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Two things need close watching by the people of the United States, at this time of war excitement, when, under cover of a seductive but false patriotism, the beneficiaries of special pecuniary interests find exceptional opportunities to plot and plan for the "glory" and "honor" of their country and the triumph of plutocracy. One of these is the itch for "national expansion;" the other is the measure for raising war revenues.

The "national expansion" idea is well expressed by F. F. Hilder, secretary of the National Geographical Society, in an instructive and interesting description of the Philippine Islands with which he favors the public. Though he admits that we did not start out upon a war of conquest, but took up arms to free Cuba, and while he would have us cling to our original object so far as Cuba is concerned, yet the temptation which Admiral Dewey's victory offers is too inviting for his jingo spirit, and he urges the appropriation of the Philippines. And while we are at it, he would have us take Puerto Rico as well. By way of excuse for these acts of conquest, he suggests that as bankrupt Spain has no ready cash with which to pay a war indemnity, we should "take real estate instead."

The secretary of the National Geographical Society is not alone in putting forth feelers as to "national expansion." About the same time at which he writes come other intimations from Washington, apparently inspired, and from London, too, that it behooves the United States to take

advantage of the opportunity which the war with Spain seems to offer, of becoming one of the great gobbling powers of the earth. The man must be both blind and deaf who cannot understand that the desire for conquest which afflicts fallen man is being gently played upon at this crisis. And if the people do not take warning in time, the end of the war may find this country entering upon a career of "expansion" which will place it at the mercy of the manipulators of a great navy and a large standing army. This is not a necessary result of the war, but it is one which may be reasonably apprehended. If the really democratic elements of the country which approve this war for liberty, do not make themselves clearly understood as being opposed to a war of conquest, the days of the great American republic are numbered, and those of the American empire are at hand.

The one supreme purpose of this war should continue to be what it was at the beginning—the independence of Cuba. Nor should plutocratic schemers, such as Elkins and Hanna are or represent, be allowed to fool the American public by setting up a fraudulent independence there. The Cuban independence which our people have virtually recognized—which Congress did in terms recognize by concurrent resolution two years ago, and which the masses now recognize by uniting the banner of Cuba libre with the stars and stripes—is that of the insurgents. When their flag waves over all Cuba, our work in this war will have been done.

But we should not thereupon abandon the Philippine islands, nor leave Spain in the quiet possession of Puerto Rico. The Philippines have fallen into our hands by the fortunes of war, and though they should not be

retained as a spoil of war, neither should they be passed back to the bloodthirsty rule of the Spaniard. Since they have come under our guardianship, as an incident of a war in which we are engaged, we ought to give them the independence that we have demanded and are fighting for in behalf of Cuba. And as to Puerto Rico, inasmuch as the Spanish government on this hemisphere has been a nuisance, the independence of that island also should be required, and Spain sent once for all—bag, baggage, plunder and blood—out of our neighborhood. To the extent that this war is carried beyond its original purpose of freeing Cuba, we must see to it—if we have any real regard for national honor and human rights—that it is carried only in the direction of further freedom. It is not "expansion" of power, but expansion of liberty, to which American ambition should aspire.

Cautions are abundant, of course, against entrusting Cubans, Puerto Ricans, and Philippine Islanders with independence. It is the old objection to democracy, which has been raised time out of mind to every advance toward self-government. Because a people cannot be expected to govern themselves as their betters would like to see them governed, their betters say they are unfit for self-government. The objection is invalid. If it were reasonably certain that any people are unfit for self-government, it would be still more certain that no other people are fit to govern them. The only remedy for unfitness for self-government is self-government itself. This is true of Cuba, it is true of Puerto Rico, and it is true of the Philippine Islands. If they are unfit to govern themselves, after hundreds of years of government by others, they will never learn to gov-

ern themselves under government by others. Let them, then, try the experiment of self-government at once. Mexico, under self-government, has learned, in spite of extraordinary disadvantages, to govern herself in much less time than Spain spent in educating her colonies. Give the Cubans, the Philippine Islanders, the Puerto Ricans as good a chance as Mexico has had, and if after a couple of centuries they have not improved, it may be more plausibly argued that self-government is no better for a people than paternal government. At present the argument from experience runs the other way.

Probably the protest against Cuban and Puerto Rican self-government will not make much impression upon the American mind. It is too obviously inspired by men who would like to do the governing down there in our name. Of the Philippines, however, so little is known, and of that so little is true, that a notion prevails that the natives are savages who would need to be under tutelage lest they run amuck among the peaceable inhabitants. But the very secretary of the geographical society whom we have quoted above, speaks of the natives of the Philippine Islands as "mild and amiable." What better material could be desired for an experiment in self-government? For conquest, a mild and amiable people might not be well adapted; but for peaceable self-government, why not?

The stories of Philippine savagery evidently have their origin in the acts of reprisal of the natives against their Spanish masters. But these acts show no incapacity for self-government. On the contrary they show that the natives, despite their amiability and mildness, are unmistakably human. The circumstances at the same time indicate that they are not savage. Have they murdered women and children? Yes. But that is not savage under the circumstances. The women and children, and the men, too, whom they have murdered, are Spanish

women, children and men; and the Spanish themselves began that kind of warfare by murdering native men, women and children. What tells strongly for the capacity of the Philippine natives for self-government is the fact that while no Spaniard dare venture among them, white men and women not Spaniards do so with perfect safety. What better proof could be required that the natives are not waging indiscriminate warfare upon civilized people than this fact that they scrupulously confine their depredations to the race which indiscriminately murders their fathers, brothers, sons, wives, sisters, mothers and children? Could Anglo-Saxons be trusted not to retaliate in the same way? If they could be, at what time since the Indian wars in this country did they reform? There is no valid reason for believing that the Philippine Islanders could not govern themselves. Nor is there any real objection to allowing them to try, except the objection that they might prevent the privileged classes of civilized nations from preying upon them.

To be sure, if we allowed Cuba, Puerto Rico and the Philippines to set up independent governments we might have to forego a war indemnity from Spain, for Spain is bankrupt. But we want no indemnity. That circumstances may sometimes warrant war indemnities, we will not dispute, but there are no such circumstances in connection with this war. We have gone to war with Spain to liberate outraged neighbors; Spain has not made war upon us wantonly. We therefore are in no position to ask indemnity, either in money or real estate. To do so would reflect upon our honor as a nation much in the same way, though not to the same degree, that acts of conquest would.

Even at their best, war indemnities are of doubtful utility. They add to the burdens of the vanquished people without relieving the victorious people. Suppose, for instance, that we were paid an indemnity at the end of

this war. Think of the crushing weight with which it would fall upon the poor Spaniards who are already so heavily taxed that they are rioting all over Spain! Yet it would not relieve the people in this country who are providing the funds with which to prosecute the war on our side. It might be made to benefit those of them who continued to be taxpayers; but it would return no taxes that had been paid. Indirect taxes are never returned. The probability is that a war indemnity, if used at all to refund taxes, would be used to refund direct taxes, which are paid chiefly by the richer classes. Of all the taxes of the civil war, for example, only one kind was returned, and that was the tax on land—the one tax which fell in any large amount upon unearned values. True, these observations would not apply to an indemnity in the form of a transfer of sovereignty over Puerto Rico and the Philippines. But the acceptance permanently of that transfer would so utterly discredit our good faith, so completely prove that we had been waging a war of conquest instead of liberation, and withal would put us in so much danger from "national expansion," that even a money indemnity would be at once more safe and more honorable, less mean and sordid.

The second object of popular vigilance at this time—the war revenue measure—is as we write still undetermined in its details. It is in this connection that the pretense of patriotism is most dishonestly set up by the plutocrats. Because some congressmen, more truly patriotic than their detractors, have insisted upon forbidding the issue of interest-bearing bonds, and have tried to shift some of the burden of taxation from the masses of the people to accumulated wealth, they are denounced as traitors who endeavor to embarrass the government. That they are embarrassing somebody is true enough, but it is not the government. It is the plutocratic ring who want to run the government.