzing influence prevents you now from keeping faith with the people? [Applause.]

It is twenty-one months since you made the St. Louis pronouncement. Every day the condition in Cuba has grown worse. You won a stupendous victory; you have a brutal majority here, and yet you are afraid to open your chops or to say your souls are your own. Next fall, when you appeal to the people for their suffrages, they will say to you, "Depart, ye workers of iniquity" [laughter], and will cast you into that outer darkness, where there will be weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth. [Applause.]

DEMOCRATIC AND REPUBLICAN FOREIGN POLICIES CONTRASTED.

To every suggestion that we should reenter upon a vigorous foreign policy which will thoroughly protect American citizens and American interests on every part of the habitable globe we are met with the hysterical shriek that we are advocating war. It is not true, but suppose it were. There are some things worse than war, deplorable as war unquestionably is, and one of them is to play the cry-baby act until we are despised of all nations and kindreds and tongues.

Thomas Jefferson was not a bloodthirsty soldier or a vain-glorious warrior. He was a man of peace, but he was also a self-respecting American, and when we were only a handful he dared to establish the embargo and to precipitate a war with the greatest power in the world, for the war of 1812, our second war for independence, was Jefferson's war—a Democratic war, fought by Democrats and won by Democrats, when the forefathers of the present Republican party were holding the Hartford secession convention. [Laughter and applause.]

William L. Marey was not a soldier, but he was an American of the school of Jefferson, and when we were not half as strong as we are now, he was willing to go to war with the Austrian Empire, when at the zenith of her power, to protect the rights of the humblest of our naturalized citizens. [Applause.] War was prevented only by the Emperor yielding to our demands. But

then it must be remembered that Marcy was a Democrat and consequently a patriot, proud of his country and ready to defend her rights to the uttermost.

A Democratic foreign policy made the sentence "I am an American" of more effect than the famous "Romanus sum"—made it a safe passport in every land and upon every sea.

Now, that we number 70,000,000 souls, a Republican Administration can not be taunted, kicked, or cuffed into resenting any insult or demanding reparation for any injury.

Such a contemptible and pusillanimous policy is enough to make Grant, Sherman, Sheridan, Dupont, Farragut, and Porter restless in their coffins.

Along in the late sixties Admiral Farragut was cruising in the Mediterranean and intimated to the Sultan that he would like to anchor his fleet in the Bosphorus. The Sultan conveyed the reply that that was a privilege accorded only to princes of the royal blood. Whereupon, Farragut, the grand American, sent the grand Turk this message:

I have 800 American princes of the blood royal aboard ship. They are entitled to the best of everything to be had. We are clearing our decks for action, and will call upon you in force.

[Applause and laughter.]

It is entirely superfluous to state that all restrictions were removed, all red tape cut, all the cobwebs of court etiquette swept away, and that Farragut went whither he pleased, anchored where he chose, and did as he wished. [Applause.]

We desire peace as much as do the Republicans, but it is the sort of peace which Benjamin Disraeli, Lord Beaconsfield, the marvelous Jew, declared he secured for England at the Berlin International Congress—"Peace with honor." The coining of that one phrase would have immortalized him if he had done nothing else. "Peace with honor," is what Democrats want. "Peace with dishonor" seems to satisfy the aspirations of Republicans.

Just so that the President distributes "pie" in sufficient quantities they care nothing for the dying women and starving babies in "the gem of the Antilles." [Applause.]

So long as voters can be hoodwinked with sonorous promises they are willing that American lives shall be sacrificed and American property shall be destroyed ad libitum by the Spaniards, who hate and deride us. This is Republican statesmanship, Republican patriotism, and Republican humanity in an off year in our political system. [Applause.]

A MISSOURI DEMOCRAT'S SPEECH ON ST. JACKSON'S DAY.

On the 8th day of January—St. Jackson's day—and suppose Andrew Jackson were President now, what would he do? I do not know all that he would do, but I would risk my life on the proposition that he would give the Spanish butchers forty-eight hours to get out of Cuba, bag and baggage, and if they did not go at once, without standing on the order of their going, he would drive them into the sea or hang them as ruthlessly as he hanged Ambrister and Arbuthnot amid the wilds of Florida.

This month, at the Omaha celebration of Jackson's astounding victory at New Orleans, my friend Mr. J. A. Graham, managing editor of the St. Louis Republic, made a speech in which he gave utterance to these manly, robust, and patriotic sentiments, which contain more genuine American spirit and worldly American wis-

dom than all the Republican speeches that I have heard since I have been in Congress:

It can not have escaped the notice of clear-sighted patriots—
Says Mr. Graham—

that the monarchs of Europe are meditating an assault upon the American system. The Italian dispute of a few years ago draw out their feeling. The Cuban troubles have almost exposed their plans.

They fear the growing power of a free republic. The capacity of a free people to turn material resources into wealth, to invent, to labor with high intelligence as well as with patient industry, has excited their envy and dislike. Ahead of them they see a time when all their armies and navies will be but paper walls against the steady advance of a sovereign people. Meanwhile their craze for territorial aggrandizement turns their covetousness toward Central and South America. At the first favorable opportunity they will defy the Monroe doctrine.

If China is seized and divided, there will be one more, and a very strong, incentive to destroy the Monroe doctrine and control the future isthmian canal.

For a century the doctrine of the Democratic party has been that peace is a surer guardian of the safety of our institutions than standing armies and monster navies. That doctrine is still the truth of Democracy, of Christianity, and of God. But peace with honor, decency, and self-respect presupposes that we must be let alone. It is not Democratic doctrine that we should ever meekly endure insults; and most surely not Democratic doctrine that we should go down unarmed to defeat rather than prepare for war as the reply of freedom to the insolent threat of armored tyranny.

More than that. I begin to think that the time has come when the honor and the success of the American nation require a display of force commensurate with the range of our interests. We have been employed in the development of our domestic affairs. With our unparalleled home markets, our unparalleled standard of living, we have supplied a demand for almost the whole of our own products. The opinion of foreign peoples we have cared for very little. It is unfortunately true that the name of America is flouted in every foreign country. Falseness and ignorance have been doing their work while we laughed at the lies. Now, however, our markets are congested. Our marvelous industry, and our yet more marvelous machinery of production and transportation, have surpassed our ability to consume, great as it is.

Perhaps the natural laws of trade will bring eventually the markets we need for the healthy expansion of our exports and the constant employment of our artisans. But against entrenched prejudice progress is slow. It is to be deeply regretted, but it is a fact that in most of the world the only conception of national greatness is connected with the demonstration of physical power. Without dwelling on this fact and its logic, without being even assured that I am not wrong, I will say this much: The assertion of naval strength, the proved certainty of our defenses against possible attack, the performance of a glorious deed by American ships against a foe deemed by the world powerful and brave, would constantly send thundering over the surface of the earth the grandeur of America in a language which would be as plain to the Hankow celestials as to the saunterers on the boulevards of Paris.

True, there is immeasurable potentiality in the citizens who can at a word change the pruning hook into a sword and the sword into the pruning hook. There is now no danger that we shall ever be conquered by a foreign foe. But our coast defenses are feeble; our Navy is ridiculously small in comparison with the extent of our approachable shores. Monarchs of other nations know this and believe that a sudden attack would lay us under tribute, annul the Monroe doctrine, hamper our trade, and open Spanish America to their invasion. They have great navies and armies unemployed. What stimulates them most, perhaps, is that they associate an attack on the United States with a cessation of international dangers from their own quarrels, with a muzzling of domestic discontents, and with that disgraceful failure of democratic institutions which they so feverishly desire to hold as an example before their subjects.

Still further. The Democratic party of the United States has a monetary system to advance for the welfare of all toiling producers. In 1896 the party espoused the cause of bimetalism and nominated a splendid young Nebraskan as its champion. The monarchies of Europe, allied always with plutocracy and privilege, repudiate bimetalism and reject with offensive scorn every overture we make for the restoration of silver money.

If victorious war is the only way by which we can teach them to respect our opinions and recognize the right of their own and our people to lift from the brow of labor the crown of thorns and lighten the galling burden of the cross of gold, then, speaking for at least one Jacksonian Democrat, I am will-

ing to say, let them have it; let them learn the lesson, until their own shoulders run blood under the lash of aroused freedom and their knees bend under the pressure of a race that is as irresistible in conflict as it is beyond rivalry in the peaceful arts of industry.

I do not speak for territorial conquest, for entangling alliances, or for any departure from the traditions of true Jeffersonian Democracy; but I speak in that Jacksonian spirit which hung British spies when they made themselves overt enemies to this nation and met the flower of the British army beside the Mississippi on the day we celebrate. If we are to be defied, I would have the Democratic party, and no other, the first to ring back defiance, like the smitten shield of an invincible hero. If foreign insolence has taken a vow to spit upon the American flag, I would have the Democratic press, the Democratic party, sound the trumpet that calls the people, build the navy that will humble the insulter, if it takes a thousand battle ships and a billion of money. I would have the Jacksonian press and the Jacksonian party send to the uttermost parts of the earth the refrain of the Jacksonian poet:

"First on the land and first on the ocean,
Flag of the rainbow and banner of stars."

These words of Mr. Graham were fitly spoken, and are like apples of gold in pictures of silver. They are American sentiments, Democratic sentiments—Missouri sentiments. They contain the prophecy of that vigorous American foreign policy which will be inaugurated, enforced, and perpetuated, if needs be at the cannon's mouth, when true and genuine Democrats once more control the destinies of the Republic, as they will surely do from and after high noon on March 4, in the year of our Lord and Master 1901.

AN URGENT INVITATION TO REPUBLICANS.

My Republican friends, I urgently invite you to lay aside the weight that is holding you down, assert your rights, and come out on the side of eternal justice and human liberty, thereby demonstrating that you are worthy of the high vocation wherein you are called. We Democrats and Populists stand here ready and anxious to remove from America her great reproach. We on this side will contribute 155 votes to the good cause. If only 24 righteous men can be found in this Republican Sodom—if only 24 Republicans will break their heavy yoke, defy their merciless taskmasters, and join us in this noble work, before the sun sets this day we will send the glad tidings ringing round the world that "Cuba is free! Free, thank God, by the act of the American Congress!" [Applause.]

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