

KNOTTY PROBLEMS OF THE PHILIPPINES.

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WITH startling suddenness we have acquired an unexpected and unsought interest in the Eastern question. A few months ago we were rather enjoying the stew into which events in China had thrown our neighbors over the water, and were congratulating ourselves that our interests were not involved. There has been a kaleidoscopic change of conditions in the far East, and to-day *we*, of all people, find ourselves the center of attraction, with a fair prospect of acquiring a whole archipelago as to the desirability of which we are in doubt. Our misgivings on the latter point do not seem to be shared by all the powers, and a sharp eye is kept on us, in the apparent hope that a false move on our part may afford a pretext for interference, and end in a distribution of the spoils.

The situation is certainly unique, and one of its most curious features is the remarkable change which has come over the opinions of many of our people as to the wisdom of our attempting to hold distant colonial possessions. It is but a short time since we should have been well-nigh unanimous in our condemnation of such a policy. Now public opinion is divided.

One thing seems tolerably certain. The issue before us is a new one, and if it is to be settled intelligently, it must be settled on its merits. For this reason especial interest attaches to the problems arising from existing conditions in the Philippines.

It must not be forgotten that even with all the larger Philippine ports in our possession we shall still be very far from having taken the islands; but we have already destroyed what authority previously existed there, and we must now either go forward or retreat. Things cannot be allowed to remain indefinitely in their present condition.

Can we, then, withdraw, and restore the islands to Spain? To do so would be to stultify ourselves in the eyes of the world. We have gone to war in order to put a stop to Spain's brutality in Cuba, and we have taken the position that this end can only be accomplished by her expulsion from the island. We have turned a deaf ear to her

promises of better things in future, and have said to her that she must go.

But the Cubans have not been the only Spanish subjects to suffer oppression. By a strange chance we have it in our power to strike the shackles from other millions of unfortunates. What, then, are we to do? Has not every crime against civilization in Cuba been duplicated in the Philippines a hundred times? If the taxes levied upon the Philippine natives in the past have been heavier than they could bear, how would it be now, with the mother-country burdened with debt as never before? Granting for the moment that Spain would be able to reconquer the islands, what would be the fate of the thousands of natives who have revolted against her? Have we any reason to doubt that other scores would be "forgotten" in the Black Hole until they suffocated? that other hundreds would be lined up on the seawall in front of the Luneta, and shot down like dogs, while the bands were playing and fair women applauding?

Is it an answer to say that Cuba is near, and the Philippines are distant? How many degrees of latitude and longitude measure the difference between right and wrong? True, we might have thought it hopeless to attempt the improvement of conditions in the Philippines, had not fate placed the power in our hands. Granted, if you will, that we cannot right the wrongs of all oppressed nations, yet can we refuse to accept the responsibility which the logic of events has thrust upon us? Can we say to Spain: "We will have no more of your misrule in Cuba, but the Philippines are a long way off; take them back again, and be sure to treat them well"? If we were to do this, could we blame our cynical neighbors for suggesting that our interest in putting a stop to misgovernment seemed to wane when the territory concerned did not happen to be conveniently situated for annexation to our own? It seems almost unthinkable that we should ever put ourselves in such a position; but if we were disposed to do so, another question would arise. Is it in our power to restore the islands to Spain? The islanders themselves would hardly be willing parties

to such a transaction. Is it probable that she could again subdue them? Her conquest of the archipelago began in 1565, under Legaspi. It should not be forgotten that in the centuries which have passed she has not been able to complete it. At the outbreak of the present revolution there were tribes as independent of her as they were the day Magellan set foot on Cebu.

Up to the present time Spain has been able to maintain certain great advantages over the natives. She has purposely kept them in ignorance, has prevented them from communicating freely with one another, has "removed" men who showed capacity and inclination to become leaders, and has, above all, prevented the bringing in of firearms and ammunition. Now much of this is rapidly being changed. Existing conditions are developing leaders. Many modern arms are in the hands of the insurgents, and the rank and file have learned that they can fight Spanish regulars, and whip them. If hard pressed, the native troops could take to the mountains, where white troops could not follow them, and could carry on a guerrilla warfare indefinitely.

In view, then, of the improbability that Spain would be able to regain her lost possessions in the far East, should she have the opportunity, and of the still greater improbability that the opportunity will be extended to her, it seems to me tolerably safe to assume that the Philippines are about to pass from under her control forever.

But can we not withdraw and leave the civilized natives to work out their own salvation? There can hardly be two answers to this question, for their utter unfitness for self-government at the present time is self-evident. If, with their lack of education and experience, they are incapable of governing themselves, much less could they keep their savage neighbors in order, suppress brigandage and piracy, and resist the encroachments of foreign powers. There could be but one result were they to make the attempt. Numerous leaders would arise, each with his own following. Anarchy would soon follow, and abundant excuse would be afforded for outside interference. European powers would intervene to protect the interests of their subjects, and in order better to attain this end would annex the islands.

I have attempted to show that we have already gone too far to retreat; yet there are many possibilities before us. We may meet with active opposition from other countries in our efforts to establish our

authority, and see the islands parceled out among the powers. We may think it wise to surrender them to some other nation, or combination of nations, in return for concessions in other parts of the world. It may seem best to retain them ourselves, or to stand by them until they are able to maintain their independence under a stable government of their own. What the outcome will be no man can at present foretell. It suffices me to enumerate the possibilities, since in so doing it is made evident that the Philippine Islands are about to pass under the control of some other nation than Spain.

For my present purpose it is immaterial what nation this may be. Certain problems must be faced, and it is with these problems that I am concerned.

The first serious obstacle that will be encountered is that presented by the climate. The islands lie wholly within the tropics, and extend on the south to within four and a half degrees of the equator. The heat is trying at the best. Personally I have found the burning sun of the dry season less hard to bear than the "muggy" weather, when bright sunshine alternates with heavy showers, or the rain falls day after day without interruption. One often reads of delightful days and cool nights in the fall and winter months. After spending three and a half years in almost constant travel through the archipelago, and visiting every one of the larger islands except Leyte, I can say that I have never yet seen a day when a man could endure hard physical labor without suffering from the heat. I have experienced the hot season, the dry season, the wet season, but never yet have I been so fortunate as to strike the *cool* season.

Manila is the only place where reliable temperature records have been kept; and while no one place can be taken as representative of the whole archipelago, the results obtained at the capital are not without interest. The average temperature for January is 77°, for February 78°, for March 81°, for April 83°, for May 84°, for June 82°, for July 81°, for August 81°, for September 81°, for October 80°, for November 79°, and for December 77°.

The average temperature for the year at Manila is 80°. It will be noted that the lowest average temperature occurs in December and January, and is 77°. The "delightful season in the autumn, when the atmosphere is clear and dry, and the temperature ranges from about 67° to 75° F.," has not as yet

been discovered by the scientists at the Jesuit observatory.

The lowest temperature during the year is 60°, and the highest 100°. There is no month in which the thermometer does not rise as high as 91°. When it is remembered that the air is charged with moisture much of the time, it will be realized that the climate of Manila leaves some things to be desired.

On the other hand, it should not be forgotten that the lack of sudden changes makes it possible to adapt one's dress to these conditions. There are many places in the islands where relief from the heat of the lowlands might be obtained by taking up one's abode on high ground, while the monsoons, blowing through a considerable part of the year, help to make the heat endurable, if one lives where their effect can be felt.

More serious than the heat is the malaria. Some islands are entirely free from it. Others are veritable pest-holes. There are malarial fevers which recur every third day, every second day, and daily. There is a malignant type,—fortunately, local in its occurrence,—which runs its course in a very few hours, usually terminating with black vomit and death.

It has been shown, however, that much of the illness from malaria is due to causes that can be remedied. Before the day of General Arolas, Sulu was a fever-center. By improving the drainage, and filling in with coral sand, he bettered the health of his town, until at the time of his departure the death-rate compared favorably with that of any of the larger European cities. Still more significant were the results obtained at Tataän, in Tawi Tawi. The troops stationed there suffered terribly from fever until an enterprising *comandante* cleaned up the place, and caused the forest to be cleared away for half a mile around the blockhouse, when fever almost disappeared.

But, taking things as they exist, a sufficient commentary on the conclusion that "the climate is not unhealthful, even in summer," is afforded by the following statement, which rests on good authority: "About eight years ago, General Manager Higgins of the Manila and Dapitan Railway, having secured a concession from the Spanish government, organized in London a party of about forty Englishmen—civil engineers and others—who were to survey the route and build and afterward assist in the operation and management of the railroad. Mr. Higgins gave special attention to the physical condition of

his assistants, selecting only men that he believed could stand the severe climate of the archipelago. To-day not more than half the members of that party are alive."

As regards the general health of the country, it may be mentioned that smallpox is always present, though it does not become epidemic, apparently because so large a percentage of the population have it during childhood that the number who have not been infected to be found at any one time is comparatively small.

Epidemics of cholera are rare, but when they occur it is very difficult to check the spread of the disease. The natives believe that a black dog runs down the village street, and the cholera follows in his wake. "It is the will of God," and they will take no precautions. The epidemic of 1888 broke out at an isolated military outpost, where not more than sixty men were stationed, but it swept over the greater part of the archipelago. The bubonic plague has never appeared in the islands.

If a man has a sound constitution to begin with, is careful of his diet, keeps out of the sun during the heat of the day, avoids severe and long-continued physical labor, and is fortunate enough to escape malarial infection, he may spend many years in the Philippines without taking harm. I knew an old Spaniard who, after thirty-nine years of continuous residence there, was able to boast that he had not experienced a day of sickness.

Women and children feel the effects of the climate much more quickly than men, and unless one were able to choose his place of residence he would hardly care to take his family there. It is, I think, probable that the attempt to bring up successive generations of white children in the Philippines would result in failure, as it has in India.

The main problems requiring solution, however, are those presented by the people themselves. There is much misapprehension in this country both as to the character of the population and the extent to which it was under Spanish control at the outbreak of the present revolt. This misunderstanding is due, in large measure, to the picturesque inaccuracy of many of the statements which have recently appeared. It should not be supposed, for instance, that "Spanish rule is practically confined to narrow sea-coast strips," and that "the great bulk of the territory is unsubdued and undeveloped, and inhabited by the original savage Negritos, who roam the islands unmolested."

The Negritos are, as their name indicates, a race of small blacks. They are believed to be the aborigines of the archipelago. Far from occupying the bulk of its territory, they are all but extinct. They may still be occasionally met in the mountains of Luzon, Negros, and Mindanao, but during my entire stay in the islands I saw them only once.

Spanish rule in Mindanao is confined to narrow strips of territory along the coasts and the more important rivers, and the Moslem population of Basilan, Sulu, and Tawi Tawi is virtually independent. Wild Malay tribes are found in some parts of Luzon, Negros, and Mindanao, and probably also in the mountains of Panay and Samar. They people the whole of Mindoro and Palawan, except a few points along the coast, but the remainder of the important islands have until recently been completely under Spanish control.

For the purposes of the present discussion, I divide the population into independent and subject tribes. Under independent tribes I include the Negritos, the Mohammedan Malays, and the pagan Malays. As the number of Negritos is very small, and their birth-rate is below their death-rate, they need not be considered.

The Mohammedan tribes of the southern islands, of whom I shall speak collectively as *Moros*, cannot be so lightly passed over. They are very brave and warlike, and are well provided with excellent steel weapons. Thus far the Spanish have fortunately succeeded in preventing their getting any very large number of firearms. They are a race of born pirates, and, particularly in Sulu, have a fanatical hatred of all Christians. To kill a Christian, especially a *Spanish* Christian, is with them a most commendable act. For the past twenty years the Spaniards have succeeded in keeping them at home, but further than this their control has not gone.

Pagan Malays form the wild population of the northern islands. Of the independent tribes known to inhabit Mindanao, seventeen are pagan and six Mohammedan. One tribe in Luzon is addicted to head-hunting at a certain season of the year, and others are said to be warlike; but as a rule the pagan peoples are perfectly harmless, so long as they are decently treated. That they are not always so treated the following incident will show.

Before going among the Montéses in Negros, my companion and I were warned that they were dangerous, and advised to take an escort of troops. This we declined

to do. One of our Spanish friends accompanied us into the mountains. He carried a shot-gun, and I saw him eying the bushes sharply. In reply to a query from me, he said he was looking for a Montés. I asked him why, and he replied that he wanted to put fine shot into one, *and see him run!* He assured me that he had often diverted himself in this way. Under the circumstances, I could hardly have blamed one of his former victims for trying a shot at us with a poisoned arrow.

Taken as a whole, then, the pagan tribes may be said to present no serious problem except the one involved in their ultimate civilization. The results of the few half-hearted attempts that have been made in this direction have been such as to convince me that they might make rapid progress, as soon as the condition of the civilized natives could be sufficiently improved to afford a practical illustration of the benefits of civilization. At present the pagan tribes consider themselves to be the ones who are better off, and I am bound to say I believe they are right.

With the *Moros* it is a different matter. It is certain that they will return to their old ways at once, if opportunity offers. They must be kept at home at all hazards, and to this end an efficient patrol of light-draft gunboats, armed with machine-guns, must be maintained along the coast of Mindanao and westward to Borneo. The number of vessels need not be large, but they should be kept moving.

The Sulu *Moros* should be given a lesson that they would not soon forget. They are an intractable, bloodthirsty set, quite capable of turning against those who befriend them. The simplest way to control them would be to disarm them, and forbid them to carry weapons. They would not submit without resistance. Fortunately, their island is so small, and the nature of the ground is such, that effective operations could be carried on against them with a comparatively small force.

The *Moros* in Mindanao have in the past been kindly disposed toward Englishmen and Americans. We lived in their villages and moved about among them without serious risk. There is at least a chance that if fairly and judiciously treated they might eventually be converted into decent people. If they chose to make trouble, it would be impossible for white troops to operate against them in the interior, under existing conditions.

Weyer sent in an expedition against them

while we were at Zamboanga, and we saw the wreck of it come back. I do not care to see the like again. Although numerous glorious victories were celebrated in Manila, one of his officers told us that they never got where the enemy were, and that eighty per cent. of the force were disabled by fever and starvation. Certain it is that men died at Zamboanga faster than the priests could shrive them; this, too, in spite of the fact that the force was chiefly composed of native troops. The starvation was inexcusable, but the fever was inevitable.

Hostile Moros could at least be driven into the interior, and kept there until such time as roads were constructed, so that effective operations could be carried on against them. As a matter of fact, good order has been maintained in the vicinity of the Spanish settlements in Mindanao, and the force of troops kept in the island has not been large.

We must consider next the civilized natives, the people of mixed race, and the foreigners. If we except the Spanish friars, the only foreigners whose presence in the country affords any serious problem are the Chinese. They form an important, and at present a necessary, element in the population. In Manila alone they number some forty thousand. In the larger cities there are a few coolies, but the great majority of the Chinese are in business. Traders push into the remotest districts to buy up agricultural and forest products, while every tiny native village has its Chinese shop. The retail business of the Philippines is almost entirely in their hands.

As a class they are industrious, sober, and law-abiding; but in business they are altogether too sharp for the native, who, accordingly, hates them very cordially, and in the past has on several occasions displayed a tendency to cut their throats. It is difficult to see how he would get on without them, however.

The native women do not seem to share the dislike of the men. At all events, the Chinese have no difficulty in procuring native wives or mistresses. The extensive Chinese mestizo class which results is an important one, and many of the shrewdest business men in the islands belong to it.

From a variety of causes there has also arisen a Spanish mestizo class, which, while numerically small, is still very important. Its members are despised by the Spaniards, and are ranked by them with the natives, but among their number may be found many men of superior intelligence, and not a few

who have contrived to obtain a fair education. They are more restless under adverse conditions than the comparatively stolid natives, and there is perhaps some poetic justice in the fact that their enmity is often especially directed against the friars, who are chiefly responsible for their existence. The leaders in the present revolt come largely from the Spanish mestizo class.

The people of mixed blood and the civilized natives really compose the bulk of the population, and for our present purpose may be treated as one class.

In characterizing them I shall quote the opinion of a former British consul at Manila, not only because I agree with him, but because I wish to make plain the fact that my good opinion of them does not lack for confirmation: "Rarely is an intratropical people a satisfactory one to eye or mind. But this cannot be said of the Philippine Malay, who, in bodily formation and mental characteristics alike, may fairly claim a place, not among the middling ones merely, but among the higher names inscribed on the world's national scale. He is characterized by a concentrated, never-absent self-respect; an habitual self-restraint in word and deed, very rarely broken, except when extreme provocation induces the transitory but fatal frenzy known as 'amuck'; an inbred courtesy, equally diffused through all classes, high or low; by unflinching decorum, prudence, caution, quiet, cheerfulness, ready hospitality, and a correct though not inventive taste. His family is a pleasing sight—much subordination and little constraint, unison in gradation, liberty, not license. Orderly children, respected parents, women subject but not oppressed, men ruling but not despotic, reverence with kindness, obedience in affection—these form a lovable picture by no means rare in the villages of the Eastern isles."

By centuries of oppression and injustice this naturally gentle and peace-loving people has been driven into armed revolt, and one of the first problems which must be faced will be the restoration of order and the disbanding of the insurgents.

Unfortunately, in spite of his many amiable qualities, there is nothing quite so dear to the heart of the Philippine native as a little authority over his fellows. He believes himself quite capable of administering the affairs of his country, and his past experience naturally tends to make him suspicious of outsiders. It will require no little tact to allay his fears, and persuade

him to go quietly about his own affairs; but with care this can probably be accomplished.

Failure to win the confidence of the insurgents would be a serious matter, for if any considerable number of them should take to the mountains, they could cause much trouble before they were run down. I believe, however, that their natural indisposition to exert themselves unnecessarily would result in their eventual submission, if they were not given good ground for continuing to resist.

Yet, if there were a disposition readily to submit to the new régime, the establishment of a stable form of government adapted to the needs of such a population would not be a simple matter, especially for a nation which has no trained body of men ready to undertake the task. Still, the problem is perhaps not quite so hopeless as it might at first seem. Things would at the outset naturally be under the direction of army men, and civil authority would very gradually take the place of military rule.

The worst troubles with the Spanish system of administration have arisen from the way in which it was carried out rather than from inherent defects in the system itself, and it might again be put in force, with its more objectionable features modified. If this were done, much help might be obtained from native and mestizo clerks. Few Spaniards have cared to do more of their own work than was absolutely necessary, and for the most part they have turned it over to clerks. These men have often held their places for years. They possess a familiarity with the details of administration which would be of great service.

Reforms should be begun at once, and one of the first should be a material reduction in the extortionate taxes which have in the past been levied on the long-suffering inhabitants. Such a measure would be certain to produce a favorable impression, and would go far toward giving the natives confidence in the new administration.

In order to strengthen this confidence, a part of the funds raised by taxation should be expended in local improvements, such as the building of roads and the establishment of schools.

Another much-needed reform would be the provision of a simple but comprehensive and effective code of laws. The name of the existing codes is legion, and a lawsuit under any one of them is the worst misfortune that can befall a man. A precedent can be found for anything; bribery is uni-

versal, and justice virtually unknown. Let the native once find out that he has rights before the law, and he will begin to regard the law with some respect.

As a rule the civilized natives are orderly, and the most serious problem which the representatives of law and order would have to face would be the suppression of brigandage. There have always existed, in the northern islands, bands of *tulisanes*, or professional bandits. Sometimes they establish permanent headquarters in inaccessible places, and again they live scattered among the honest villagers, assembling only when they have some devilry on hand. Their ranks are recruited in part from the criminal classes, in part by the addition of men who have been driven by bitter wrongs to turn against the existing order of things. They are often led by men supposed to be possessed of *anting anting*, or charms which make them bullet-proof and give them various other miraculous properties. These *tulisanes* descend on defenseless people, and plunder, kill, and carry off prisoners to be held for ransom. As a rule they are desperate cowards, but some of their operations occasionally show daring. During my stay they kidnapped a priest in the very streets of Manila.

In the past, when the *guardia civil* has succeeded in hunting them down, they have usually been acquitted, or, if convicted, have soon managed to effect a mysterious escape, while the presiding *alcaldes* have suddenly become wealthy.

At the close of the present war these bands of *tulisanes* will doubtless be augmented by the riffraff of the insurgent forces. They have been so long accustomed to having their own way that they will be overbold. A vigorous policy in dealing with them would have a very wholesome effect. In operations against them, and so far as possible in all operations in the archipelago, native troops should be used. When well drilled and well led they make excellent soldiers. A convenient way to dispose of a part of the insurgent forces would be to retain them in service under white officers. It is perhaps worth while to note, in this connection, that in recent operations about Manila native troops have, in at least one instance, remained true when Spanish soldiers mutinied.

The wide-spread ignorance which prevails in the Philippines is one of the most important problems demanding solution. Many of the natives are quick to learn, and are anxious for the opportunity, so that their

education reduces itself to a question of ways and means. A school system is provided for by the Spanish law, but favoritism prevails in the choice of teachers, who are often grossly incompetent, while the practical working of the schools is frequently interfered with by the friars. The law provides that Spanish shall be taught; but as it suits their convenience, in the more out-of-the-way places, to be the only means of communication between government and natives, they often forbid this. A few prayers and a little writing and arithmetic comprise the course of instruction in many of the schools.

The relation of the friars to the free-school system naturally leads to the consideration of a very important question, which I approach with hesitation, not only because of the danger of giving offense, but on account of the risk of creating a false impression. It would be idle, however, to treat of the problems of the Philippines without discussing the predominance of the friars, and the character of their influence.

A clear distinction should be drawn at the outset between the *friars* and the *priests*, a fact which is too often lost sight of in considering the religious question in the Philippines. Some of the priests have accomplished an immense amount of good. Take, for instance, the Jesuits. Their Ateneo Municipal at Manila is, with possibly one exception, the best educational institution in the archipelago, and numbers among its faculty many able and competent men. For some reason, which does not appear, the Jesuits are allowed to carry on missionary work only in the Moro country, where they must propagate their faith at the risk of their lives. The priests of their mission are often very superior men, and I am glad to be able to testify, as the result of personal observation, not only to the absence of the abuses which I have seen elsewhere, but to the fact that much good is accomplished.

On the other hand, many of the parishes in the Philippines are under *friars*, who would not be allowed to hold such charges in any other country. While it is by no means true that all of these friars are incompetent or depraved, it is nevertheless a fact that many of them are ignorant beyond belief; are given over to open and brutish licentiousness; practise inhuman extortion, especially in connection with the solemnizing of marriage and the burial of the dead; interfere with the execution of the laws, and themselves openly violate them when it serves their ends to do so. The inevitable

result is the utter demoralization of the communities which they control. There is no doubt that their evil practices have contributed as much as any other one cause toward bringing about the present revolution, and one of the demands of the insurgents has been that they should be expelled from the country.

The unwisdom of making an exception in the Philippines, and allowing these friars to hold parishes there, would seem to have been sufficiently demonstrated. It is inconceivable that the church which in this country produces some of our best citizens should remain indifferent to the conditions which exist in the Philippines, when once they become known; and if it will but help in the application of suitable remedies, it may certainly look forward to a bright future in this hitherto unhappy country.

It is nevertheless true that there exists a large class which has suffered at the hands of the friars wrongs that it is not human to forget. Provision should be made for these people, and the other churches will find among them, as well as among the more docile of the pagan tribes, abundant occupation for all the men they can throw into the field.

The development of the enormous natural resources of the archipelago affords a problem which will richly repay solution. The wonderful fertility of the soil, the immense wealth in forest products, and the presence of valuable and extensive mineral deposits are matters of common knowledge. The difficulties which will be encountered are the lack of means of communication and transportation, the severity of the climate, and the trouble in securing labor.

The first of these difficulties will doubtless disappear before many years. As a result of the second, it may be accepted as a fact that heavy work cannot be performed by white men. Unfortunately, the native is too much of a philosopher to make an entirely satisfactory laborer. He works when he is obliged to, and rests when he can afford to. Nature has done so much for him that he finds it practicable to rest much of the time. Whether he will develop industry under improved conditions remains to be seen.

While the problems of the Philippines are neither few nor simple, there is, in my judgment, little doubt that the nation which successfully attempts their solution will find the game well worth the candle. Are *we* competent to attack them? If not, to what more competent nation shall we turn them over?