

*A PLAN FOR THE PHILIPPINES.*

Any proposal to unravel the Philippine snarl must, of course, look straight at the facts as they exist to-day. The march of events has changed the problem from month to month. Last May the solution was to order Dewey to refit and recoal and sail away. This was the course urgently pressed at the time upon Mr. McKinley by Senator Sewell. The President rejected the advice, and soon it became too late to take it even if he wanted to. Other solutions were possible before the meeting of the Paris Commission—before the ratification of the treaty by the Senate—before the fighting broke out in the islands; but those events successively put a new face on the difficulty, and compelled new plans to solve it. To-day we have full legal authority to do what we will in the Philippines. The islands are ours before the law of nations. But no nation on earth, unless it be an enemy to us, is satisfied with the Philippine situation. Our best friends, the English, are not; this country itself is not. The case cries loudly for some change of policy. What shall it be? What course, at once prudent and practicable, can be adopted to put an end to a strife which is both humiliating and fruitless?

We find in the *London and China Telegraph* an interview with a man who knows the Malays well, and knows Americans well, and who thinks he sees the true policy for us to pursue. It is Dr. Alfred Russel Wallace, the distinguished naturalist, and what he says is this:

"Surely it is possible [for the Americans] to revert to their first-expressed intention of taking a small island only as a naval and coaling-station, and to declare themselves the protectors of the islands against foreign aggression. Having done this, they might invite the civilized portion of the natives to

form an independent government, offering them advice and assistance if they wish for it, but otherwise leaving them completely free. It might be advisable first to leave the great island of Mindanao, mostly inhabited by Mohammedans, to form its own separate government; and some guarantee might properly be asked for the fair treatment of the uncivilized portion of the population, such as the presence of a few American residents as protectors of the aborigines. By some such method as here suggested the great republic of the West might aid in the production of a new type of social development adapted to the character of the Malayan race."

Let it be noted that this suggested solution of the difficulty steers clear of the great objections which have been made to other plans. It does not propose to "hand back" the islands to Spain. Most Americans, we presume, would be glad to hand them to Spain or any other Power foolish enough to take them; but it is too late to do that now. The islands are ours for better or worse, for richer or poorer. But Dr. Wallace himself does not contemplate that we should leave the Philippines a prey to scrambling foreign Powers, and so perhaps bring on a European war. We are to announce ourselves their protectors. We are to defend them against foreign aggression. In short, we are to follow the well-approved English plan of declaring a protectorate, and then leaving the natives to develop the best indigenous government they can. An American protectorate over the Philippines, the recognition of American suzerainty by the inhabitants, would be a very different thing from administrative supremacy. It would mean American sovereignty and supremacy for a time in all that affected the foreign relations of the islands; it would mean suitable guarantees for the protection of life and property; it would, of course, mean American garrisons as the sufficient symbol of American power; it would mean the protection of one island or one race from possible aggressions on the part of another; but it would also mean the free development of native life and local rule, and, above all, it would mean the immediate ending of the aimless and bloody fighting which is disgracing us in the eyes of the world.

The Filipinos would accept an American protectorate. They are eager for it, unless they have changed their minds since last August. The testimony from their leaders laid before our Paris Commissioners was emphatic on this point. They knew that they could not protect their own islands against voracious European countries. They desired also the presence of a strong American force while the first experiments in native government were being undertaken. We should then have been assisting, instead of crushing out, what Prof. William James has called "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."

That milk is spilled, and there is no use in crying over it now. But is it too late to retrace our steps and do in effect what we should have done long ago? It seems to us that it is not. In fact, the way seems easy. As the case stands, our dispute with the Filipinos is largely a dispute about words. If the first article of the proclamation of the Philippine Commission were verbally changed, there is no doubt that the natives would accept it with enthusiasm. Suppose that instead of reading, "The supremacy of the United States must and will be enforced throughout every part of the archipelago, and those who resist can accomplish nothing but their own ruin," it had stood, "The United States declares itself protector of the Philippine Islands against foreign aggression, and calls upon the natives to set up their own internal government." It is clear that the war would have ended on the spot; that all the rest of the proclamation, so admirable in its promises of local control of local affairs, guarantees of civil and religious rights, a pure judiciary, and so on, would have been put into effect without the firing of another shot, the leaving of another Filipino to die a death of slow torture in the jungle, or the killing of another American soldier ordered to massacre the people whom he thought he was sent to free.

Now, the point we insist upon is that this plan, Mr. Wallace's plan, would give us all that we can get under any plan, and give it to us peacefully. A protectorate would be as good for American trade as would administrative supremacy; the islands are open to the commerce of the world in either case. Under the proclamation, it was proposed to give the natives "the amplest liberty of self-government"; that could be still better given, and just as well safeguarded, under a protectorate. So with all the rest of it. If we are honest in saying that we wish only to develop and build up the Philippines, instead of ruthlessly exploiting them, we must confess that we could do the work as well under a protectorate as under a sovereignty asserted throughout every part of every island. As kindly protectors, instead of boastful sovereigns, we should be able to discharge all our duties to the world which we have assumed by expelling the Spaniards from the Philippines; should get just as much profit and more praise ourselves; and should implant in the breasts of the natives gratitude and hope where now we are rousing hatred and revenge. We need only realize that it is possible to benefit lower races without first crushing them under the heel of a conqueror; need only understand, with Dr. Wallace, that even the most benevolent conquests sow seeds of misery among the conquered, and terribly retard their natural development. Our mistakes in the Philippines have, so far,

been egregious. Even Jingoism privately admit it; history will write it inexorably. But we may still do much to redeem the situation if we will now frankly face it, choose the words and the acts which best suit the wishes of the natives, instead of our vulgar pride, and by wise conciliation, by patience, by experiment after experiment, prove to the Filipinos that liberty does not mean repression and death, but the opening of the prison door and opportunity for manhood.