

# The Open Court

A MONTHLY MAGAZINE

Devoted to the Science of Religion, the Religion of Science, and the  
Extension of the Religious Parliament Idea

Editor: DR. PAUL CARUS,  
Assistant Editor: T. J. McCORMACK.

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VOL. XIV. (NO. 2)

FEBRUARY, 1900.

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## EXPANSION, BUT NOT IMPERIALISM.

BY THE EDITOR.

[The speeches of Senators Beveridge and Hoar have attracted much attention all over the country, but neither the one nor the other has, in our opinion, presented the right solution of the question. In a debate which took place on Jan. 17, 1900, before the Sunset Club of Chicago, the editor of *The Open Court* made some comments along the lines in which he has treated the subject from time to time in incidental notes in these pages. The following article is an expansion of his remarks.]

ON the question of the Philippines, our nation is divided into two parties: (1) the expansionists, and (2) the anti-imperialists. They are represented in the Senate by Beveridge, and by Hoar, and here in the Sunset Club by Col. J. H. Davidson and the Rev. Jenkin Lloyd Jones.<sup>1</sup>

The expansionists declare that we should not let slip the opportunity of growing in power and expanding into an empire that the world must reckon with and that in the future will make its influence felt all over the globe. The anti-imperialists take their stand upon high moral ground and urge us, not without some display of sentiment, to remain faithful to the ideal of liberty as outlined in our Declaration of Independence.

There is much that is right and good on either side. Both parties emphasise a truth, and I fail to see that the two views should not be reconcilable. In fact, I claim that on the main points, omitting all incidentals, they do not clash at all, and may be combined in the proposition *Expansion, but not imperialism*, which, I trust, will finally be accepted by the nation at large.

Let our new acquisitions, which *de facto*, by right of conquest

<sup>1</sup>The present article is a résumé of the editorial views on expansion, and we hope that our readers will forgive us for repeating some of the arguments presented in former numbers of *The Open Court*. See "Cuba as an Allied Republic of the United States," November 1898, pp. 690-993; "Americanism and Expansion," April 1899, pp. 215-223; "The Filipino Question," June 1899, pp. 375-6; and "The Philippine Imbroglio," August 1899, pp. 504-5.

and treaty of peace, are now our dependencies, be established as federal republics enjoying home rule in agreement with their own wishes and according to the character of their nationalities.<sup>1</sup> When dealing with them, let us avoid the very terms "dependency" and "subject"; let us call them, and in every respect treat them as, independent allies and let us allow them sovereignty in their own sphere of political life. But while we should give independence to Cuba, Porto Rico, and the Philippines, we need not abandon the strongholds and harbor defences of these islands. We might hold them as federal fortifications, but we must hold them under all circumstances, and I go so far as to claim that it is the *duty* of the United States government to retain them, for they are indispensable to the maintenance of our interests in the world's politics; and they have fallen into our hands, not by chance, but through the necessity of our historical development, which led to a conflict with Spain and pitted the representatives of two opposed principles against one another upon the very spots where their interests collided.

As to the Philippines<sup>2</sup> the best plan may prove to be a division of the territory into various states with different constitutions according to local requirements, ethnological as well as religious. The Mussulmans, the various mountain tribes, the Filipinos, the European colonists of the city of Manila, etc., are too disparate elements to enter as homogeneous ingredients into the plan of a comprehensive Philippine Republic.<sup>3</sup> But the various districts might be independent and might form a loose confederacy under the presidency of the United States; and a federal supreme court should be instituted as a court of last appeal in all affairs, civil litigations and criminal proceedings. It would be the duty of the

<sup>1</sup> The question of the constitutionality of the Open Door policy which in the present number is so ably handled by Mr. Roscoe C. E. Brown is a legitimate problem if our new acquisitions are to be treated as dependencies the laws governing which must be manufactured at Washington. But the question could not be raised at all if the proposition were accepted which we advocate as the only practicable solution. It is obvious that whatever relations may be covered by the name of this alliance, our Constitution can have no direct bearing on the administration or methods of taxation in the islands. For further details see the article "China and the Philippines," on p. 333 of the present number.

<sup>2</sup> We say "the Philippines," not the Filipinos, for the Filipinos are only a part of the inhabitants of the Philippines. We must not forget that the European residents in Manila have a right, too, to make their wishes respected. In addition there are other tribes and residents. Aguinaldo represents only a fraction of the Filipinos.

<sup>3</sup> If we attempt to govern the Philippine Islands, we would be responsible for the laws that prevail there, and the criticism of the anti-imperialists that we sanction slavery and polygamy would be just. But if we make of the Sulu Mohammedans a federal state, we could not be blamed for their institutions, and all that can be expected of us would be that we exercise a moral influence upon our allies which will finally lead to the abolition of institutions which are not compatible with our own ideals of civilised life.

latter so to construe the laws of the different states that they would not lead to collisions and would be interpreted in the spirit of modern civilisation and humaneness.

There are imperialists who claim that the Filipinos are not fit to govern themselves. It may be. But have we not large classes in the United States that in this respect are no whit better?

If the inhabitants of our conquered territories are not yet fit to govern themselves (as is so frequently claimed), let us teach them the principles of self-government; and I feel sure that according to the old maxim, *docendo discimus*, we ourselves shall be able to profit by these lessons as much as, perhaps more than, the Filipinos.

The acquisition of the new territories will prove a test of our own worth. Even if we make of them federal republics, our responsibility does not cease entirely; and we shall naturally watch their development with parental pride. As the education of children exercises an educational influence on the parents themselves, so the United States may derive unexpected blessings from a faithful discharge of their duties toward their new wards.

There are many reasons for granting unreserved home rule to the Philippines, but I will here mention only the one that appeals most strongly to the advocates of imperialism. It is this: that our hold on the islands will be strongest if we grant to the inhabitants perfect independence. If we subdue them they will be our enemies. *Quot servi tot hostes*. Let the natives of the Philippines and of all the other new territories elect their own magistrates and attend to the policing of the country by men of their own choice, of their own language, of their own nationality, and according to principles which they deem best. The easiest way of governing people, be they colonists or a conquered race, is by giving them local self-government. The more independent they feel the more satisfied they will be.

If we guarantee the inhabitants of the Philippines their liberty, they will prove themselves to be sincere allies, and in critical times we may rely upon their friendship.

But why should we not abandon the islands entirely? Why should we not with the anti-imperialists say that we have no business in Havana and Manila?

Did you ever consider that from the harbors of Cuba and Porto Rico a bold though weak enemy could destroy within a week our entire coast trade and harrass our maritime cities with impunity? Havana, Cienfuegos, Santiago de Cuba, San Juan of Porto Rico, command the seas that wash our shores, and without them the



canal that is to unite the two greatest oceans of the world cannot be controlled. The possession of these strongholds is of vital interest to us and should not be left to the accidents of the home politics of the islands.

The same (in a modified form) is true of the fortifications of Manila Bay, of Apia, and Honolulu. To surrender any one of these fortifications would be treason toward the mission of the United States. Cavité in hostile hands would, in the emergency of war, be a formidable weapon against us, but Manila Bay in our possession will serve our navy for a basis of operation and will offer our merchantmen in the far East a convenient place of refuge.

The idea that the business of the United States is at home, and that the Illinois farmer has no interest beyond the territory which he plows, is a grave mistake. The world is one great organism, and if we cannot, or dare not, take a strong stand in the Gulf and in the Pacific we shall soon see our national life crippled in our own country. If we want to stand up for American principles in contrast to European principles, we must look out for the future and strengthen our position which is much weaker than our national vanity would admit. It is not enough to talk about ideals, we must work for them and, if need be, fight for them.

Aye, to fight for them! There is the rub. Our friends, the anti-imperialists, as a rule, denounce war and speak of the dangers of standing armies and militarism. But this world is a world of struggle; and he who does not struggle will be trampled under foot.

War is terrible, but we cannot change the constitution of the universe, the plan of which is to bring out nobler qualities by combat and competition. We can replace the crude modes of battle with more refined methods, the club with the gun and the gun with legal argument; but even a lawsuit remains a struggle, and the stronger one conquers.

Strength is an indispensable quality, but there is this comfort that brute force prevails only for the moment, and strength not allied with justice cannot stand. It is right that gives to power endurance, in which sense the saying is true that right is might.

Arbitration will become a more and more acceptable way of settling international disputes; but we shall see that arbitration will be decided in favor of that side which in case of war would win. The United States are a peaceful nation, but they will remain at peace only so long as they are strong enough to defend themselves against foreign infringement.

As to militarism I claim, first, that it is dangerous only when



the life of the nation is rotten. Secondly, if we grant the newly acquired territories home rule, we shall have as little need of a standing army in the Philippines as we have here among us to-day for the sake of keeping the United States loyal to the Union. And, thirdly, what we need to maintain ourselves in the struggle for existence among the nations of the world is not a strong army but a strong navy, and no one has as yet claimed that the navy might become dangerous to the liberties of the nation.<sup>1</sup>

We wrong no one in retaining these harbor defences of the islands ceded to us by Spain; for certainly neither Aguinaldo nor any of his followers has a better title to the possession of Cavité. The Filipinos are not the only inhabitants of the Philippines; the colonists of European extraction have no less a right to life and liberty in the islands; and *we* have the same right as they to go there. Let our navy, whom destiny and duty brought thither, in the name of our government have and hold what through an inevitable course of events fell into their hands.

By granting independence and home rule, nay, even sovereignty, to the inhabitants of the islands, but retaining the strongholds of the country, we can be good expansionists and at the same time thorough anti-imperialists.

Allow me here to make an incidental comment as to the nature of sovereignty, what it involves and what it does not involve. Sovereignty means independence and involves the right of administering one's own affairs without the intrusion of outsiders. But the sovereignty of a state or a monarchy does not necessarily involve

<sup>1</sup> Militarism is dangerous in France, because there is something rotten in the Republic, but it is not dangerous in Germany. Most of the Germans who denounce the German army as an unbearable burden or an imperialistic institution are deserters or people who left the fatherland merely to shirk their military duty. They know not whereof they speak. The army is a two-edged sword, which the government is very fearful of using for selfish ends, for they know very well that they could not use it twice with success. The author of this article served in the Prussian field artillery, regiment No. 17, and was attached as a lieutenant of the reserves to the Saxon artillery, regiment No. 12, until he became naturalised as a citizen of the United States, and he challenges anybody to deny that the regulations of the German army have a good deal of democratic principle in them. There is no respect of person but duty rules supreme and the practical application of this rule is one, perhaps the main, reason of its strength.

So long as they were warlike, so long as they were ready to fight for their ideals and the expansion of their kind of civilisation with sword in hand, the Roman Republic stood unshaken, but when they became refined by the luxuries of peace and left the glory of dying for their country to mercenary soldiers, Rome degenerated and the establishment of Cæsarism became necessary as the best thing that could be had under the circumstances. Militarism in itself does not endanger liberty; but lack of strength and flabby love of peace at home and abroad do.

One of the speakers at the Sunset Club praised Mr. Gladstone's love of peace; but please bear in mind that by his principles of avoiding war he encouraged England's enemies, and the whig ministry had to wage more wars than its Tory predecessor Lord Palmerston.

Far from being a noble and moral principle, the ideal of peace at any price is mere sentimentalism, and is as immoral as the ovine morality of those who admire the sheep for its good nature in allowing itself to be devoured by the wolf.

the regulation of import duties, and a series of rights which are exercised by the representatives of a confederation of two or several allied sovereign states. Thus, the states of our Union are sovereign states, and so in Germany are the kingdoms of Bavaria, Württemberg, and Saxony; but they, as such, have no representatives at foreign courts; they have under their control no standing armies, nor do they possess the right of levying duties or any other indirect taxes. There is no need of entering into details, as it will be sufficient to indicate that the sphere of regulating international relations is a province of its own which does not necessarily belong to the institution of home rule.

It is in the interests of the islands themselves that we should reserve to ourselves, at least at present, the regulation of their international relations, for thus alone can they be protected against foreign encroachments which, for instance, Hayti has suffered repeatedly at the hands of European powers; and the mode in which we should in the course of time change this condition may fairly be left to future developments.

Let us look out for advantages that are real, which consist in the expansion of our industries and our commerce, including the possession of a few important strongholds of strategic importance for the protection of our interests in cases of war, but not in the acquisition of territorial possessions with the right to interfere with the home politics of other nations, which only increases our responsibilities, leads to complications of incalculable intricacy, and renders our position precarious.

Under all circumstances the policy of changing our dependencies into federal republics as independent as possible in their home politics seems to be the most promising, the easiest, and the best method of dealing with the intricate questions that arise from our territorial expansion. We should have in that case all the advantages which other nations have through actual possession, and should be relieved of the responsibility of detailed management, which, after all, is a risk and a danger, bringing no returns whatever, except perhaps to a few office-hunters, to keep out whom would be a great blessing and would save our nation the unpleasant experience of making itself obnoxious to its new allies.

Genuine expansion carries the principles of our own history with it and extends the blessings as well as the responsibilities of home rule to those who come under our influence. Imperialism however is a mere external show of expansion without any actual benefit. Imperialism would weaken our position in the world.

But because we should not allow our country to drift into imperialism, we must not set our face against expansion. Why should we? If the feet of our boys are growing shall we not allow them to wear boots of a larger size?

The anti-imperialists claim that expansion is a new departure in the history of the United States, but this is an error. We have been expanding since the very day that the thirteen colonies constituted themselves as states, and an irony of fate which is so often visible in history placed Thomas Jefferson, the leader of the anti-imperialists, then called Whigs or anti-federalists, in power at the very moment when the first opportunity offered itself of a most important expansion. James Monroe, the Whig ambassador of the United States, reached Paris in 1803 at the time when France was preparing for war with Great Britain; and the French government offered to the United States for \$15,000,000 that large tract of territory then called Louisiana, covering the entire Mississippi valley including the whole state of Illinois with our good city of Chicago and extending northward to Canada. The Whig ambassador did not hesitate to conclude the bargain, and the Whig president endorsed it, although it was fundamentally and directly opposed to his anti-imperialistic interpretation of the constitution. He felt urged to excuse his conduct by saying that he "acted like a guardian who makes an unauthorised purchase for the benefit of his ward, trusting that the latter will afterwards ratify it;" but he forgot to ask the consent of both parties concerned, the people of the United States and the inhabitants of Louisiana, and perhaps with good reasons; for the latter, then consisting mainly of French colonists, would undoubtedly have as vigorously protested against the ratification of the bargain as the present inhabitants are satisfied with it. Think what would have become of the United States if England had taken the Mississippi valley which at this critical moment was prevented only by an anti-imperialist acting according to the principles of imperialism!

We grant that the present administration made mistakes, but we ought to be charitable; for it is likely that the anti-expansionists, if they had been in power, would have done no better. The situation was difficult, and criticism is easy. They will always be "antis"; some people are born so. It is probable that if the "antis" had been in power, they would be expansionists now; and if not, if they had withdrawn from the islands, the situation there would be worse than it is at present.

If the purchase of Louisiana had been made by a federalist

president, would not Mr. Jefferson have censured him severely for the unwarranted trespass of his power? Since the silver issue has worn out, the "antis" need a new campaign cry, and it seems that anti-expansion is the best obtainable.

One more word. Cuba seemed to be a witches' cauldron of restlessness and yet our relation to the island is so far quite satisfactory. On the other hand, the Filipinos were regarded as a peaceful nation who would be easily managed and might quickly be Americanised. Yet we have trouble upon trouble with them and in spite of many official announcements that the end of the revolution is near on hand, their pacification is still unaccomplished. And why? because the United States government was careful enough to treat Cuba according to the principle here sketched out, but did not deem the same consideration necessary for the Filipinos.

Let us heed the lesson which these facts teach.