

The Independent

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THE SULTAN'S EPITAPH.

(PERSIAN.)

BY RICHARD HENRY STODDARD.

ONE day a soul made man, from Allah's throne
I wandered to this world of mortal men;
A little while I was a stranger here,
Now night comes, I return—a stranger there!

I was the servant of a mighty king,
Whose court I left; I go to him again;
Bowed down with sin and sorrow I return,
Bearing with me my sword and winding-sheet!

A little while that heavenly bird, my soul,
Was prisoned in the cage of human life;
But now the cage is broken, I am gone,—
The bird has flown back to its native sky!

Farewell, my sweet companion, my dear friends,
No further stay is mine; I leave you all.
May you be happy in the world of men,
May I be happy in the world of souls!

IMPERIALISM.

BY THE HON. CARL SCHURZ.

IT is remarkable how the moral sense as well as the reasoning faculties of persons who are otherwise quite upright and judicious, may sometimes become obscured or confused by the influence of those violent currents of opinion which, in popular parlance, we call "crazes." Shortly after the close of our Civil War the proposition was advanced that the national bonds should be paid off in depreciated greenbacks; and as this idea seemed to take hold of the popular mind, persons, who in their private dealings were scrupulously honest, would convince themselves, and try to convince others, that a way of paying debts which, between man and man they would have abhorred as utterly knavish, would be perfectly just if adopted by the Government as to its bond creditors. We had the same experience during the fiat-money craze in the seventies, before the resumption of specie payments, and again later, during the silver craze. A similar phenomenon we have had occasion to observe since the day of Dewey's brilliant victory in Manila harbor, which seemed to put in our power a group of several hundred islands with a population of over 8,000,000 souls, about 9,000 miles away from our western coast, thus giving us an important position in those distant seas, in which the colonizing Powers of Europe are busily maneuvering for predominance.

This was to us a new sensation, apparently sufficient to unsettle in the minds of many otherwise sober and well-balanced persons, not

only all their old principles of policy, but even their sense of honor. The word went forth that the nation had suddenly "come to consciousness"; that the United States must accept the "new mission"; that it is no longer the mere "United States of America," but "Imperial America"; that we already have "Asiatic and West Indian possessions," which we must keep, that our "destiny" points to expansion, and so forth *ad infinitum*. I copy all these exclamatory expressions from an editorial in THE INDEPENDENT, where they appear with the ingenuousness of a fresh enthusiasm.

When we inquire into the real meaning of these more or less ecstatic outbursts with due soberness, we find that this new "mission" or "destiny" commands us to have or to get outside colonies—not as if our population had become too crowded in our present boundaries, for our large country is but thinly peopled; nor as if we found the resources of our country too scanty to keep our people profitably employed, for our home resources are not only not fully developed but not even fully explored; nor as if we needed outside possessions for our foreign commerce, for we are still very far from fully supplying the foreign markets open to us; but we must have colonies, simply because we now have an opportunity for getting some, no matter whether we get them honorably, or whether their possession will be good for us when we have them.

As to the question of honesty in getting them, I have again to quote THE INDEPENDENT, for it furnishes the most striking illustration of the perversion, by a prevailing craze, of the moral sense of otherwise scrupulously upright men. The only authoritative declaration of the purpose of our war against Spain is found in the resolution adopted by Congress, which contains the following clauses:

"That the people of the island of Cuba are, and of right ought to be, free and independent. . . . That the United States hereby disclaims any disposition or intention to exercise sovereignty, jurisdiction, or control over said island, except for the pacification thereof, and asserts its determination, when that is accomplished, to leave the government and control of the island to its people."

Nothing could be clearer and more specific than this declaration. It was addressed not only to Spain, not only to the Cubans, but to the people of the United States, and, in fact, to all mankind. The United States proclaimed to the whole world, and it was repeated in this country by press and speech untold thousands of times, that we waged this war against Spain from absolutely disinterested and humanitarian motives, solely to deliver the suffering Cubans from Spanish tyranny. Upon this ground we claimed the sympathy of civilized mankind; and when some European newspapers said that this was all sham and hypocrisy, and that our real scheme was to grab the Spanish colonies for ourselves, our press and our public men repelled the charge with virtuous indignation. If ever a proclamation was morally binding as to the pledge it involved, it was this.

But THE INDEPENDENT tells us that all this goes for nothing, and that we have a perfect right to take and keep Cuba as well as the rest of the Spanish colonies. The argument deserves to be quoted as a specimen inspiration of the new "consciousness." It says:

"Just think for a moment. The United States engaged to deliver Cuba, preferably by peace, by war, if it must be. The President's ultimatum to Minister Woodford to that effect was sent in plain English to him, *in the belief that Spain would steal it from the wires and withhold it from our representative.* Spain did both. Fortunately our Minister, who was not without resources of private information, learned that fact as soon as it occurred, and learned also the attitude which Spain intended to take in regard to it. The order of events here is important. Our Minister

first received, not the ultimatum, which should have come to him at once, but the official declaration by the Spanish Government that the resolutions of Congress, passed three days before, had ended diplomatic relations between the Governments. He at once accepted the official declaration, received his passports, and left Spain without presenting the ultimatum at all. . . . The President immediately accepted war as a fact, by the act of Spain. . . . *We had made Cuba and her deliverance our sole objective. The presentation of our ultimatum might have held us to that. By denying access to the ultimatum, Spain not only freed us from it, as to her, but also launched war on us, in a way to make the injury of our whole country her program, and our disablement of her at every point both our opportunity and our right.*"

(The italics in this quotation are mine.)

It is hardly necessary to comment upon this statement, which charges the President with a sly trick by which to find a pretext for perverting the whole purpose of the war, and which argues that the proclamation to the whole world involving a solemn pledge, made by the Congress of the United States, loses all its morally binding force, because the Spanish Government fell into a trap adroitly set for it, and did not regularly receive and receipt for the ultimatum. THE INDEPENDENT is a religious newspaper, devoted, no doubt in perfect sincerity, to the teaching of religious doctrine, of truthfulness, honesty, fidelity to one's word, and righteousness generally. It would certainly not teach its readers to shirk their moral obligations in private life by such quibbles and subterfuges as those by which the statement quoted seeks to justify the taking and keeping by the United States of Cuba and the other Spanish colonies after the resolution adopted by Congress. It has evidently fallen a victim to the craze, and will, I trust, soon join in the prayer that if these are to be the effects of the new "consciousness" and "mission" and "destiny" upon the moral sense of the American people, the Lord in his mercy may speedily deliver us from the evil.

Of the same character and tendency is the assertion, currently put forth by Imperialist papers, that if we deliver the oppressed people of Cuba, of Porto Rico and of the Philippine Islands of the Spanish tyranny, we shall be morally responsible for their future welfare, and that if this can be best secured by annexation to the United States we shall not only be

authorized but morally obliged to annex them. Is this reasonable? When, before the war, the right and duty of intervention in Cuba was being discussed, the following illustration was used by way of argument:

"My neighbor is an old brute, who cruelly maltreats his children. I witness across the fence in my back yard how he mercilessly cudgels one of his daughters, and kicks her nigh to death. Is it not my moral duty to jump over the fence, and to rescue the girl from the brutality of her unnatural parent?"

I accept the simile, but I say: "If it is my moral duty to rescue the girl, it does not follow that, after I have knocked down the old tyrant and rescued the girl, it will also, if she cannot take care of herself, be my moral duty to marry her, or to adopt her as a daughter and take her into my own household as a permanent member of my family; for she may be very undesirable company for my own children." And this is the real point to be considered as to whether the having of those colonies would be good for us.

Is there a conscientious and sober-minded man among the Imperialists who will deny that in deciding this question of expansion the welfare of our own people should be our first consideration? Is there one who will deny that it would be an exceedingly risky experiment to annex Cuba and Porto Rico and the Philippines and to incorporate them in our political system as States on an equal footing with the other States, not only to govern themselves, but to take part in governing the whole Republic, with such populations as they have, and considering that, owing to the influences of the tropical climate, those populations will never be like ours? And is there one who will deny, that it will be an equally risky experiment, to annex those countries and to govern them in the pro-consular way—a system of government which, aside from overthrowing all the fundamental principles of our institutions, would be likely—I might say certain—to bring into our politics a flood of corruption?

I know it is pretended by some of the Imperialists that of late our statesmanship has been at a low ebb, because it had to deal only with parochial questions; that our country was too small for great statesmen; that we needed expansion to make our views larger; that if we only obeyed our new "consciousness" and

recognized our "destiny," such small topics as silver and the tariff would be crowded out by vast international interests, and that greater responsibilities would not only make us broader in our conceptions, and wiser, but also more virtuous. We heard similar predictions when "Greater New York" was in issue. We were told that the larger responsibility for so great a city as that would be, would arouse the citizens from their apathy to a firm determination that only the best and wisest men should be in the high places thereof. The first result was the restoration of old Tammany Hall to power. Does any one believe that if we annex the Spanish colonies Bosses Croker and Platt will lose their power, and New York City will send Joseph Choate and Seth Low to Congress instead of Sulzer and Quigg? We have heard much of the Sugar Trust exercising great influence in Congress. The first effect of the annexation of the Spanish colonies would be likely to add to the Sugar Trust a Manila combine and a Cuba and Porto Rico ring working to get favorable legislation from Congress for their own enrichment. I certainly do not despair of the purification of our politics. But I look for it in the concentration of the people's attention upon our home affairs, not in its distraction from them and in the multiplication of the elements of corruption. Here lies what I deem the first duty the American people owe to themselves—not the care for the people of Cuba, Porto Rico and the Philippines. After liberating them we should do for them the best we can, but in any event keep them out of our own household.

There are many other phases of this great subject—the matter of expense, for instance—which I cannot discuss here for lack of space. I will only add that I expect this craze to pass over as other crazes have passed before when the search-lights of public discussion were turned upon them. It is said that the Republicans are likely to make the expansion policy a party issue and that they rely for their triumph upon the war-cry and upon the unpopularity of the Democratic silver policy with the conservative citizens of the country. This may prove a miscalculation. I have seen several very earnest Sound Money men who reason thus: "A victory of the silver party would be a great calamity, but a calamity which in the course of time may be repaired. The annexation of the Spanish colonies would be in its

consequences a greater calamity which can never be repaired. As between the two, we would rather take our chances with the first." How far this feeling extends I do not know; possibly very far. It will be likely to make itself very much felt, if not in the Congressional

elections of this year, then certainly in the Presidential election two years hence, when the bills will have begun to come in and the people will have gained a real "consciousness" of what it all means.

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