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## Manifest Destiny and the Pacific<sup>1</sup>

*Dan E. Clark*

The launching by this association of a new quarterly, devoted in its scope to the history of the entire basin of the Pacific, indicates an appreciation of the importance of the Pacific Coast of the United States and of its close relationship to the other lands in and bordering on this great ocean. Consideration of the significance of the forthcoming publication suggested to the writer that it would not be inappropriate on this occasion to review briefly some of the many predictions made in the past regarding the destiny of America, both on this coast and across the Pacific Ocean.

The term Manifest Destiny is here used in a broad sense. It includes, in the first place, the emotion which prompted Elkanah Watson, prophesying in 1778 for the year 1900, to speak of "the decrees of the Almighty, who has evidently raised up this nation to become a lamp to guide degraded and oppressed humanity";<sup>2</sup> or Albert J. Beveridge in 1900 to call America "trustee, under God, of the civilization of the world."<sup>3</sup> This is the chosen-people, beacon-to-mankind interpretation of America's mission and duty. This is the view of which Carl Schurz wrote, although without adding his approval, when he referred to the "youthful optimism . . . inspiring the minds of many Americans with the idea that this republic, being charged with the mission of bearing the banner of freedom over the whole civilized world, could transform any country, inhabited by any kind of population, into something like itself

<sup>1</sup> Presidential Address delivered before the Pacific Coast Branch of The American Historical Association at Berkeley, California, December 29, 1931.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted in Jesse Lee Bennett, *The Essential American Tradition* (New York, 1925), 296.

<sup>3</sup> *Congressional Record*, 56 cong., 1 sess., 704.

simply by extending over it the magic charm of its political institutions.”<sup>4</sup>

Then there is the doctrine of pre-ordination or inevitability governing the westward progress of the “star of empire.” For some it was divine command and the superintending guidance of Providence that furnished the irresistible impulse. Others based their prophecies on the ceaseless inward urge which had for so long been impelling Anglo-saxon peoples westward. Still others referred to the certainty that American dominion and American enterprise must seek their natural boundaries, as water seeks its level. All these are included in the meaning of Manifest Destiny as here used.

The writer feels no necessity to pass judgment on the sincerity or motives of those who eloquently propounded the views, hereafter mentioned or quoted, in regard to the unavoidable rôle which America was destined to play on both shores of the Pacific. Most of these men lived long before the day of the modern cynic and de-bunker. If there was dross mingled with the gold in their exaltation and enthusiasm, few of them were conscious of it. America was still the land of the free and the home of the brave. At the same time it is true that there were always those who denied the force of predestinarian logic; and at the close of the last century there were many critics who exposed selfish economic imperialism lurking behind fine-sounding phrases.

The definite formulation of the doctrine of Manifest Destiny no doubt belongs to the decade of the roaring forties. With respect to the Pacific Coast and the Pacific, however, it seems certain that the essential features of that idea were in men’s minds at a considerably earlier date. Even Coleridge in his later years was constrained to say: “The possible destiny of the United States of America, as a nation of a hundred millions of freemen, stretching from the Atlantic to the Pacific, living under the laws of Alfred, and speaking the language of Shakespeare and Milton, is an august conception.”<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Carl Schurz, “Manifest Destiny” in *Harper’s Monthly*, LXXXVII, 737 (1893).

<sup>5</sup> Coleridge’s *Table Talk*, quoted on the title page of Robert Greenhow, *The History*

The writer will not pretend to say when the idea of the possibility or desirability or certainty of American control on the Pacific first entered men's minds. Some part of it no doubt occurred to the hardy New England sea captains who sailed around the Horn and up the western coast after the close of the Revolution. Some such vision probably animated the restless John Ledyard. Apparently it was in the thought of John Adams when, in his *Defense of the American Constitution* in 1787, he wrote: "Thirteen governments thus founded on the natural authority of the people alone . . . and which are destined to spread over the northern part of that whole quarter of the globe, are a great point gained in favor of the rights of mankind."<sup>6</sup> Whatever may have been the hopes and purposes of Thomas Jefferson in his long-continued efforts to promote far western exploration, he apparently went no further than to look forward, as he wrote to John Jacob Astor, to the time when the descendants of the first settlers on the Pacific slope should "spread themselves through the whole length of that coast, covering it with free and independent Americans, unconnected with us but by the ties of blood and interest."<sup>7</sup>

Before Jefferson passed from the stage, however, others were to express views that were far less hesitating. "Nothing can or will limit the immigration westward, but the Western Ocean," declared Timothy Flint in 1825. "Alas! for the moving generation of the day, when the tide of advancing backwoodsmen shall have met the surge of the Pacific. They may then set themselves down and weep for other worlds."<sup>8</sup> The accumulating information in regard to the Oregon country and the Treaty of 1818 with Great Britain providing for joint occupancy directed *of Oregon and California* (Boston, 1845).

<sup>6</sup> Charles Francis Adams (ed.), *The Works of John Adams*, (Boston, 1850-56), IV, 293. Eighty years later, in his speech on the Alaska treaty, Charles Sumner referred to this statement by Adams, and interpreted it to predict the spread of the United States to the Pacific. "Thus," said Sumner, "according to the prophetic minister, even at that early day was the destiny of the Republic manifest." *The Works of Charles Sumner* (Boston, 1874-83), XI, 222.

<sup>7</sup> Paul Leicester Ford (ed.), *The Writings of Thomas Jefferson* (New York, 1892-99), IX, 351.

<sup>8</sup> Timothy Flint, *Recollections of the Last Ten Years* (Boston, 1826), 203.

attention to the importance of the mouth of the Columbia. "Upon the people of Eastern Asia," said that ardent advocate of western measures, Thomas Hart Benton, in 1820, "the establishment of a civilized power on the opposite coast of America, could not fail to produce great and wonderful benefits. Science, liberal principles in government, and the true religion, might cast their lights across the intervening sea."<sup>9</sup>

The debate in the House in 1822-3 on Floyd's bill to occupy the mouth of the Columbia brought out from rather unexpected sources the full idea of Manifest Destiny, even if the actual words were not used. Although George Tucker of Virginia opposed the bill, he was bound to admit that "we cannot arrest the progress of our population to the West. In vain may the Government attempt to set limits to its course. It marches on, with the increasing rapidity of a fire, and nothing will stop it until it reaches the shores of the Pacific."<sup>10</sup> But it was Francis Baylies of Massachusetts who preached the doctrine most fully and eloquently. Even, said he, if the settlers who went to Oregon should later decide to form their own separate government, "with a nation of kindred blood, governed by laws similar to yours, cherishing your principles, speaking your language, and worshipping your God, you may rear a monument more magnificent than the Arch of Trajan, more durable than the pyramids; a living, animated, and everlasting monument of your glory and your greatness." Addressing the timid and reluctant, he predicted that if they passed the bill they might in later life "cherish delightful recollections of this day, when America, almost shrinking from the 'shadows of coming events,' first placed her feet upon untrodden ground, scarcely daring to anticipate the grandeur which awaited her." Returning to the discussion at a later point in the debate, he said: "Gentlemen are talking of natural boundaries. Sir, our natural boundary is the Pacific ocean. The swelling tide of our population must and will roll on until that mighty ocean interposes its waters, and limits our territorial empire." Finally, to conclude these

<sup>9</sup> Thomas Hart Benton, *Thirty Years' View* (New York, 1854-56), I, 13.

<sup>10</sup> *Annals of Congress*, 17 cong., 2 sess., 422.

rather extended excerpts from this early apostle of Manifest Destiny, Baylies reached his climax when, in his peroration, he exclaimed: "To diffuse the arts of life, the light of science, and the blessings of the gospel over a wilderness, is no violation of the laws of God; it is no invasion of the rights of man to occupy a territory over which the savage roams, but which he never cultivates. . . . The stream of bounty which perpetually flows from the throne of the Almighty ought not to be obstructed in its course, nor is it right that his benevolent designs should be defeated by the perversity of man."<sup>11</sup>

During the ensuing two decades, little happened to elicit similar exuberant predictions regarding the Pacific Coast and its destiny. And yet the idea lay not far below the current of thought and appeared occasionally on the surface in western newspapers. For instance, in 1825 the *Ohio State Journal*, speaking of the Oregon country, said: "One fourth part of this territory, that part which contains the Oregon harbor, will, at a future day, enter the Republican Confederacy as Oregon State; and the City of Oregon, will arise on its banks, which shall rival New York or Philadelphia in their wealth and population. Then the busy hum of commerce and the shouts of freemen, shall re-echo from the Atlantic to the Pacific oceans."<sup>12</sup> Five years later the *Buffalo Journal* reviewed the irresistible westward march of American pioneers. "This course of empire," said the editor, "may—must be stayed, when the shore of the Pacific has been reached."<sup>13</sup> In a speech in the House of Representatives Caleb Cushing rejoiced in "the spectacle of the Anglo-American stock extending itself into the heart of the Continent . . . advancing with, as it were, the preordination of inevitable progress, like the sun moving westerly in the heavens, or the ascending tide on the seashore, or, in the striking language of a foreign traveller, as a deluge of civilized men rising unabatedly and driven onwards by the hand of God." When the settlers should reach the Pacific he desired them to

<sup>11</sup> *Annals of Congress*, 17 cong., 2 sess., 421, 422, 682-3, 688.

<sup>12</sup> Quoted from the *Ohio State Journal* in the *Detroit Gazette*, January 3, 1826.

<sup>13</sup> Quoted from the *Buffalo Journal* in *The Arkansas Advocate*, June 9, 1830.

“carry along with them the laws, education, and social improvements, which belong to the older states . . . worthily fulfilling the great destiny reserved for this exemplar American Republic.”<sup>14</sup>

Then came the “fabulous forties” when American buoyancy reached its highest point. Now it was that the desire for territorial expansion came out into the open, unashamed and aggressive. During this decade the Oregon question was settled, after there had been set up that “redoubtable line” of 54° 40', up to which, in the words of Benton, “all true patriots were to march! and marching, fight! and fighting, die! if need be! singing all the while, with Horace—*Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori.*”<sup>15</sup> Before the ownership of Oregon was determined there were abundant opportunities for enthusiasts to portray the inevitability of our possession and the wonders that were to follow. Benton, himself, though scorning our claim up to 54° 40', was an ardent advocate of our right to the entire valley of the Columbia. “Such a country is formed for union, wealth, and strength,” he said in a speech in 1842, which dims into dullness the most glowing prognostications of the modern chamber of commerce promoter. “It can have but one capital, and that will be a Thebes; but one commercial emporium, and that will be a Tyre, queen of cities. Such a country can have but one people, one interest, one government: and that people should be American—that interest ours—and that government republican. . . Accursed and infamous be the man that divides or alienates it!”<sup>16</sup> A year later he declared that the white race had always gone for land and, said he, “they will continue to go for it, and will go where they can get it. Europe, Asia, and America have been settled by them in this way. All the States of this Union have been so settled. The principle is founded in their nature and in God’s command; and it will continue to be obeyed.”<sup>17</sup>

It was in the debate on the termination of joint occupancy in Oregon in January, 1846, according to J. W. Pratt, that Con-

<sup>14</sup> Claude Moore Fues, *The Life of Caleb Cushing* (New York, 1923), I, 246-7.

<sup>15</sup> Benton, *Thirty Years' View*, II, 669.

<sup>16</sup> Benton, *Thirty Years' View*, II, 430.

<sup>17</sup> Benton, *Thirty Years' View*, II, 474.

gress first heard the doctrine of Manifest Destiny expressed in those exact words. Robert C. Winthrop of Massachusetts spoke of this "new revelation of right" justifying expansion over the whole continent. He apparently referred to an editorial which had recently appeared in the New York *Morning News*. The editor pushed aside all the time-honored rights to territorial possession and based our claim to Oregon on a manifest destiny originating in a divine purpose and command that we should extend far and wide the blessings of liberty and self-government.<sup>18</sup> This concise and convenient formula met with ready acceptance. We may well imagine with what gratitude it was seized upon by some of those advocates of expansion who had been troubled by secret misgivings that national aggrandizement was not a wholly altruistic ambition.

Oregon was not the only Pacific project during the forties to which this formula or a similar viewpoint might be applied. Caleb Cushing's mission to China in 1843 was undertaken, according to his own words, "in behalf of civilization." The amazing letter from President Tyler, attributed to Webster, which he bore to the Emperor of China, breathed condescension and cited "the will of Heaven" that a treaty should be the outcome of the mission.<sup>19</sup>

During this decade also the pioneer promoters of a railroad to the Pacific, like John Plumbé and Asa Whitney, were painting alluring pictures of the great development of commerce with the orient that would follow the fruition of their plans. They did not neglect to call attention to the attendant opportunities for the dissemination of the light of American civilization. Benton became a convert to the plan and made his famous speech in which he suggested that the completed line should "be adorned with its crowning honor, the colossal statue of the great Columbus, whose design it accomplishes, hewn from the granite mass of a peak of the Rocky Mountains, overlooking the road, the mountain itself the pedestal, and the statue a part

<sup>18</sup> Julius W. Pratt, "The Origin of Manifest Destiny" in *American Historical Review*, xxxii, 795-6.

<sup>19</sup> Fuess, *The Life of Caleb Cushing*, I, 414-415, 419-420.



of the mountain, pointing with outstretched arm to the western horizon, and saying to the flying passenger, 'There is the East! There is India!'"<sup>20</sup>

Last, but not least, it was during this decade that California came within the scope of practical politics and Manifest Destiny. "California," declared Benton in 1846, "become independent of Mexico by the revolt of the Picos, and independent of them by the revolt of the American settlers, had its destiny to fulfill—which was, to be handed over to the United States. So that its incorporation with the American Republic was equally sure in any and every event."<sup>21</sup> In a political letter in the same year, William H. Seward announced his belief that "Our population is destined to roll its resistless waves to the icy barriers of the North, and to encounter oriental civilization on the shores of the Pacific."<sup>22</sup>

Thus early did Seward enter upon his grandiloquent career as perhaps the most persistent exponent of the doctrine of America's unescapable and all-including destiny. To him no prospect was more exhilarating than that offered by the opportunities on the shores of the Pacific and across its waters. "The Atlantic states, through their commercial, social, and political affinities and sympathies," said he, during the debate on the admission of California in 1850, "are steadily renovating the governments and the social constitutions of Europe and of Africa. The Pacific states must necessarily perform the same sublime and beneficent functions in Asia. If, then, the American people shall remain an undivided nation, the ripening civilization of the West, after a separation growing wider and wider for four thousand years, will, in its circuit of the world, meet again and mingle with the declining civilization of the East on our own free soil, and a new and more perfect civilization will arise to bless the earth, under the sway of our own cherished and beneficent democratic institutions."<sup>23</sup> Later in

<sup>20</sup> J. P. Davis, *The Union Pacific Railway* (Chicago, 1894), 136.

<sup>21</sup> Benton, *Thirty Years' View*, II, 693.

<sup>22</sup> Frederic Bancroft, *The Life of William H. Seward* (New York, 1900), II, 470.

<sup>23</sup> G. E. Baker (ed.), *The Works of William H. Seward* (New York, 1853-1884), I, 58.

the same debate, speaking of California, he said: "She has brought us to the banks of streams which flow over precious sands, and, at the base of mountains which yield massive gold, she delivers into our hand the key that unlocks the long-coveted treasures of the eastern world. . . She invites us . . . to extend the sway of peace, of arts, and of freedom, over nations beyond the seas, still slumbering under the mingled reign of barbarian superstition and unalleviated despotism."<sup>24</sup>

Most men ceased to talk of expansion during the timid years immediately following the achievement of the great compromise, and during the troublous times after the enactment of the Kansas-Nebraska bill. The emotion of Manifest Destiny was satisfied for most Americans by the extension of our national domains to the southwest and to the Pacific. It was not so with Seward. The Pacific railroad bill, measures for the encouragement of commerce on the Pacific—any and every pertinent project was seized by him as the occasion for a panegyric on his favorite subject. He was equally capable of making his own occasion. In the Senate in 1852 he delivered his most famous prophecy concerning our destiny in the Pacific. "Even the discovery of this continent and its islands," he declared, "and the organization of society and government upon them, grand and important as these events have been, were but conditional, preliminary, and ancillary to the more sublime result, now in the act of consummation—the reunion of the two civilizations, which, having parted on the plains of Asia four thousand years ago, and having travelled ever afterward in opposite directions around the world, now meet again on the coasts and islands of the Pacific Ocean." This movement was no delusion; it was inevitable, and the benefits to Asia would be profound. "Who does not see, then," he continued, "that every year hereafter, European commerce, European politics, European thoughts, and European activity, although actually gaining greater force—and European connections, although actually becoming more intimate—will, nevertheless, relatively sink in importance; while the Pacific Ocean, its shores, its islands, and the vast

<sup>24</sup> Baker, *The Works of William H. Seward*, 1, 94.

regions beyond, will become the chief theatre of events in the world's great hereafter." <sup>25</sup>

In 1860 neither the gathering clouds of civil conflict nor the approach of the Republican nominating convention was sufficient wholly to divert Seward's gaze from the constantly enlarging vision which his crystal revealed. By this time he saw a United States covering at least all the continent of North America, with its capital in the valley of Mexico. It was in a speech at St. Paul that he presaged an event in which he was to play a leading role seven years later. "Standing here and looking far off into the northwest," he said, "I see the Russian as he busily occupies himself in establishing seaports and towns and fortifications, on the verge of the continent, as the outposts of St. Petersburg, and I can say 'Go on and build up your outposts all along the coast, up even to the Arctic Ocean—they will yet become the outposts of my own country—monuments of the civilization of the United States in the northwest.'" <sup>26</sup> Opponents of Seward at this time claimed that he was even in favor of the annexation of a part of China. One of his biographers suggests that something of the kind may have been in Seward's mind when he wrote to Cassius M. Clay in 1861 suggesting that Russia and the United States might remain good friends until they met "in regions where civilization first began." <sup>27</sup>

Professor Golder furnished us with an illustration of the impression which American push and optimism made about this time upon at least one European—one whom he identified as Rear-admiral Popov of Russia, who had been in California and Alaska. Whether this observer had read Seward's St. Paul speech or whether he merely absorbed his ideas from the spirit of the people, he wrote to his home government that Europeans might sneer at the Monroe Doctrine and Manifest Destiny, but that these doctrines were in the blood of Americans and in the air they breathed. "There are twenty millions of Americans," he wrote, in substance, "every one of them a free man and

<sup>25</sup> Baker, *The Works of William H. Seward*, I, 248-250.

<sup>26</sup> Bancroft, *The Life of William H. Seward*, II, 471.

<sup>27</sup> Bancroft, *The Life of William H. Seward*, II, 471.

filled with the idea that America is for Americans. They have taken California, Oregon, and sooner or later they will get Alaska. It is inevitable. It cannot be prevented; and it would be better to yield with good grace and cede the territory to them.”<sup>28</sup>

Seven years later the destiny foretold by Seward and Admiral Popov was fulfilled and Alaska came into the possession of the United States as if by magic and in spite of the sneers of the skeptical. One of the defenders of the purchase treaty in the Senate was Charles Sumner. He was concerned that the treaty should not be “a precedent for a system of indiscriminate and costly annexation.” Nevertheless, he sincerely believed “that republican institutions under the primacy of the United States must embrace this whole continent.” At another point in his long speech he spoke of the republic as “something more than a local policy; it is a general principle not to be forgotten when the opportunity is presented of bringing an immense region within its influence. The present treaty,” he continued, “is a visible step in the occupation of the whole North American continent. As such it will be recognized by the world and accepted by the American people. But the treaty involves something more. We dismiss one other monarch from the continent. One by one they have retired—first France, then Spain, then France again, and now Russia—all giving way to the absorbing Unity declared in the national motto, *E pluribus unum*.”<sup>29</sup>

No sooner was Alaska acquired than Seward’s active mind was contemplating new realms of destiny. The ink on the treaty was scarcely dry when he was talking of Hawaii and complaining that people were too much engrossed in domestic questions “to entertain the higher, but more remote, questions of national extension.”<sup>30</sup> But that engrossment in domestic affairs was too deep to be seriously disturbed. To be sure, the completion of the Union Pacific Railroad in 1869 occasioned a burst of national enthusiasm. Appreciation of the significance

<sup>28</sup> Frank A. Golder, “The Purchase of Alaska” in *American Historical Review*, xxv, 416.

<sup>29</sup> *The Works of Charles Sumner*, xi, 222-223, 233.

<sup>30</sup> Bancroft, *The Life of William H. Seward*, II, 489.

of that achievement as far as the Pacific was concerned was best expressed by Bret Harte when he had the western engine say to the one from the east as they met at Promontory Point:

You brag of your East! You do?  
 Why, I bring the East to you!  
 All the Orient, all Cathay,  
 Find through me the shortest way;  
 And the sun you follow here  
 Rises in my hemisphere.<sup>31</sup>

Then for more than two decades the American people were willing to let their further destiny wait while they frenziedly exploited the resources already within their reach, and while they enjoyed the new toys introduced by the industrial revolution. It was not until the decade of the nineties that there seemed a need for more worlds to conquer. Then again the islands of the Pacific became very alluring. Among the early proponents of this recrudescence of Manifest Destiny was that great expositor of the dominance of sea power, Captain A. T. Mahan. "That which we have received of the true spirit of freedom we have kept—liberty and law—not the one or the other, but both," he wrote in 1893 in an article on the importance of Hawaii to us. "In that spirit we not only have occupied our original inheritance, but also, step by step, as Rome incorporated the other nations of the peninsula, we have added to it, spreading and perpetuating everywhere the same foundation principles of free and good government. . . . And now, arrested on the south by the rights of a race wholly alien to us, and on the north by a body of states of like traditions to our own, whose freedom to choose their own affiliations we respect, we have come to the sea. . . . Have we no right or call to progress farther in any direction?" The real direction of his thoughts appeared when he said that "the annexation, even, of Hawaii would be no mere sporadic effort, irrational because disconnected from an adequate motive, but a first-fruit and a token that the nation in its evolution has aroused itself to the necessity of carrying its life—that has been the happiness of those under its influ-

<sup>31</sup> See Davis, *The Union Pacific Railway*, 155.

ence—beyond the borders which heretofore have sufficed for its activities.”

In order to safeguard and make useful an acquisition so evidently ordained, it was likewise inevitable that the United States should build an Isthmian Canal. “Land-carriage, always restricted and therefore always slow,” explained Mahan, “toils enviously but hopelessly behind, vainly seeking to replace and supplant the royal highway of Nature’s own making. Corporate interests, vigorous in that power of concentration which is the strength of armies and of minorities, may here for a while withstand the ill-organized strivings of the multitude, only dimly conscious of its wants; yet the latter, however temporarily opposed and baffled, is sure at last, like the blind force of nature, to overwhelm all that stand in the way of its necessary progress. So the Isthmian Canal is an inevitable part in the future of the United States.”<sup>32</sup>

Four years later the captain’s views had expanded and an even more glorious destiny and mission had been unfolded to him. It appeared to him then “that in the ebb and flow of human affairs, under those mysterious impulses the origin of which is sought by some in a personal Providence, by some in laws not yet fully understood, we stand at the opening of a period when the question is to be settled” whether eastern or western civilization was to dominate the world. “The great task now before the world of civilized Christianity,” he declared, “its great mission, which it must fulfil or perish, is to receive into its own bosom and raise to its own ideals those ancient and different civilizations . . . at the head of which stand China, India, and Japan.”<sup>33</sup>

Even more persuasive and literary, but less sweeping in his vision, was Mahan’s brother naval officer, Commodore George W. Melville. The dignified pages of the *North American Review* for March, 1898, carried his glowing exhortation: “But little more than a century has gone by since on the winter wind at Valley Forge, there streamed a ragged flag, the star of hope

<sup>32</sup> Alfred T. Mahan, “Hawaii and our Future Sea Power” in *Forum*, xv, 1-11.

<sup>33</sup> Alfred T. Mahan, “A Twentieth-Century Outlook” in *Harper’s Monthly*, xcvi, 527.

to the stern soldiery whose bare and bleeding feet reddened the snow as they guarded it there. In the generations that have passed, that flag, with the clustering memories not only of victory by land and sea, but of many a year of happy peace, has swept from ocean to ocean.

Shall a noble destiny lead it still farther on, as  
Bright on the banner of lily and rose,  
Lo, the last sun of our century sets?

Shall its purpose hold," he further inquired, "to follow the pathway of the stars, 'to sail beyond the sunset,' and floating over Hawaii in mid-Pacific to guard the golden shore of the Republic and to win a new glory on that wide sea?"<sup>34</sup>

Contemporaneously Charles Denby Jr. sounded a similar note concerning the Orient, with his major emphasis less disguised. "America may attempt to evade the responsibility thrust upon her," he asserted. "She may, with shortsighted resolution, turn her face away from her great future, but she will not succeed. The markets of the Orient are the heritage of her merchants, and the time will inevitably come when the voice of the Republic will be heard in oriental courts with the same accent of authority as in the commonwealths of South America. It would be well if the certainty of this destiny could be recognized before European statesmanship has barred the way with 'vested interests'."<sup>35</sup>

Within a few months after the last two exhortations were printed, war with Spain was declared and the United States was launched on her career as a world power, with island dominions in both great oceans. It needs not to be shown in this presence how Manifest Destiny was now pressed into the service of imperial policy, especially with regard to the Philippines. "The war has brought us new duties and responsibilities," proclaimed President McKinley, "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

<sup>34</sup> George W. Melville, "Our Duty on the Pacific—What We Have There to Hold and Win" in *North American Review*, CLXVI, 296.

<sup>35</sup> C. Denby Jr., "America's Opportunity in Asia" in *North American Review*, CLXVI, 35.

the high command and pledge of civilization. Incidental to our tenure in the Philippines is the commercial opportunity to which American statesmanship cannot be indifferent." Our own E. D. Adams slyly paraphrased this sentiment to read "God directs us – perhaps it will pay."<sup>36</sup> William Allen White seems to have been caught up in the emotional fervor of the period. In his *Emporia Gazette* he exclaimed: "It is the Anglo-saxon's manifest destiny to go forth as a world conqueror. He will take possession of the islands of the sea. . . This is what fate holds for the chosen people. It is so written. . . It is so to be."<sup>37</sup>

Even this sketchy recital would be inadequate if it neglected to quote more fully from that classic gem – Albert J. Beveridge's maiden speech in the United States Senate on January 9, 1900 – from which an excerpt was read at the beginning of this paper. "We will not renounce our part in the mission of the race, trustee, under God, of the civilization of the world," he insisted, speaking of our retention of control in the Philippines. "He has made us adepts in government that we may administer government among savages and senile peoples. . . And of all our race He has marked the American people as His chosen nation to finally lead in the regeneration of the world. This is the divine mission of America, and it holds for us all the profit, all the glory, all the happiness possible to man. . . What shall history say of us? Shall it say that we renounced that holy trust, left the savage to his base condition, the wilderness to the reign of waste, deserted duty, abandoned glory, forgot our sordid profit even, because we feared our strength and read the charter of our powers with the doubter's eye and the quibbler's mind? Shall it say that, called by events to captain and command the proudest, ablest, purest race in history in history's noblest work, we declined that great commission?"<sup>38</sup>

<sup>36</sup> Ephraim D. Adams, *The Power of Ideals in American History* (New Haven, 1913), 92.

<sup>37</sup> Helen O. Mahin (ed.), *The Editor and his People* (New York, 1924), 305. In a footnote supplied by Mr. White his comment in 1924 is: "The squawk of the hard-boiled chicken that has not pipped the shell."

<sup>38</sup> *Congressional Record*, 56 cong., 1 sess., 704, 711.



This survey of the application of the doctrine of Manifest Destiny to the Pacific would seem to demand a fervid peroration. Such a task is beyond the powers or imagination of the writer. Let him who wishes speculate as to the next occasion that shall cause this emotion to find expression in the halls of Congress and the pages of our press. Let him who can tell us whether the American's sense of humor or his fairness to Providence will make such utterances less probable in the future.

It is perhaps fitting that we should close with reverential words written two decades ago by the great historian of our Pacific Coast, Hubert Howe Bancroft. "Were we as ready as were our forefathers to see the hand of Providence in the affairs of men, some things might be accounted for which must now await further accession of wisdom," he wrote in his time of retrospection, as he surveyed the course of events on these western shores. "In our ignorance we might ask, for example, what possible connection could there be between a Yankee fur-trader on the Northwest Coast of America in the year 1792, the federal congress at Philadelphia, and a Corsican adventurer seeking advancement in the streets of Paris. Or, again, what could black cannibals in the jungles of Africa, or whilom importations thence in Georgia and Alabama, or the visit of a future president to Florida have to do with the late possessions of the king of Spain, or in establishing the southern limits and frontage on the Pacific of an Anglo-saxon commonwealth in the wilds of America. And yet, enlightened by wisdom from on high, one might answer, It is the Invisible Architect of the Republic, his finger pointing out where the corner stones shall be laid, corners so wide apart, so utterly at variance, that only the eye of omniscience may trace the lines of their connection."

Again Bancroft said: "The star of empire leading westward; the star of empire which we have followed from Holland, from England, across the continent, across the Pacific sinks now as we approach the threshold of the ancient East, while we find ourselves still holding fast to our traditions."<sup>39</sup> While we may

<sup>39</sup> Hubert Howe Bancroft, *Retrospection, Political and Personal* (New York, 1912), I, 13.

lack something of his faith, these words hold for us a challenge to separate the genuine idealism from the all too evident jingoism in our great American emotion of Manifest Destiny.

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