

A Simple Story Common to Imperialism

Here is a simple story told by two simple letters. It is a story familiar in many an American home ever since this government adopted a colonial policy. It is a story common to the program of imperialism. The parents of this dead boy have the consolation of knowing that their son fell bravely fighting under his country's colors; but it was an unnecessary sacrifice and all of the Philippine Islands and all of their wealth and opportunity for exploitation are not worth the life's blood of one of America's Tom Harrisons.

Mr. and Mrs. J. T. Harrison of Saltillo, Tenn., recently received the following letter:

Malabang, Mindanao, March 14, 1906.

Mr. J. T. Harrison, Saltillo, Tenn.

Dear Sir—You have by this time received news of the death of your son, Tom. I hope so, as I would not want to be the first one to send you such heart-rending news.

First, let me offer my heartfelt sympathy to you, and Tom's relatives in this sad bereavement. He was a man, and a soldier, well liked by all who knew him. I knew him very intimately as he was a member of my squad. I always found him very attentive to his duties, and in every way ready at all times to do what he could to help others.

Believe me, I miss Tom indeed. He was my "Bunkie," and I now miss him, as the space he had occupied alongside of my bunk is now vacant, and there is no Tom to talk to and joke with.

Again, let me offer you my heartfelt sympathy, and rest assured, Tom is missed in every sense in this company.

Now then, let me tell you the reason for my writing to you: The fighting in which Tom Harrison lost his life was prolonged two days. It seems orders were changed after we had arrived at the top of the mountain on the 6th of March. We waited in sight of the enemy's forts

for to take action. But we were recalled from our position and told to wait another day. It was during this wait, from 9 a. m. till 3:30 p. m., that Tom and I made an agreement to write to each other's people in case of anything happening to us. We were to write for one another, and tell just how the other died, or was wounded.

Now, it is to this promise I gave Tom on the top of Mount "Budajo" that I write. This promise and agreement was made with the idea that it would never have to be fulfilled by either; more to keep us from thinking how perilous was our position. It was only "talk," but it seems it has turned out otherwise.

Now to the task: It was on the 7th of March at about 3:45 p. m., just as he was answering the charge, Tom had gained the top of the mountain, and was just going to step up on the trench as he was speared through the stomach. He died almost instantly. Help was at his side as he fell, but Tom was beyond that stage.

The day before this final charge, I must say that Tom's actions were very courageous and brave, and although no doubt he thoroughly realized his danger and it was very great, he never gave the least sign. He wanted to do his part. Did he succeed? God alone knows. But we of the company must acknowledge that Tom was there for the "charge," and tried to do his duty as a soldier.

Tom was buried in Jolo Jolo, P. I., on the 9th day of March, as were also ten other good and true soldiers. They received the honors as was their due. Still it does not fill the void that we of the company feel in not having Tom Harrison with us.

He died as we, all of the army, hope to die—"fighting." God rest his soul!

In conclusion I would say, I hope and pray that I have fulfilled my obligation to the dead. If in any way in after years I can do you any service, let me know of it.

You will shortly hear from the government as to the financial condition of Tom. I know he had saved some, but do not know what extent of saving he had.

Again offering my sympathy, I beg to remain
Yours most sincerely,

ROY C. OLSON,
Corporal Co. D, 9th Inf.
Malabang, Mind.

Saltillo, Tenn.—Editor Commoner: I send you the sad news of the death of my son, Thomas Harrison, who was killed in the battle of Mount Budajo, Philippine Islands, March 7. It was a shock to me and to his mother. Tommy was the twelfth child, and the baby boy. I was trying to educate him so he would be able to take charge of my farm and run it to pay himself and to take care of me and his mother in our tottering days. But he got in company with a young man who had been in the army three years over in the Philippines, and he told him what a good time there was, and that it was better than going to school. Tommy was too good a boy to face his mother and tell her goodbye, but slipped off with that young man and joined the army before we could get to him. It was the mistake of his life. It nearly kills his mother and bruises me. No man ever raised a better boy than Tommy Harrison was. Everybody liked him that knew him, and you will see from the letter I send you from his comrade that the army loved him too.

Please print this letter, also the letter from Roy Olson. Maybe it will prevent somebody's boy from making the mistake that mine made. I wish some one would make a comment on this event. I give my heartfelt sympathy to those other homes that were made sad by that fight. I need the prayers of everybody.

J. T. HARRISON.

But Who Has Been Punished?

W. S. Ryan, of Indianapolis, Ind., writing to the Indianapolis News, says:

"Folk, at St. Louis, did something worth commending; the United States district attorney for Oregon has 'made good;' Lawson, no matter what he is, has been telling some truths; Russell exposed the beef crowd's methods; Baker has written the truth about railroad corruption; Stefens has given us political corruption blood raw; Miss Tarbell has flayed 'John D.;' Phillips has detailed particulars respecting a few of the traitors in his 'Treasure of the Senate.' Now comes the systematized cry, 'Drop the muck rake,' 'Cease this exposing of the corruption that is offensive.' Why? Are the dear people awake? The people were robbed of millions—are now being robbed of millions—and Lawson has told them so; and the News and other papers have sneered at him. The people are not awake; they have not had the iron shoved into them hot enough nor deep enough. And yet the cry, from a source easily discoverable to be controlled by influences that the 'muck rake' uncovers, that lives and thrives upon 'muck,' is to drop the 'muck rake;' and President Roosevelt is its echo.

"After all the discoveries above indicated by names of persons, who has suffered for wrong done? Who has been punished?"

"Some newspaper, responsive to the demands of the 'muckers,' and some magazines, double-lead their edited wisdom as they proclaim the positiveness of the awakening of the people.

"Who has been punished for any of the unlawful acts that Lawson has pointed out and proved? Who has suffered for the evils that Russell brought home to the beef trust? Who has suffered punishment for any of the crimes that Baker has riveted on the railroads? Who but the people have suffered because of such crimes? Who among the Standard Oil crowd has been punished? Are they not doing business regularly in the good old way at the same old stand? Who of the United States senate has been esteemed the less because of Phillips' truthful lampoons?"

"Shades of Webster, Clay and Calhoun, look down upon the grocer-statesman from Rhode Island, Aldrich; the discredited remnant of 'Me Too' Platt, and the dishonored clown Depew; Steve Elkins, from Mesilla, 'down on the Rio Grande' and elsewhere; William A. Clark (the

predecessor by agreement, so 'tis said, of the Montana Addix, F. Augustus Heinz, H. H. Rogers' partner, who was once 'impossible' to the same Rogers) Dryden and Kean, of New Jersey; Penrose, of Pennsylvania, and a few others.

"And now comes the 'noblest Roman of them all' with his 'big stick' wrapped thick with speeches, advising the world on every subject. Beside Folk, at St. Louis, with everything against him, and only the power of a petty local prosecuting attorney's office to sustain him, what has Theodore Roosevelt, with all the machinery of the government at his command, accomplished, either for the good of the people or in punishment of those who have violated the law? The merger case? Of course, Hill and Harriman have not gone straight ahead, snapping their fingers at the supreme court (whose decrees are worthless unless enforced by the executive) and consolidated their interests; of course not. And the injunction on the beef trust? Did it enjoin? Is the beef trust out of business entirely and are the cattlemen getting more and the consumer paying less than formerly for beef not inspected by the government? But what could the president of the United States do? What did one Stephen Grover Cleveland do when the laws were being violated at Chicago? But that was different. Yes, it was; then the law and corporate interests were on the same side—for a wonder! Now why should the 'muck rake' be dropped? Simply because it creates a bad smell? Drop the 'muck rake?' Why, sir, if Atlas straddled the Andes, with one foot in the Pacific and one in the gulf, and held by the handle a muck rake with teeth long enough to reach to hades, and he stuck in the prongs at Lake Superior and raked through to the everglades of Florida, our friends Rogers, Rockefeller, Armour et id omne genus, would hop between the teeth, yell, 'He never touched us,' and begin the formation of a heat and light company, using the interstices made by the teeth of the rake for piping heat from—where they never shovel snow.

"Before the president of the United States decries the use of the 'muck rake' he should 'get busy.'"

Since Mr. Ryan wrote the above, George W. Perkins, arrested for giving other people's money to the republican campaign fund, has been discharged.

SPECIAL OFFER

The following letters are self-explanatory: W. E. Vincent, Hutchinson, Kan.—I send you list of twenty subscribers and a draft for \$12 to pay the same.

B. F. Howard, Libby, Mont.—I notice that in your mention of the paper you gave my list as 50 when it should have been 60.

John Carter, Jacksonville, Ill.—Please send to my address several copies of The Commoner. I want them for use in securing new subscribers. One of your boy subscribers.

Everyone who approves the work The Commoner is doing is invited to co-operate along the lines of the special subscription offer. According to the terms of this offer cards each good for one year's subscription to The Commoner will be furnished in lots of five, at the rate of \$3 per lot. This places the yearly subscription rate at 60 cents.

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