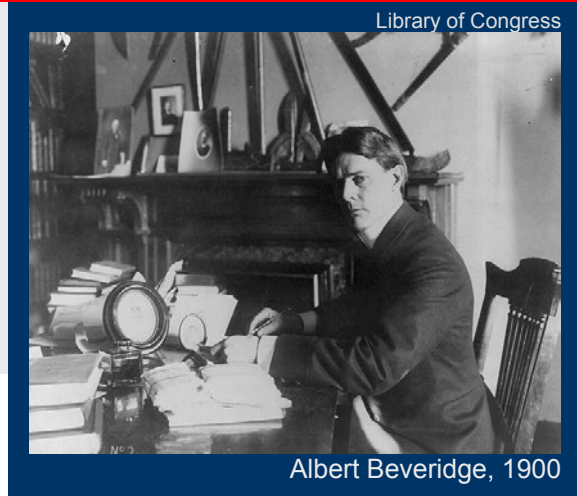


— Albert J. Beveridge —

## MARCH OF THE FLAG

Address to an Indiana Republican Meeting  
Indianapolis, Indiana, 16 September 1898

Excerpts



Fellow citizens, — it is a noble land that God has given us; a land that can feed and clothe the world; a land whose coastlines would enclose half the countries of Europe; a land set like a sentinel between the two imperial oceans of the globe, a greater England with a nobler destiny. It is a mighty people that He has planted on this soil; a people sprung from the most masterful blood of history; a people perpetually revitalized by the virile, man-producing workingfolk of all the earth; a people imperial by virtue of their power, by right of their institutions, by authority of their Heaven-directed purposes — the propagandists and not the misers of liberty. It is a glorious history our God has bestowed upon His chosen people; a history whose keynote was struck by [the] Liberty Bell; a history heroic with faith in our mission and our future; a history of statesmen who flung the boundaries of the Republic out into unexplored lands and savage wildernesses; a history of soldiers who carried the flag across the blazing deserts and through the ranks of hostile mountains, even to the gates of sunset; a history of a multiplying people who overran a continent in half a century; a history of prophets who saw the consequences of evils inherited from the past and of martyrs who died to save us from them; a history divinely logical, in the process of whose tremendous reasoning we find ourselves to-day.

Therefore, in this campaign, the question is larger than a party question. It is an American question. It is a world question. Shall the American people continue their resistless march toward the commercial supremacy of the world? Shall free institutions broaden their blessed reign as the children of liberty wax in strength, until the empire of our principles is established over the hearts of all mankind?

Have we no mission to perform, no duty to discharge to our fellow-man? Has God endowed us with gifts beyond our deserts and marked us as the people of His peculiar favor, merely to rot in our own selfishness, as men and nations must, who take cowardice for their companion and self for their deity — as China has, as India has, as Egypt has? . . .

Ah! the heroes of Vicksburg and Peach Tree Creek, Atlanta, Mission Ridge, the Wilderness, and all those fields of glory, of suffering, and of death!

Soldiers of 1861! A generation has passed and you have reared a race of heroes worthy of your blood — heroes of El Caney, San Juan, and Cavite, of Santiago and Manila — ay! and 200,000 more as brave as they, who waited in camp with the agony of impatience the call of battle, ready to count the hellish hardship of the trenches the very sweets of fate, if they could only fight for the flag.

For every tented field was full of Hobsons, of Roosevelts, of Wheelers, and their men; full of the kind of soldiers that in regiments of rags, starving, with bare feet in the snows of winters made Valley Forge immortal; full of the same kind of boys that endured the hideous hardships of the Civil War,

drank from filthy roadside pools as they marched through swamps of death, ate food alive with weevils, and even corn picked from the horses' camp, slept in the blankets of the blast with sheets of sleet for covering, breakfasted with danger and dined with death, and came back — those who did come back — with a laugh and a shout and a song of joy, true American soldiers, pride of their county, and envy of the world.

For that is the kind of boys the soldiers of 1898 are, notwithstanding the slanders of politicians and the infamy of a leprous press that try to make the world believe our soldiers are suckling babes and womanish weaklings, and our government, in war, a corrupt machine, fattening off the suffering of our armies. In the name of the sturdy soldiery of America I denounce the hissing lies of politicians out of an issue, who are trying to disgrace American manhood in the eyes of the nations. . . .

And the burning question of this campaign is, whether the American people will accept the gifts of events; whether they will rise as lifts their soaring destiny; whether they will proceed upon the lines of national development surveyed by the statesmen of our past; or whether for the first American people doubt their mission, question fate, prove apostate to the spirit of their race, and halt the ceaseless march of free institutions.

The Opposition tells us that we ought not to govern a people without their consent. I answer, The rule of liberty that all just government derives its authority from the consent of the governed, applies only to those who are capable of self-government. We govern the Indians without their consent, we govern our territories without their consent, we govern our children without their consent. How do they know that our government would be without their consent? Would not the people of the Philippines prefer the just, humane, civilizing government of this Republic to the savage, bloody rule of pillage and extortion from which we have rescued them?

Do not the blazing fires of joy and the ringing bells of gladness in Porto Rico prove the welcome of our flag?

And, regardless of this formula of words made only for enlightened, self-governing people, do we owe no duty to the world? Shall we turn these peoples back to the reeking hands from which we have taken them? Shall we abandon them, with Germany, England, Japan, hungering for them? Shall we save them from those nations, to give them a self-rule of tragedy? It would be like giving a razor to a babe and telling it to shave itself. It would be like giving a typewriter to an Eskimo and telling him to publish one of the great dailies of the world. This proposition of the Opposition makes the Declaration of Independence preposterous, like the reading of Job's lamentations would be at a wedding or an Altgeld speech on the Fourth of July.

They ask us how we shall govern these new possessions. I answer: Out of local conditions and the necessities of the case methods of government will grow. If England can govern foreign lands, so can America. If Germany can govern foreign lands, so can America. If they can supervise protectorates, so can America. Why is it more difficult to administer Hawaii than New Mexico or California? Both had



a savage and an alien population; both were more remote from the seat of government when they came under our dominion than Hawaii is to-day.

Will you say by your vote that American ability to govern has decayed; that a century's experience in self-rule has failed of a result? Will you affirm by your vote that you are an infidel to American power and practical sense? Or will you say that ours is the blood of government; ours the heart of dominion; ours the brain and genius of administration? Will you remember that we do but what our fathers did — we but pitch the tents of liberty farther westward, farther southward — we only continue the march of the flag?

The march of the flag!

In 1789 the flag of the Republic waved over 4,000,000 souls in thirteen states, and their savage territory which stretched to the Mississippi, to Canada, to the Floridas. The timid minds of that day said that no new territory was needed, and, for the hour, they were right. But Jefferson, through whose intellect the centuries marched; Jefferson, who dreamed of Cuba as an American state; Jefferson, the first Imperialist of the Republic — Jefferson acquired that imperial territory which swept from the Mississippi to the mountains, from Texas to the British possessions, and the march of the flag began!

The infidels to the gospel of liberty raved, but the flag swept on! The title to that noble land out of which Oregon, Washington, Idaho and Montana have been carved was uncertain; Jefferson, strict constructionist of constitutional power though he was, obeyed the Anglo-Saxon impulse within him, whose watchword then and whose watchword throughout the world to-day is, "Forward!": another empire was added to the Republic, and the march of the flag went on!

Those who deny the power of free institutions to expand urged every argument, and more, that we hear, to-day; but the people's judgment approved the command of their blood, and the march of the flag went on!

A screen of land from New Orleans to Florida shut us from the Gulf, and over this and the Everglade Peninsula waved the saffron flag of Spain; Andrew Jackson seized both, the American people stood at his back, and, under Monroe, the Floridas came under the dominion of the Republic, and the march of the flag went on!

The Cassandras prophesied every prophecy of despair we hear, to-day, but the march of the flag went on! Then Texas responded to the bugle calls of liberty, and the march of the flag went on! And, at last, we waged war with Mexico, and the flag swept over the southwest, over peerless California, past the Gate of Gold to Oregon on the north, and from ocean to ocean its folds of glory blazed. . . .

. . . To-day, we are making more than we can use. To-day, our industrial society is congested; there are more workers than there is work; there is more capital than there is investment. We do not need more money — we need more circulation, more employment. Therefore we must find new markets for



our produce. And so, while we did not need the territory taken during the past century at the time it was acquired, we do need what we have taken in 1898, and we need it now.

Think of the thousands of Americans who will pour into Hawaii and Porto Rico when the republic's laws cover those islands with justice and safety! Think of the tens of thousands of Americans who will invade mine and field and forest in the Philippines when a liberal government, protected and controlled by this republic, if not the government of the republic itself, shall establish order and equity there! Think of the hundreds of thousands of Americans who will build a soap-and-water, common-school civilization of energy and industry in Cuba, when a government of law replaces the double reign of anarchy and tyranny! — think of the prosperous millions that Empress of Islands will support when, obedient to the law of political gravitation, her people ask for the highest honor liberty can bestow, the sacred Order of the Stars and Stripes, the citizenship of the Great Republic!

What does all this mean for every one of us? It means opportunity for all the glorious young manhood of the republic — the most virile, ambitious, impatient, militant manhood the world has ever seen. It means that the resources and the commerce of these immensely rich dominions will be increased as much as American energy is greater than Spanish sloth; for Americans henceforth will monopolize those resources and that commerce. . . .

Do you indorse that policy with your vote? It means creative investment for every dollar of idle capital in the land — an opportunity for the rich man to do something with his money besides hoarding it or lending it. It means occupation for every workingman in the country at wages which the development of new resources, the launching of new enterprises, the monopoly of new markets always brings. . . .

For the conflicts of the future are to be conflicts of trade — struggles for markets — commercial wars for existence. And the golden rule of peace is impregnability of position and invincibility of preparedness. So, we see England, the greatest strategist of history, plant her flag and her cannon on Gibraltar, at Quebec, in the Bermudas, at Vancouver, everywhere, until, from every point of vantage, her royal banner flashes in the sun. So Hawaii furnishes us a naval base in the heart of the Pacific; the Ladrões another, a voyage further on; Manila another, at the gates of Asia — Asia, Asia, to the trade of whose hundreds of millions American merchants,

American manufacturers, American farmers, have as good a right as those of Germany or France or Russia or England; Asia, whose commerce with England alone, amounts to billions of dollars every year; Asia, to whom Germany looks to take the surplus of her factories and foundries and mills; Asia, whose doors shall not be shut against American trade. Within two decades the bulk of Oriental commerce will be ours, — the richest commerce in the world. In the light of that golden future, our chain of new-won stations rise like ocean sentinels from the night of waters, — Porto Rico, a nobler Gibraltar; the Isthmian canal, a greater Suez; Hawaii, the Ladrões, the Philippines, commanding the Pacific!



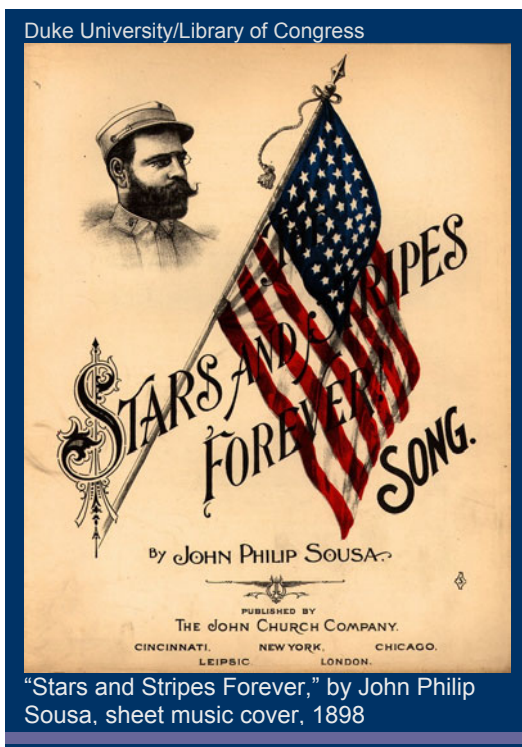
Ah! as our commerce spreads, the flag of liberty will circle the globe, and the highways of the ocean — carrying trade of all mankind, be guarded by the guns of the republic. And, as their thunders salute the flag, benighted peoples will know that the voice of Liberty is speaking, at last, for them; that civilization is dawning, at last, for them — Liberty and Civilization, those children of Christ's gospel, who follow and never precede, the preparing march of commerce!

It is the tide of God's great purposes made manifest in the instincts of our race, whose present phase is our personal profit, but whose far-off end is the redemption of the world and the Christianization of mankind. And he who throws himself before that current is like him who, with puny arm, tries to turn the gulf stream from its course, or stay, by idle incantations, the blessed processes of the sun. . . .

Fellow Americans, we are God's chosen people. Yonder at Bunker Hill and Yorktown his providence was above us. At New Orleans and on ensanguined seas his hand sustained us. Abraham Lincoln was his minister and his was the Altar of Freedom, the boys in blue set on a hundred battlefields. His power directed Dewey in the East and delivered the Spanish fleet into our hands on the eve of Liberty's natal day, as he delivered the elder Armada into the hands of our English sires two centuries ago. His great purposes are revealed in the progress of the flag, which surpasses the intentions of Congresses and Cabinets, and leads us like a holier pillar of cloud by day and pillar of fire by night into situations unforeseen by finite wisdom, and duties unexpected by the unprophetic heart of

selfishness. The American people cannot use a dishonest medium of exchange; it is ours to set the world its example of right and honor. We cannot fly from our world duties; it is ours to execute the purpose of a fate that has driven us to be greater than our small intentions. We cannot retreat from any soil where Providence has unfurled our banner; it is ours to save that soil for Liberty and Civilization. For Liberty and Civilization and God's promise fulfilled, the flag must henceforth be the symbol and the sign to all mankind — the flag! —

“Flag of the free heart's hope and home  
 By angel hands to valor given,  
 Thy stars have lit the welkin dome,  
 And all their hues were born in heaven!  
 Forever wave that standard sheet,  
 Where breathes the toe but falls before us  
 With freedom's soil beneath our feet  
 And freedom's banner streaming o'er us!”\*



\* Joseph Rodman Drake (1795-1820), “The American Flag,” 1810s, final stanza of poem.