

THE HELL OF WAR AND ITS PENALTIES.

BY EDWARD ATKINSON, OF BOSTON.

President McKinley said rightly that to allow a war undertaken in the name of humanity to be perverted into a war of conquest would be a crime, but I doubt if he was fully aware of the penalty which would at once be met by the criminal nation.

A war of conquest or any permanent occupation of tropical countries by white troops brings not only fevers and malaria upon them of well-known kinds, but yet worse, more fatal and more certain to bring moral and physical degeneration upon them is the infection of venereal disease.

There are many good people whose sympathies have been aroused by the anticipation of being enabled to carry the benefits of Protestant Christianity and of personal liberty to the oppressed in the West Indies and the Philippine islands. We may even admit all that is urged in favor of making the conquest of these islands upon these grounds, but before we undertake this philanthropic enterprise may it not be judicious to count the cost? I do not mean the money cost and the necessity which has lately been made very plain of adding new taxes even to the war revenues now being collected. That burden we can bear if we must. The greater cost will be the corruption of the blood through the infection of every force that will be annually called out to maintain our rule.

It may be well to ask all who are imbued with this missionary sympathy, how many young men of our own brotherhood are you willing to sacrifice for each convert? How many of your own sons will you expose to sure infection and degeneration in the conduct of your philanthropic purpose? Or will you satisfy your own consciences by consenting to the necessary conscription of other people's sons when it presently becomes impossible to maintain our armed forces in these islands without a draft?

I know that this is a very unsavory subject and that I am using terms which are not commonly spoken aloud, but it happens that in the course of my social studies my attention has been called to this social evil, and I think I should be wanting in my duty if I did not call public attention to the dangers in the plainest possible way.

To that end I lately addressed a letter to President McKinley, of which the following is a slightly condensed copy:

"PRESIDENT WILLIAM MCKINLEY:

Sir: I venture to present a protest against any longer occupation of the Philippine islands, of Cuba, and of Porto Rico, or the use of any larger forces than are needed to enable the people of these islands to frame and form a method of government under which personal liberty and individual rights

may be established, and to enter upon this undertaking. Whether or not they are capable of maintaining such governments after their being enabled to do so by the removal of the Spanish rule is not a matter with which we have any permanent concern.

"I present this case, as hereinafter stated, in my personal capacity, pending the organization of what will probably become a great national Anti-Imperialist League, founded on the principles of Washington's Farewell address, for which the preparations are being made and the consultations are being had throughout the country.

"To the extent named the burden of temporary occupation must be assumed; beyond that, any exercise of dominion or sovereignty would be as unwarranted in principle and as inconsistent with the maintenance of our republican institutions as it would be dangerous to the armed forces required.

"The political wrong of assuming sovereignty by force over any part of these islands after a war undertaken in the name of humanity has been so forcefully stated by yourself that no words of mine could bring out the iniquity of such a course more plainly, but it is feared that your hand may be forced again, as it was apparently, into a premature declaration of war by the acts of senators whose apparent judicial reports of what they thought they saw in Cuba were disproved a week later by one of the constituents of the one who had the most influence who followed after him, and has since been fully disproved by the facts of the case. It is therefore now the right and duty of every true and patriotic citizen to support you in resistance to these evil influences by bringing out in the plainest terms the physical and social dangers and evils which must and will ensue if large armed forces are kept upon land for any length of time upon any of these islands and from which naval forces can only be protected by keeping them off the land.

"The greatest and most unavoidable danger to which these forces will be exposed will be neither fevers nor malaria; it will be venereal diseases in their worst and most malignant form. It is this which has reduced the population of Hawaii to a degenerated remnant, four per cent. of whom are isolated under sentence of death from leprosy; a disease of a similar type, perhaps not from the same cause, which gives evidence of the utter degeneracy of these poor people. It is fortunate, on the testimony of one of the highest judicial officers of the Sandwich Islands lately in Boston, that no large armed force will be required in Hawaii, admitting that none such could be sustained without infection. His view is that one hundred and fifty to two hundred middle aged men of established character would suffice for all the exhibition of

force that may be needed to maintain order.

"The records of the British army in India and China, and the condition of the English troops in Hong Kong, lately reported to me by an English gentleman who has been studying social conditions throughout the world, are horrible in the extreme. He stated that fifty per cent of the English troops in Hong Kong were infected with venereal disease every year. It is well known that while there may be an apparent cure this disease works corruption of the blood to the third and fourth generation, ending in degeneracy.

"The records of the medical department and the testimony of visitors to our own camps in this country, coupled with the observations of members of congress with whom I have consulted, prove that this phase of the hell of war had taken firm hold of our troops even before they had been exposed to the greater hazard at their points of destination in Cuba, Porto Rico, and Manila.

"The precautions reported to me by commercial men who are thoroughly familiar with the conditions of these places, especially Manila, made necessary even on the part of private persons lest the infection should be carried from lavatories and the like, indicate the utterly corrupt condition of all the principal cities in these islands.

"It is no time to mince words or to forbear plain speech under a false sense of delicacy. These words must be spoken. This danger must be publicly named and these facts must be widely known, and the exposure to the corruption of the young blood of this nation must be stopped. It is not a pleasant duty, but I shall assume this duty. The final responsibility will rest upon yourself and all who have authority. Unless you would invite the execration of the mothers of our land and cause your administration to stand recorded in history with utter condemnation you cannot ignore or slight these facts and this danger, which is an evil worse than death, worse than war; to try to ignore it and not to provide against it in every possible manner by avoiding the inclusion of these islands in our domain will be to the disgrace of those who shall bring this danger of corruption of the blood upon our country—a greater disgrace than all other losses of honor combined.

"Measures are being taken to bring conclusive evidence of the facts which I have stated before congress at the earliest possible date. I have sent to England for the medical records. I trust that you will order the commission now engaged in the investigation of the war to deal with this subject.

"I pledge to you the support of every right-minded man and woman in your effort to carry out your declared purpose of limiting the exercise of force by