

Is America Indifferent to the Philippines?

By THEODORE ROOSEVELT
and NEWTON W. GILBERT



RS. MARTIN EGAN, of Manila, is now in this country endeavoring to arouse active interest in some of the questions connected with the American administration of the Philippine Islands. She has been sent to America under the auspices of public organizations in Manila, chief among which is the Manila Merchants' Association, composed of Filipinos and Americans, to try to gain the sympathetic attention of the people of the United States to the work which has

been done, is being done, and still remains to be done in the Philippine Islands. The movement which resulted in the mission of Mrs. Egan was a popular one, and the funds wherewith to defray its expenses were raised by subscription in Manila. Mrs. Egan has brought with her a number of newspaper and magazine articles by American and Filipino officials and residents of the islands. These articles, after their appearance in various journals, will be embodied in a book, which will be published in this country some time during the coming winter. The Outlook has had the opportunity of obtaining two of these articles, of which the first, by Commissioner Gilbert, is here presented to our readers. The second, by Mr. Milton E. Springer, giving some account of the resources of the Philippines, will be published later. With reference to Mrs. Egan's mission, President Roosevelt has written a letter to the Editor-in-Chief of The Outlook which, together with Commissioner Gilbert's article, will help Americans to answer the question whether their country is indifferent to its responsibilities in the Philippine Islands.—THE EDITORS.

The American Attitude Toward the Philippines

BY THEODORE ROOSEVELT

Oyster Bay, September 9, 1908.

My dear Dr. Abbott:

I have looked over the really noteworthy list of articles on the Philippines obtained by Mrs. Egan, and have glanced at some of the articles themselves. I greatly hope that these articles will have the widest possible circulation among our people, for they seem to me to give a more comprehensive account of the exact situation in the Philippines than I have seen published from any other sources during the seven years that I have been President. The articles by the American officials, such as that by Governor-General Smith on "The Past and Future Filipino;" "American Achievements in the Philippines," by

Commissioner Gilbert; the accounts of our dealing with the health problem in this new tropical possession, by Drs. Musgrave, Strong, McDill, and others; upon our educational system in the Philippines, by Dr. Barrows; on our agricultural school and medical college, and what they will mean for the future development of the Filipinos, by Drs. Freer and Copeland—all of these and others like them are of the utmost importance. But in addition to these there are articles of equal interest and importance, by men not in the Government service. Among them are a study of the Catholic Church in the Philippine Islands by the Right Rev. Archbishop Harty, and of the Protestant churches

there by the Rev. Charles W. Wright; a description of the oldest educational institution under the American flag, and another, of the charitable institutions of the Philippines, by Father Volz; and stories of the old Philippine churches by Superintendent O'Reilly, of the Manila schools. The material side of what we are doing is shown in the appeal from the Merchants' Association of Manila, written by Mr. John Gibson, its President; in Mr. Springer's account of the resources of the Philippines [this article will be published later in *The Outlook*], and in Colonel Colton's account of "The American Mart in the Far East with the Free Zone at Manila." Most important of all, it seems to me, are the articles by native Filipinos; such as the description of the First Philippines Assembly by the Speaker, Mr. Osmena; "The History of Justice in the Philippines," by the Chief Justice, Mr. Arellano; the statement of "What American Justice has done for the Philippines," by Commissioner Araneta; the reasons given by various distinguished Filipinos—judges, members of assembly, and private citizens—as to why they feel that at this time to thrust independence upon the Philippines would be to work far-reaching calamity to the islands.

Surely all of this conveys a body of information which should command the careful attention of the American people, and if this attention is given it I am persuaded that with it will come a realization of the extraordinary service that, to the lasting honor of America, has been rendered the Philippine people by

our officials in the Philippines during the last ten years, and of the imperative need that the policy so successfully inaugurated shall continue unbroken. I earnestly hope that the American people will show the sympathetic interest in the islands necessary if we are to continue to do with patience and proper pride our great task there. I do not believe that in all history there is another example so marked of the way in which a great people has with wisdom and disinterestedness managed the affairs of a great foreign dependency with an eye single to the good of that dependency. There is no danger whatever of our exploiting the Philippines for individual American benefit. Everything that has been done or that we contemplate doing in the islands is for the immediate or eventual benefit of the Filipinos themselves; and nothing would benefit them more than to enlist American capital in the development of the islands. My only regret is that more capital has not gone there.

I am certain that our people feel an earnest desire to do their full duty to the Philippines. I am not in the least afraid of hostility to what we have done in the islands, but I sometimes am afraid of indifference; and I know that it is often harder to turn indifference into interest than to turn hostility into approval. Our real problem is to convert indifference to the Philippines into active interest, and it seems to me that these articles in the possession of Mrs. Egan offer one admirable means to this end.

Sincerely yours,

THEODORE ROOSEVELT.