

"I am not pleading against the duke of Lauzun who was first on the walls of La Rochelle, nor against the duke who took 12 cannons from the Dutch at Utrecht, nor against the duke who captured two standards from the English at Fontenoy; I am pleading against the duke of Lauzun who never captured anything in his life except my box at the opera." It seems to me that this is the whole thing in a nutshell. In spite of warnings coming from all sides, the aristocracy would not see what was going on around them and what was slowly, but surely, coming. The great preacher Massillon, 90 years before the revolution, predicted the downfall of the nobles, but they took no heed. Voltaire and Jean Jacques Rousseau, 70 years later, wrote books. The latter wrote one that was called "The Social Contract." The aristocracy laughed at it and called it a mere theory; but, as Carlyle once said in his own brutal way: "Their skins went to bind the second edition of that book," their land was put up to auction, and the people acquired it. The aristocracy ceased to be a power in the country.

Before the revolution the French peasant was a sort of wild animal, dark, livid, burnt with the sun, bound to the soil, which he dug and stirred with unflagging patience. At night he retired to his den and fed on black bread, water and roots. No wonder that Mme. de Sevigne was able to exclaim: "These people save other men the trouble of sowing, digging and reaping, and deserve not to lack of that bread which they have grown." To-day the French peasant lives in his own cottage and cultivates his own field. His ideal of life is the independence which is the fruit of labor and economy.

AGUINALDO.

For The Public.

A brave young patriot of heroic brand,
Who seems devoted to his native land—
Long may he live to guide that land aright,
In tranquil peace or in the torrid fight;
In council or in battle may he be
Ever victorious and forever free,
And may he lead his people out of strife
To law and liberty and placid life.

CHARLES J. BEATTIE.

THE PHILIPPINE TANGLE.

Extract from an article with the above title, by Prof. William James, of Harvard university, published by the Evening Transcript, of Boston, Mass., dated March 1.

What was only vaguely apprehended is now clear with a definiteness that is startling indeed. Here was a people towards whom we felt no ill will, against whom we had not even a slanderous rumor to bring; a people for whose tenacious struggle against their Spanish oppressors we have for years

past spoken (so far as we spoke of them at all) with nothing but admiration and sympathy. Here was a leader who, as the Spanish lies about him, on which we were fed so long, drop off, and as the truth gets more and more known, appears as an exceptionally fine specimen of the patriot and national hero; not only daring, but honest; not only a fighter, but a governor and organizer of extraordinary power. Here were the precious beginnings of an indigenous national life, with which, if we had any responsibilities to these islands at all, it was our first duty to have squared ourselves. Aguinaldo's movement was, and evidently deserved to be, an ideal popular movement, which as far as it had time to exist was showing itself "fit" to survive and likely to become a healthy piece of national self-development. It was all we had to build on, at any rate, so far—if we had any desire not to succeed to the Spaniards' inheritance of native excretion.

And what did our administration do? So far as the facts have leaked out, it issued instructions to the commanders on the ground simply to freeze Aguinaldo out, as a dangerous rival, with whom all compromising entanglement was sedulously to be avoided by the great Yankee business concern. We were not to "recognize" him, we were to deny him all account of our intentions; and in general to refuse any account of our intentions to anybody, except to declare in abstract terms their "benevolence," until the inhabitants, without a pledge of any sort from us, should turn over their country into our hands. Our president's bouffe-proclamation was the only thing vouchsafed: "We are here for your own good; therefore unconditionally surrender to our tender mercies, or we'll blow you into kingdom come."

Our own people meanwhile were vaguely uneasy, for the inhuman callousness and insult shown at Paris and Washington to the officially delegated mouthpieces of the wants and claims of the Filipinos seemed simply abominable from any moral point of view. But there must be reasons of state, we assumed, and good ones. Aguinaldo is evidently a pure adventurer "on the make," a blackmailer, sure in the end to betray our confidence, or our government wouldn't treat him so, for our president is essentially methodical and moral. Mr. McKinley must be in an intolerably perplexing situation, and we must not criticise him too soon. We assumed this, I say, though all the while there was a horribly suspicious

look about the performance. On its face it reeked of the infernal adroitness of the great department store, which has reached perfect expertness in the art of killing silently and with no public squealing or commotion the neighboring small concern.

But that small concern, Aguinaldo, apparently not having the proper American business education, and being uninstructed on the irresistible character of our republican party combine, neither offered to sell out nor to give up. So the administration had to show its hand without disguise. It did so at last. We are now openly engaged in crushing out the sacred thing in this great human world—the attempt of a people long enslaved to attain to the possession of itself, to organize its laws and government, to be free to follow its internal destinies according to its own ideals. War, said Moltke, aims at destruction, and at nothing else. And splendidly are we carrying out war's ideals. We are destroying the lives of these islanders by the thousand, their villages and their cities; for surely it is we who are solely responsible for all the incidental burnings that our operations entail. But these destructions are the smallest part of our sins. We are destroying down to the root every germ of a healthy national life in these unfortunate people, and we are surely helping to destroy for one generation at least their faith in God and man. No life shall you have, we say, except as a gift from our philanthropy after your unconditional submission to our will. So as they seem to be "slow pay" in the matter of submission, our yellow journals have abundant time in which to raise new monuments of capitals to the victories of Old Glory, and in which to extol the unrestrainable eagerness of our brave soldiers to rush into battles that remind them so much of rabbit hunts on western plains.

It is horrible, simply horrible. Surely there cannot be many born and bred Americans who, when they look at the bare fact of what we are doing, the fact taken all by itself, do not feel this, and do not blush with burning shame at the unspeakable meanness and ignominy of the trick? * * * *

Shall it not in so far forth be execrated by ourselves? Shall the unsophisticated verdict upon its hideousness which the plain moral sense pronounces avail nothing to stem the torrent of mere empty "bigness" in our destiny, before which it is said we must all knock under, swallowing our higher sentiments with a gulp? The issue is perfectly plain at last. We are cold-

bloodedly, wantonly and abominably destroying the soul of a people who never did us an atom of harm in their lives. It is bald, brutal piracy, impossible to dish up any longer in the cold pot-grease of President McKinley's cant at the recent Boston banquet—surely as shamefully evasive a speech, considering the right of the public to know definite facts, as can often have fallen even from a professional politician's lips. The worst of our imperialists is that they do not themselves know where sincerity ends and insincerity begins. Their state of consciousness is so new, so mixed of primitively human passions and, in political circles, of calculations that are anything but primitively human; so at variance, moreover, with their former mental habits; and so empty of definite data and contents; that they face various ways at once, and their portraits should be taken with a squint. One reads the president's speech with a strange feeling—as if the very words were squinting on the page.

The impotence of the private individual, with imperialism under full headway as it is, is deplorable indeed. But every American has a voice or a pen, and may use it. So, impelled by my own sense of duty, I write these present words. One by one we shall creep from cover, and the opposition will organize itself. If the Filipinos hold out long enough, there is a good chance (the canting game being already pretty well played out, and the piracy having to show itself henceforward naked) of the older American beliefs and sentiments coming to their rights again, and of the administration being terrified into a conciliatory policy towards the native government.

NATIONALIZING THE TELEPHONE IN ENGLAND.

According to cable dispatches in the daily papers from London the government has announced its intention to engage in the telephone business, and an appropriation of \$10,000,000 has been asked for the purpose of beginning the work. The details of the government's policy have not been given in the meager dispatches alluded to, but it may be taken for granted from the enthusiastic support which the proposition received in parliament that the enterprise will be given a fair trial by the government. The attitude of the National company in England to-day is somewhat similar to that of the Bell company in this country at the time of the expiration of the fundamental Bell patents. Equally arrogant and hostile to the public, they command little re-

spect and no sympathy in their trial. In this country the result of the policy of the old Bell monopoly is plainly seen in the encouragement that is everywhere extended to independent enterprises. Judging from the expressions of opinion in the English press, the same condition would confront the National company if the field had been thrown open to competition. Whatever the plans of the government may be, it is safe to assume that the public will welcome any change that will promise relief from the obnoxious corporation which now controls the field.—Western Electrician of March 18.

THE TALE OF A FROG WHO LOST HIS TAIL.

For The Public.

I sing of a frog, once a polliwog,
Who his loss did thus bewail:
"Ah, woe is me! Ah, woe is me!
For I have lost my tail.
'Tis not so gay, Dame Nature's way;
I do not like her notion.
I'd rather sail with my polliwog tail;
It helps in locomotion.
And tailless frogs, unlike polliwogs,
On the shore must frisk.
Dangers stand thick; It makes one sick
To think of the awful risk.
For wicked boys, with dreadful noise,
Toward us appear disdainful.
With rocks they whack us on the back;
The shock is very painful."

Said a good old saint, who heard his plaint
(Saints feel for others' woes):
"They re-tail your race; I know the place;
My cart right by it goes."

Scores jumped in the cart, and went to the mart.

Those frogs the saint whole-saled.
Mirabile dictu! Let doubts not afflict you;
Every frog the buyer re-tailed.

Moral:

Ne'er pin your faith on what man saith,
When selfish interests bide.
In nature find infinite mind;
She's safe and honest guide.

BENJAMIN H. DAVIS.

"Why do the roses fade slowly away?"
she inquired, poetically.

"Well," replied the bald-headed young man, "it's more comfortable to have them fade slowly away than to go off all of a sudden like a torpedo."—Washington Star.

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