

# THE AMERICAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE JOURNAL

Vol. VII  
No. 8

August  
1927

EDITORIAL OFFICES

American Chamber of Commerce

P. O. Box 1638

TELEPHONE 1156

GENERAL LEONARD WOOD: 1860-1927



As the forms were being closed for this issue of the *Journal*, word flashed over the Pacific by cable that Major General Leonard Wood, Governor General of the Philippine Islands, had died in Peter Brent Brigham Hospital, Boston, after an operation for skull-bone tumor which first appeared in 1906, was then operated by Dr. Cushing, and had recurred, having been originally induced by the injury General Wood received in his office in Havana, Cuba, in 1902, when, standing to greet a visitor, his head struck a heavy brass knob of a chandelier. News of his death spread over Manila like a pall.

Newspapers hurried extra editions off the press, in English, Spanish and Tagalog. Soon the little brown urchins, running barefoot through the drizzling tropical rain, were crying "Extra! Extra!" And all the headlines said "Wood Is Dead! General Wood Is Dead!" Thus the islands plunged into mourning. It was significant of how veneration and respect for this great soldier-statesman held enthralled men of his own and the native race in the Philippines, to see the papers getting out their extras. From the editors down, they went about their work half-dazed, notorious as they are for stoicism in all things. Nothing could be found, by impotently gripping hands ill guided by the intellect. Files were rifled in vain for cuts, mats and biographies—until the combined muddling of all somehow got things moderately right.

Calls went out over the telephone, but the reporters could scarcely frame their questions; and when they got the dope they could hardly make the necessary notes. Such, we think, vividly mirrors the feeling in these islands. It is a feeling of men lost in their way; a feeling as of a ship at sea in a baleful storm, its captain and master mariner stricken dead, his sure hand limp at the helm and the rudder powerless against the menacing waves.

It is not, however, a feeling that would overwhelm General Wood himself, whose death evokes it.

"The man of firm and noble soul  
No factious clamors can control."

General Wood, under such circumstances—and we have all observed him harried by the most poignant pain—would go ahead with the day's work, as we too must go ahead. It was a part of his greatness, if not the larger part, to put self aside and the public welfare, the immediate obligation to mankind, to the fore.

As a community we are too moved, too borne along on the strong wings of grief, to see the object of it in its true place in history; time will make the assignment, and all we know is that it will be a most eminent one. The duties, meantime, of the living press upon us all. They are the duties of carrying on.

Yet we may briefly capitulate. About a year ago, General Wood being in the southern islands and unable to address the constabulary graduating class in Baguio, the duty fell to Governor Early, who, in his eulogy of Wood, dwelt on the triumph over yellow fever in southern America and the western tropics, made possible by Wood's courage alone. It was necessary to inoculate men with the disease, and against a tirade of press abuse Wood called for volunteers from his soldiers. One death was the sacrifice, and the job for humanity was done. In the Philippines, Wood tackled the scourge of leprosy, that *feethd upon the blood*, the Bible tells us. And did he spare himself? First of all he marshalled public opinion and resources here and abroad, he made of abandoned Culion a haven of comfort and hope for the suffering, and he visited them as often as he could, to cheer them under the rigors of the cure. When he saw them, he took them by the hand and made them feel, as much as his inspiring presence could, that they were men among men. Inexorably too, as in the yellow fever instance, he asked them for their children, born clean, to be taken away from Culion and kept from contamination. His bounden humanity, then, governed by scientific judgment, sets him apart as a world benefactor.

Now let us narrow the viewpoint, in a sense; let us speak of the Philippines generally. General Wood compelled every one, here and in America and throughout the world, to look upon the Philippine problem as but one phase of the general problem America confronts in the Far East. We have all seen the turn of press discussion; we all remember what Edward Price Bell got him to say in his interview for Bell's book, *World Chancelleries*. And only now we have all been reading thoughtful discussions of the Philippines in this light by capable young Filipinos themselves. This momentary reflection brings us to the question of General Wood's successor, the policy that is to follow upon his. Whoever the man may be, that policy cannot be materially modified without imposing perils upon the nation that General Wood's career as Governor General served effectively to put aside.

With this comment, woefully stilted and inadequate, we perform leave him in the patient hands of time and the gracious memory of mankind, for whom he made himself a gallant sacrifice.

## TWENTY-NINE YEARS

On May 1, 1898, Dewey closed successfully with the Spanish royal fleet in Manila, and on August 13 of that year the American flag was supported by the fleet, occupied Manila. It was the day after the protocol of peace was signed, and the advent of the third American community established in the Philippines, the first with their flag and their own sovereignty. In honor of Occupation Day and Month the *Journal* struts some two-color stuff in this issue, pictures of a sunset over Manila bay and the ruins of Guadalupe. We are still under the war department; no other territory was ever there so long; but we can celebrate anyway. Better days are surely ahead, and times are good right now, taking one thing with another. We have a beautiful archipelago; resourceful too, with a grateful soil and climate.

We say the third American community. The first was very early, for Father Zuñiga speaks of *Bostonians* here in 1805, as if they were a good many and quite influential in the commercial field. This community was wiped out, like the other foreign communities, by the Binondo mobs of 1820. Dr. T. H. Pardo de Tavera says in his history of the Philippines contributed to the Philippine Census of 1903 that no foreigner escaped. This is not quite exact, because Paul de la Gironière, a French ship's doctor, did escape and lived to write *Twenty Years in the Philippine Islands* and develop a first rate coffee plantation at Jala-Jala on Laguna de Bay. His ship had brought the cholera from Indochina; it was the people's first experience with Asiatic cholera, unknown in the islands up to that time, and the fatal rumor was spread among the ignorant that the foreigners had poisoned the wells. During two days, murderous fanaticism was uncontrolled. (There are still places in the islands where such rumors are readily believed, but they are fewer with every passing year.)

More Americans took the places of the mob victims. They established the second community that flourished through two generations but at last died away before the competition of the British, who had banks and ships behind them while the Americans belonged to a nation that was busy building up its west and neglectful, for the period, of its interests beyond the seas. The men of this second community were all Yankees, like the first, sea-traders and hard-bitten; but they grew old and died, while their sons, educated in the homeland, remained there to make their careers. One family alone remained, the Russells; and J. J. Russell, an active member of the chamber of commerce, is a direct descendant of the founder of Russell and Sturgis, for many years sharing honors in Manila only with another American firm, Feele, Hubbell and Company, as the leading commercial house in the islands.

The third time's the charm. This third American community of ours will no doubt perpetuate itself. Yet the *Journal* believes that more attention, speaking generally, might be given to the matter of bringing younger men up in the established houses and making their interest a personal one. Americans are certainly capable of going ahead, but sometimes they lunge forward somewhat blindly.