The Philippines a Century Hence

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THE PHILIPPINES A CENTURY HENCE

By JOSE RIZAL

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34 Escolta

"In the Philippine Islands the American government has tried, and is trying, to carry out exactly what the greatest genius and most revered patriot ever known in the Philippines, Jose Rizal, steadfastly advocated."

--From a public address at Fargo, N.D., on April 7th. 1903, by the President of the United States.

INTRODUCTION

As "Filipinas dentro de Cien Anos", this article was originally published serially in the Filipino fortnightly review "La Solidaridad", of Madrid, running through the issues from September, 1889, to January, 1890.

It supplements Rizal's great novel "Noli Me Tangere" and its sequel "El Filibusterismo", and the translation here given is fortunately by Mr. Charles Derbyshire who in his "The Social Cancer" and "The Reign of Greed" has so happily rendered into English those masterpieces of Rizal.

The reference which Doctor Rizal makes to President Harrison had in mind the grandson-of-his-grandfather's blundering, wavering policy that, because of a groundless fear of infringing the natives' natural rights, put his country in the false light of wanting to share in Samoa's exploitation, taking the leonine portion, too, along with Germany and England.

Robert Louis Stevenson has told the story of the unhappy condition created by that disastrous international agreement which was achieved by the dissembling diplomats of greedy Europe flattering unsophisticated America into believing that two monarchies preponderating in an alliance with a republic would be fairer than the republic acting unhampered.

In its day the scheme was acclaimed by irrational idealists as a triumph of American abnegation and an example of modern altruism. It resulted that "the international agreement" became a constant cause of international disagreements, as any student of history could have foretold, until, disgusted and disillusioned, the United States tardily recalled Washington's warning against entanglements with foreign powers and became a party to a real partition, but this time playing the lamb's part. England was compensated with concessions in other parts of the world, the United States was "given" what it already held under a cession twenty-seven years old,--and Germany took the rest

as her emperor had planned from the start.

There is this Philippine bearing to the incident that the same stripe of unpractical philanthropists, not discouraged at having forced the Samoans under the ungentle German rule--for their victims and not themselves suffer by their mistakes, are seeking now the neutralization by international agreement of the Archipelago for which Rizal gave his life. Their success would mean another "entangling alliance" for the United States, with six allies, or nine including Holland, China and Spain, if the "great republic" should be allowed by the diplomats of the "Great Powers" to invite these nonentities in world politics, with whom she would still be outvoted.

Rizal's reference to America as a possible factor in the Philippines' future is based upon the prediction of the German traveller Feodor Jagor, who about 1860 spent a number of months in the Islands and later published his observations, supplemented by ten years of further study in European libraries and museums, as "Travels in the Philippines", to use the title of the English translation,--a very poor one, by the way. Rizal read the much better Spanish version while a student in the Ateneo de Manila, from a copy supplied by Paciano Rizal Mercado who directed his younger brother's political education and transferred to Jose the hopes which had been blighted for himself by the execution of his beloved teacher, Father Burgos, in the Cavite alleged insurrection.

Jagor's prophecy furnishes the explanation to Rizal's public life. His policy of preparing his countrymen for industrial and commercial competition seems to have had its inspiration in this reading done when he was a youth in years but mature in fact through close contact

with tragic public events as well as with sensational private sorrows.

When in Berlin, Doctor Rizal met Professor Jagor, and the distinguished geographer and his youthful but brilliant admirer became fast friends, often discussing how the progress of events was bringing true the fortune for the Philippines which the knowledge of its history and the acquaintance with its then condition had enabled the trained observer to foretell with that same certainty that the meteorologist foretells the morrow's weather.

A like political acumen Rizal tried to develop in his countrymen. He republished Morga's History (first published in Mexico in 1609) to recall their past. Noli Me Tangere painted their present, and in El Filibusterismo was sketched the future which continuance upon their then course must bring. "The Philippines A Century Hence" suggests other possibilities, and seems to have been the initial issue in the series of ten which Rizal planned to print, one a year, to correct the misunderstanding of his previous writings which had come from their being known mainly by the extracts cited in the censors' criticism.

Jose Rizal in life voiced the aspirations of his countrymen and as the different elements in his divided native land recognized that these were the essentials upon which all were agreed and that their points of difference among themselves were not vital, dissension disappeared and there came an united Philippines. Now, since his death, the fact that both continental and insular Americans look to him as their hero makes possible the hope that misunderstandings based on differences as to details may cease when Filipinos recognize that the American Government in the Philippines, properly approached, is willing to grant all that Rizal considered important,

and when Americans understand that the people of the Philippines, unaccustomed to the frank discussions of democracy, would be content with so little even as Rizal asked of Spain if only there were some salve for their unwittingly wounded amor propio.

A better knowledge of the writings of Jose Rizal may accomplish this desirable consummation.

"I do not write for this generation. I am writing for other ages. If this could read me, they would burn my books, the work of my whole life. On the other hand, the generation which interprets these writings will be an educated generation; they will understand me and say: 'Not all were asleep in the night-time of our grandparents'."

--The Philosopher Tasio, in Noli Me Tangere.

JAGOR'S PROPHECY

The Prophecy Which Prompted Rizal's Policy of Preparation For the Philippines

This extract is translated from Pages 287-289 of "Reisen in den Philippinen von F. Jagor: Berlin 1873".

"The old situation is no longer possible of maintenance, with the changed conditions of the present time.

"The colony can no longer be kept secluded from the world. Every facility afforded for commercial intercourse is a blow to the old system, and a great step made in the direction of broad and liberal reforms. The more foreign capital and foreign ideas and customs are introduced, increasing the prosperity, enlightenment, and self respect

of the population, the more impatiently will the existing evils be endured.

"England can and does open her possessions unconcernedly to the world. The British colonies are united to the mother country by the bond of mutual advantage, viz., the production of raw material by means of English capital, and the exchange of the same for English manufactures. The wealth of England is so great, the organization of her commerce with the world so complete, that nearly all the foreigners even in the British possessions are for the most part agents for English business houses, which would scarcely be affected, at least to any marked extent, by a political dismemberment. It is entirely different with Spain, which possesses the colony as an inherited property, and without the power of turning it to any useful account.

"Government monopolies rigorously maintained, insolent disregard and neglect of the half-castes and powerful creoles, and the example of the United States, were the chief reasons of the downfall of the American possessions. The same causes threaten ruin to the Philippines; but of the monopolies I have said enough.

"Half-castes and creoles, it is true, are not, as they formerly were in America, excluded from all official appointments; but they feel deeply hurt and injured through the crowds of place-hunters which the frequent changes of Ministers send to Manila.

"Also the influence of American elements is at least discernible on the horizon, and will come more to the front as the relations of the two countries grow closer. At present these are still of little importance; in the meantime commerce follows its old routes, which

lead to England and the Atlantic ports of the Union. Nevertheless, he who attempts to form a judgment as to the future destiny of the Philippines cannot fix his gaze only on their relations to Spain; he must also consider the mighty changes which within a few decades are being effected on that side of our planet. For the first time in the world's history, the gigantic nations on both sides of a gigantic ocean are beginning to come into direct intercourse: Russia, which alone is greater than two divisions of the world together; China, which within her narrow bounds contains a third of the human race; America, with cultivable soil enough to support almost three times the entire population of the earth. Russia's future role in the Pacific Ocean at present baffles all calculations. The intercourse of the two other powers will probably have all the more important consequences when the adjustment between the immeasurable necessity for human labor-power on the one hand, and a correspondingly great surplus of that power on the other, shall fall on it as a problem."

"The world of the ancients was confined to the shores of the Mediterranean; and the Atlantic and Indian Oceans sufficed at one time for our traffic. When first the shores of the Pacific re-echoed with the sounds of active commerce, the trade of the world and the history of the world may be really said to have begun. A start in that direction has been made; whereas not so very long ago the immense ocean was one wide waste of waters, traversed from both points only once a year. From 1603 to 1769 scarcely a ship had ever visited California, that wonderful country which, twenty-five years ago, with the exception of a few places on the coast, was an unknown wilderness, but which is now covered with flourishing and prosperous towns and cities, divided from sea to sea by a railway, and its capital

already ranking among the world's greatest seaports.

"But in proportion as the commerce of the western coast of America extends the influence of the American elements over the South Sea, the ensnaring spell which the great republic exercises over the Spanish colonies will not fail to assert itself in the Philippines also. The Americans appear to be called upon to bring the germ planted by the Spaniards to its full development. As conquerors of the New World, representatives of the body of free citizens in contradistinction to the nobility, they follow with the axe and plow of the pioneer where the Spaniards had opened the way with cross and sword. A considerable part of Spanish America already belongs to the United States, and has, since that occurred, attained an importance which could not have been anticipated either during Spanish rule or during the anarchy which ensued after and from it. In the long run, the Spanish system cannot prevail over the American. While the former exhausts the colonies through direct appropriation of them to the privileged classes, and the metropolis through the drain of its best forces (with, besides, a feeble population), America draws to itself the most energetic element from all lands; and these on her soil, free from all trammels, and restlessly pushing forward, are continually extending further her power and influence. The Philippines will so much the less escape the influence of the two great neighboring empires, since neither the islands nor their metropolis are in a condition of stable equilibrium. It seems desirable for the natives that the opinions here expressed shall not too soon be realized as facts, for their training thus far has not sufficiently prepared them for success in the contest with those restless, active, most inconsiderate peoples; they have dreamed away their youth."

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