

# The God of The Machine

In the midst thinking of quitting business  
with Uncle Sam, a moment upon our ben-  
efits from him . . . . By D. R. WILLIAMS

It is trite to say that thirty years is a long span in the life of an individual but a short one in the life of a country or people. Despite this truism, however, the past three decades have witnessed a transformation in the political, material, and social status of the Philippines and their people without parallel in recorded history.

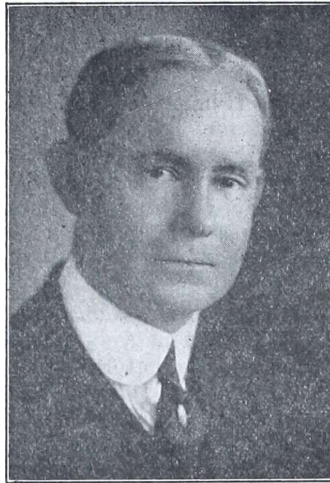
In the years between, a new generation of Filipinos has entered upon the stage and is today enjoying the fruits of this phenomenal transformation with no memory and little thought of the stark realities existing prior to its day.

Business men and a flood of tourists now arrive Manila in palatial liners, dock at substantial piers, and enthuse over the magnificent boulevards, parks, hotels, public buildings, and other manifold charms and attractions of one of the most beautiful and healthful cities in the world. Going wider afield, they journey throughout the archipelago over splendid highways, traverse its inland seas in commodious boats, and find its countryside dotted with schools, artesian wells, sanitary markets, and other modern conveniences, with a populace enjoying a state of comfort and well-being unknown among the masses of other Oriental peoples.

The disposition of these new arrivals upon the scene,—whether Filipinos, business men, or tourists,—is to take all these things for granted, and to lose sight of the "God of the Machine" which made them possible, i. e., the relentless energy, the practical directness, and the desire for results, which are a heritage of the American people. This urge for action, inspired by altruism, and given expression through men of the character and calibre of William H. Taft and a line of able successors and assistants, swept clean the wreck of Spanish medievalism and upon its ruins builded a modern commonwealth wherein the Philippine people have been and are given opportunity to realize and share—within the limits of their capacity—every development and achievement of the ages.

"Lest We Forget," a brief statement of conditions existing prior to American coming may bring home to present-day Filipinos, to Americans, and others, not only an idea of the distance traveled but a better appreciation of the work and achievements of those responsible for implanting in these islands the civilizing influences which mark centuries of Anglo-Saxon struggle against the forces of ignorance, superstition, oppression, and tyranny. In another connection the writer summarized these conditions as follows:

The situation prevailing throughout the Philippines upon American occupation was something appalling. In the City of Manila the death rate among children under one year of age, as shown by Bureau of Health records, was 95 per cent. Surface wells and a contaminated city supply system furnished water for drinking purposes, the use of distilled or artesian water being almost unknown. There was no proper sewerage or other adequate provision for disposal of human waste. The old moat surrounding the Walled City, and the numerous canals threading the business and residential



D. R. WILLIAMS

districts, were full of refuse and an offence to sight and smell. Smallpox, beri-beri, bubonic plague, tuberculosis, malaria, and other pestilential diseases, were endemic, while the ravages of cholera were frequent and deadly. Lepers existed in large numbers, and in most localities mingled freely with the general public. The treatment of the insane and feeble-minded was a disgrace to civilization. In the whole of the islands there was not a single hospital or operating room with modern conveniences and appliances. Trained nurses were practically unknown, and in many provinces medical attendance of any kind was unobtainable. There was little or no preventive inoculation, and the people lived (and died) without knowledge of germs and of their transmission through food and personal contact. Night air was considered noxious, and windows and doors were tightly closed at nightfall. Epidemics and other calamities were accepted by the natives as a visitation of Divine Providence, to be exorcised by the burning of candles and religious processions rather than through segregation of the afflicted and other sanitary measures. Given these conditions, and applying them to a people undernourished, lacking in vitality, and utterly ignorant of personal hygiene, and the fact of a high mortality and "scant population" ceases to be surprising.

There were but one hundred and twenty miles of railway in the archipelago, this line being British built and owned. Interisland transportation was slow and hazardous, the waters being poorly charted and lighted. During six months of the year the public highways were little better than quagmires, the larger rivers being either forded or crossed by antiquated ferries, making the marketing of products, except by water, difficult and expensive. With rare exceptions agricultural implements and methods harked back to the time of the Pharaohs, generation following generation without any appreciable innovations. The Philippines lay on a stagnant back-water, largely unknown and unknowing, their shores scarcely touched by the currents of progress sweeping the world outside their borders.

Space forbids any detailed statement of how the foregoing situation, which savored of decay and death, has been transformed into a community where the latest discoveries of science, and the most up to date inventions which minister to the comfort and betterment of mankind, have application within the means of the State and the individual. Those on the ground can make their own comparisons and need no further

evidence of the changes which have been wrought. Simply as an indication of material progress, it might be noted that Philippine imports and exports have increased from a total of \$47,854,000 in 1900 to \$256,260,000 in 1930, which is but a tithe of the possible total had it not been for the uncertain political status of the islands, and restrictive land and corporation laws. In the same period \$194,053,000 have been spent on public works and improvements, of which \$22,241,000 were for development of island ports, while over 2,000 artesian wells have been drilled and 178 separate water supply systems installed. Other hundreds of millions of dollars have been expended on public education and in the construction of hospitals and extension of a modern health service throughout the archipelago. The population has increased from some 7½ millions,—this after over three centuries of Spanish rule,—to approximately 13 millions after 30 years of American administration.

Not only has the United States opened a new world to the Philippine peoples, where in every right, privilege, and opportunity theretofore denied them is possible, but there has accrued to them through the fact of American sovereignty and Congressional action, a body of advantages and immunities which make of them today a favored race among earth's peoples. Without leaving their own shores, and without any contribution whatsoever to American revenues, they now have and enjoy among other privileges: United States backing for their currency system; credit for bond issue at minimum interest rates; exclusion of Chinese, with whom they cannot compete on even terms; protection of the United States Army and Navy and service of our Diplomatic and Consular Corps; freedom from foreign aggression and preservation of internal order; free entry of island products to the United States and vice versa; administration of United States public lands, forests, and mines in the Islands and revenues derived from their sale or other disposition; refund of internal revenue taxes collected in the United States on Philippine cigars and like products, together with unrestricted access by Filipinos to the United States and its Territories,—a right now enjoyed by no other Asiatics and by nationals of other countries only on a quota basis.

The small *ilustrado* class in the islands have been granted participation in public affairs up to and frequently beyond the danger point when measured by the good of all. They have today a greater share in Philippine administration, and enjoy a wider range of legislative powers than are applicable to any State of the American Union.

All of the above, and other manifold benefits, would automatically terminate with the passing of the God of the Machine which brought them into being and has maintained and developed them through the years. This is not the time or place to discuss the wisdom of such a withdrawal, whether from a Filipino or American standpoint. The progress made is real and apparent, but it is only a beginning. The processes of evolution cannot be forced, and all may be lost in an attempt to cash in too soon on present gains.

He who runs may read and form his own conclusions.