

HOW TO GOVERN THE PHILIPPINES.

BY THE EDITOR.

MR. Poultney Bigelow is an author of vigor, and it is refreshing to read in the present number his article on "A Japanese Pan-malaya," in which, while referring to Lafcadio Hearn, he advocates the right of the Japanese to act as protectors of the Filipinos on the plea that both belong to the Malay race. It goes without saying that we do not side with Mr. Bigelow in his main contentions; but we do not for that reason propose to hush the voice crying in the wilderness, for we believe that he has something to say. Though Mr. Bigelow may go too far, his note of warning should be heeded, and there is ample need of reform. We endorse neither his denunciation of Christian missions nor do we countenance his desire to have the Philippines annexed to Japan, yet we believe good philippics in good season will be wholesome food for thought, especially to those who side with the current opinion.

There is much to be said against Christian missions; we know it and think that present methods of missionarizing should be modified, yet for all that I confess that I myself am not hostile to missions; on the contrary, I would recommend every possible mode of exchange of thought in matters religious just as much as in worldly affairs. The great political powers keep embassies at the capitals of the several nations; why should not religious bodies be represented in countries where they have not yet found a footing? And it would be highly desirable not only to send religious representatives into other countries, but also to receive them at home. We ought not to know from hearsay of the Buddhist, the Brahman, the Mohammedan, the Jew, the Parsi, and the Jain faith, but we ourselves ought to meet real living pagans, who should be just as worthy types of their religion as the ambassadors are of their various nationalities.

The spirit in which many of the Christian missionaries have

gone to foreign countries is wrong; it is not always the spirit of peace and love as it ought to be if they come in the name of Christ, but they consider themselves frequently as members of the Church militant and regarding themselves as enemies of all other creeds, come to destroy the established faith of the country which they invade. Yet, I am far from denouncing missions as such, and would rather continue to encourage the old practice of sending out missionaries to other countries; but I would change the missionary spirit, and advise missionaries to approach the priests of other religions as brothers and friends. They ought to go to a pagan country with the intention of first studying the faith of their brother men, be they Buddhists, or Brahmans, or Parsis, etc. Before they attempt to convert they should try to understand others, and the result would be a wholesome quickening of the religious interest in both countries, the missionaries' old home whence they come, and their new home, the country of the people among whom they have settled as religious emissaries of the Christian faith.¹

As to the problem of the Philippines I believe it would not have been right on the part of the United States to abandon the islands after having taken them by conquest. We not only had a right to keep possession of them but also a duty; mainly for our own sake on account of the part we have to play in the world's history, but incidentally also for the sake of the conquered islands themselves. The old idea that the United States can keep to itself and not mix into the politics of the world is tenable only within definite and narrow limits, and this truth has been discovered by our diplomats who know how the world runs. To avoid entanglements with Europe does not necessarily mean that we should voluntarily resign making our influence felt in the history of mankind.

The laws of the evolution of nations are just as unchangeable as physical laws and the United States with its American ideals will have to fight its way to success. The struggle need not be fought out in actual wars, but it will be a struggle nevertheless, the result of which depends on the power we have actually at our command, and the decision of the great international conflicts will be made not by armies but by the navies of the world. The fate of a navy, however, does not depend only on the amount of armed cruisers and guns but also on the possession of points of strategic importance, among them fortified harbors and safe coaling stations which in

¹ Further details of my view on missions I have incorporated in an article written at the request of the editor of the *American Journal of Theology*, and published in the January number of that periodical (p. 13 ff.) under the title "Missions From the Standpoint of Comparative Religion."

war time can serve as bases of operation. The Philippines were thrown into our hands by a happy accident. We did not seek their conquest, but it was given us through an unpremeditated chance, and considering the enormous commercial as well as strategic importance of the islands it would be foolish to refuse the opportunity.

If we consider that the United States should not only stand for its people and their commercial interest, but also for the ideals of a humanitarian commonwealth built up upon republican principles, the folly of abandoning a great prize, such as the possession of the Philippines, would have become a crime and a betrayal of our national future. Self-assertion is not merely a right, it is a duty, though we must bear in mind that the moral significance of this duty depends upon the aim with which we identify ourselves.

In the case of the Philippines, we ought to have shown the spirit of our ideals on the first day we set foot on the conquered territory. We ought to have given to the country the liberty for which its inhabitants have been fighting in vain against their oppressors.

I insist that giving liberty to the people would not have excluded the right of the United States to keep the balance of power in her own hands, so as to allow her in case of emergency to interfere with unruly elements and restore order as has recently been done in Cuba.

The proper method of governing the Philippines would have been not to promise self-government and home rule, but to have at once permitted the people to actually enjoy these benefits. They should have had from the start all the rights which the inhabitants of the territories or perhaps even the several states of the United States possess.

It is true that the population is not homogeneous, and the interests of the people must naturally differ, but that could have been helped by dividing the country into districts, each of which might have a constitution of its own according to the desires of the inhabitants. The city of Manila with its many foreign residents might have become a free city after the fashion of the Hansa towns, a city republic. The tribes in the mountains might have had a relative independence such as has been given to the Sulu Moham-medans, or our Indians, by which they are left free to regulate their home affairs themselves under the protection of the United States Government. The chiefs of the savage tribes might either be hereditary or elected by their own people according to their traditions or wants, and they, the chiefs, should be held responsible for the good

behavior of the tribe. The rural districts also might have had a constitution of their own in agreement with their needs and customs, but everywhere home government ought to have been introduced at once and we should have given the people as much liberty as possible. The United States should have retained the possessions previously held by the Spanish government, Cavité, the port defences, in the bay of Manila and all other fortifications which are practically the key to the strategic possession of the entire Philippines.

All these separate communities each with its own constitution governed by its own magistrates should then be combined into an organization of its own, and all of them should be represented in a central body of a federal legislature, determining the policy of the federal executive who should have acted as a central government, just as the United States government stands above the several states. In the federal council the representative of the United States government might be president *ex officio* of the union. The constitution of the Philippine confederacy should have contained a paragraph establishing an indissoluble alliance with the United States carefully worded so as to exclude any possible foreign interference, and making the United States government the protector of the Philippine constitution with all the rights necessary to uphold and defend it. Such a clause would have practically amounted to an exercise of what in terms of European statesmanship is called "sovereignty."

Under such a constitution, the Philippines would have enjoyed home rule, and every Filipino would have been as free as an American citizen. The several states of the Philippine Islands would have enjoyed the same liberty as any state of the United States, and there would have been no possible reason for complaint, yet for all matters of importance the Philippines would have been and would remain within the sphere of influence of the United States, as much so as if they had been incorporated into the United States territory. The islands would have been a relatively independent confederacy but for all purposes of peaceful commercial life as well as for emergencies in time of war, this loose confederacy would have been tied to us by as strong a bond of alliance as could be desired for any legitimate purpose.

Our legislators and our government did not see this point at the time when the country was annexed, yet we dare say that it would not be too late to pursue this policy and introduce it either by legislation or by presidential rulings, sanctioned by congress.

Incidentally I will remark that self-government is always the

easiest way of preserving the spirit of order in any nation, especially if the inhabitants are unruly. It sounds like an Irish bull, but it is true nevertheless that the easiest way of governing people is by giving them home rule. By and by even the Czar will learn this lesson; would it not be good, if we began to practice it in our colonial possessions?

It is very difficult to govern a country without making mistakes, still more difficult is it to appoint always the right persons for important offices. If such mistakes are made by the people themselves, they have themselves to blame, and can not reproach the central government for tyranny or corruption, or whatever it be. People obey their own officers much better than those appointed by some superior or distant government. The latter is felt as a tyranny, the former is subject to redress and the people's own party leaders will have to bear the blame.

In case such a composite populace as that of the Philippines would not have been able to keep order by the method of self-government an interference on the part of the United States to restore order would not have been considered as an abuse of power but would have been gratefully welcomed by the better classes, and instead of being regarded as the suppressor of liberty, the United States would have been hailed as the restorer of law and order.

Though I have a great respect for the Japanese I doubt very much whether they could have handled the Philippines as easily as Mr. Poultney Bigelow appears to think. We have not heard much of the troubles of Formosa, but that is not due to the alleged fact that there have not been any, but that our ignorance of that part of the world is too dense to allow us much insight into its local conditions, and the Japanese have not published more of their experiences with the conquered island, than was absolutely necessary. Now and then rumors have come out that they have had to contend with difficulties such as we have had with the Philippines, but the world took little or no interest in the reports. Yet even if the Japanese had been unexpectedly successful with Formosa, it is not likely that they would have succeeded with the Philippines, for we must consider that the Philippines are not inhabited only by Filipinos. We can not ignore the Spanish or other European settlers whose interests commercially, politically and humanely considered are at least as broad and as great as those of the original inhabitants, the savage mountaineers, and the Malay invaders, the Filipinos. Nor is it likely that they all would have tolerated, much less welcomed, the Japanese rule.

It seems to me that as a matter of actual prudence, the Japanese ought to prefer the American rule in the Philippines, for what the Japanese want and need there is trade under civilized conditions, so that the rights of foreign traders shall be as assured as the home interests of the inhabitants. The Japanese have enough to do with Korea and Formosa. If they could digest more territory they might have taken a slice of Manchuria, but they wisely abstained from overtaxing their capacity of annexation.

Though I do not accept Mr. Bigelow's views of the the Philippine question I am glad to offer him the opportunity to have his say, and wish his criticism to be heeded. Our government has made mistakes, and the sooner we know it the earlier they can be corrected and the better a relation can be established between the United States and the Philippines. I am sure that on this basis we could build a more lasting and a more satisfactory union of the two, which would be beneficial to both parties.