



Vol. IX
No. 12

December,
1929

A CHRISTMAS MESSAGE TO AMERICA

This is the thirty-second Christmas your national colors have been at the masthead over Fort Santiago. That is about a generation, and beyond comparison it is the most fortunate period the Philippines ever had: you have sent great men here to govern, according to the doctrine written for McKinley by Elihu Root, a man who continues to honor you in world affairs; you originally sent soldiers who lent force to your overtures for peace, which was soon established, and then, by thousands, found places in the ranks of peace where their energies were devoted, for personal gain not altogether wanting in idealism, to the up-building of the country: these old soldiers, in business and industry, were the first employers to open wide the doors of opportunity to the young Filipino, whom they took green of all experience and patiently trained—meanwhile paying him in accordance with what he was able to do.

You have sent teachers by thousands, men and women bearing the torch of learning to the multitudes in the villages and towns of these islands and helping the merchant, the industrialist, the miner, the planter and the drover found the new era of democracy and equal opportunity upon the stubborn traditions of privileged feudalism. You have not wholly succeeded, in so short a time, with such a tremendous task; yet you have not wholly failed, you have much to be proud of and very little to regret: your sons have served you well and the people of these islands have been peculiarly responsive, if not actually appreciative.

You have not taxed these people, but twenty years ago you established between these islands and yourself that free trade which by the Constitution prevails everywhere under the Flag. The people of these islands, guarded by your arms, travel on your passports and avail themselves of your consular and diplomatic agencies in the same manner and to the same extent as your own citizens do, who pay the bill; and the people of these islands serve your arms, drawing compensation therefor and pensions upon disability-discharge or age-retirement.

The benefits, tangible and obvious, which you have conferred upon these people are innumerable, and you approach by the best means you can a definite basis of your relations with them, which it seems destiny will make permanent. If your agents had been as busy instructing the people as to what you have been and still are actually doing in their behalf as it has been in alleging things they have failed to do, a better understanding of you would prevail; in the way of going farther ahead stands a good deal of popular ignorance, some of it in the United States and some of it here, as well as the aims of selfish men. This can not be helped. You are doing well by these islands and in their heart of hearts the people know it.

Misgivings here as to what you may do, whether you will radically alter your policy, are really not profound. Above all, have no qualms of conscience: no sound indictment can be drawn against you.

Over here we are able to behold you in the midst of a broad perspective; we who are your sons think you did nobly in the World War, and, while less well in the World Peace, probably the best you could. You had then hardly begun to peek over your continental boundaries and truly realize the fact of your world-wide responsibilities beyond them, and you were dealing with European powers steeped in querulous traditions and theories—dominated by the Bismarckian doctrine balancing states off against one another.

The compromises of Versailles will long arise to plague you, and you have ideas, novel to you, to digest at home. You will not erect tariff barriers against the Philippines, you will follow President Hoover and lower the tariff walls you already have—for you are a great world-trader, now, and the tariff bothers you exceedingly. You will discard, in the fullness of time, your naive estimate of your so-called balance of trade; and a huge residue of cash, the difference between what you have bought abroad and what you have sold abroad, will come, not to make you confident, as now, but to alert you, as it should—for it all represents trading you might have done yet didn't do. It makes home credits too liberal and elastic, induces the making of more goods than can be sold, and, despite the Federal Reserve System, causes periodical smash-ups or potentially good stocks. Long ago, at the feet of Hamilton, you learned that, as to domestic trade, you can

not have your cake and eat it, too; and soon other great sons of yours will teach you the same lesson concerning trade overseas. You are a great mother, adaptable, responsive to the legitimate demands upon you—a leader toward the light. One institution you have is a fumbling affair, the four-year presidential term, making the president's first term devoted to the winning of a second and making fixed policy, particularly fixed overseas-policy, difficult. Nevertheless, you are getting along; you have not always wisely amended your Constitution, and this change, which would seem to be indicated by your brief experience as a nation, may be effected any time within the next fifty years. Republics are long-lived. You are young, just entering your maturity. God bless you!

A CHRISTMAS MESSAGE TO THE PHILIPPINES

Pursuit of your natural aspirations has made you appear to be willing to take advantage of any predicament America may find herself in, to the end that you may be separated from her. A factitious situation has been created, which is an abnormal condition adversely affecting the islands. Why not, then, facing facts squarely, give official promulgation to something on the lines of the following?:

"The United States has been a liberal and enlightened mother-nation to the Philippines for nearly a generation, a period which might be defined as the islands' golden era. She has granted every request short of setting the Philippines up as an entirely independent nation, a goal toward which, however, we believe her unvaried policy leads. We have faith in her, she has given us no cause not to have. We are eager for the time when our aspirations may be realized in full, but we recognize one obstacle to that end within the islands, and two without. We feel it our own peculiar obligation to remove the internal obstacle, backward economic development, with which is inevitably associated an inadequate insular income from taxation; and we feel that America, in association with other nations, will cope successfully with the external obstacles, as she is trying to do.

"We see danger in the present world situation not only to small nations, but to the largest as well; we applaud every effort being made to effect adjustments insuring world peace.

"We realize that the situation in China, a nearby nation of great potential power, makes the integrity of her bond as a nation questionable, and that only when she shall have set up a responsible government will it be prudent to rely upon her international agreements; nonaggression on her part, as well as that of other nations, is essential to our liberty when it may no longer be a national concern of the United States.

"China is one external obstacle to progress with America's plans for us.

"We also realize that since the World War, peace has not been permanently established throughout the world, and fears of the possible outbreak of another devastating conflict—of which a free Philippines might be the innocent cause—are justifiable in the minds of statesmen. We realize the need of nations, small and large alike, for new institutions of world-wide scope and power, to effect the best services which have grown beyond the resources of mere national and sea-board-city agencies; second, decisions of international disputes which are of a nature which in the past has given rise to wars; third, accords regarding the inviolability of the liberty of small nations which are still, in the final arbitrament, at the mercy of great armed powers.

"This is the second external obstacle to the fulfillment of America's intentions toward us.

"In view of all this, and emphasizing the fact that we have not the slightest cause to doubt America, we are resolved to cease importuning America for separation from her until time and our own and America's efforts have removed the obstacles to our request. We make this frank declaration so as not to appear to annoy America in the grave tasks she has undertaken in behalf of the lasting peace of the world, which, transcending all other matters, have confronted her ever since the Philippine Act of 1916 became our organic law. These tasks, we are aware, are not yet fully discharged, but time promises that they will be in the not distant future.

"On our part, meantime, we shall devote ourselves with single purpose to our domestic welfare. Our population, doubled since America came to the islands, will double again within twenty years, and the character of our trade will change from that chiefly of foreign consumption to one chiefly of domestic consumption. Our institutions will strengthen and our position become assured. That is to say, in the day of which we are warranted in expecting the dawning within a few years, nations will neither be independent nor dependent in the old sense; there will be a progression, just as there was in the past from the absolutism of kings; nations will be mutually defended and the small ones will be in no jeopardy of their freedom. During the difficult intervening period, we do not feel called upon even by our aspirations to hasten America into another concession in our behalf."

Perhaps none will dare say such a proposal from the proper source would not be heartily welcomed here and in the United States.