THE CORNER-STONE *of* PHILIPPINE INDEPENDENCE

FRANCIS BURTON HARRISON

THE CORNER-STONE OF PHILIPPINE INDEPENDENCE

A NARRATIVE OF SEVEN YEARS

BY

FRANCIS BURTON HARRISON

GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF PHILIPPINE ISLANDS,
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Governor-General of Philippine Islands, October, 1913—February, 1921

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To

THE HON. MANUEL L. QUEZON

Filipino Patriot

and

Loyal Friend

PREFACE

IS the United States Government imperialistic? The American people, upon the whole, are not, but under our system of government a state of war may be forced upon the people and, as a result, foreign territories annexed without any clear understanding of the issue on the part of the voters. It is not the peculiar privilege of the Anglo-Saxon peoples to profess one principle and practise another, but, unfortunately, the other nations of the world already look with distrust upon our designs. Certainly our neighbors to the south and across the Pacific have their doubts as to our intentions. To them the acquisition of the Philippines and Porto Rico, Hawaii, Samoa, Guam, and the Virgin Islands; our virtual protectorate over Cuba and Panama; our military expedition to Siberia, and the invasion by our marines of Hayti and the Central American States in recent years seem to justify suspicion. The average American citizen is usually not consulted in these matters; if he is, it is always our "honor" which is involved, or we are said to be acting in an unselfish desire to benefit the people whose country we invade. These, also, are the arguments used by the statesmen of the frankly imperialistic governments of Europe for their annexations of territory. If the United States is really embarked upon a course of empire, our people are entitled to know the truth and to express an opinion upon the policy. The cost in armaments is already prodigious; the ill-will toward us of the other nations of the world is growing. The price we may have to pay in foreign wars in the future may prove our ruin. Let us at least

consider, before it is too late, where the path will lead upon which our Government has taken the first steps.

The Philippines may well be the test case in this problem. We have thus far acted with unparalleled generosity toward the Filipinos, in giving them self-government and promising them their independence. They believe in us and in our promises; they were absolutely loyal to us during the war; they have made astonishing progress in self-government; they desire independence. The time is close at hand when we must redeem our promise, or else forfeit their confidence and good-will, and break our given word.

The following pages have been written in the hope of conveying to those at home who may read them an idea of what the Filipinos have done with the self-government we granted them in 1916. The purpose of the book is to portray their ideals and ambitions, their trials and problems, their accomplishments and development, rather than to describe the achievements of our fellow-countrymen in the islands. The writer is convinced that the Filipinos are now ready for independence, that they have already set up the stable government required of them by the Jones Act as a prerequisite, and that, in the words of President Wilson in 1920, in his last annual message to Congress, "It is now our liberty and our duty to keep our promise to the people of those islands by granting them the independence which they so honorably covet."

FRANCIS BURTON HARRISON.

Caithnesshire, Scotland,
September 10, 1921

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CHAPTER I

Introduction

"WHY shouldn't you be governor-general, yourself?" asked Manuel L. Quezon, delegate to Congress from the Philippines. This was on August 18, 1913, at the end of a long conversation in his office in the House of Representatives in Washington. I had been trying to persuade Mr. Quezon to support the candidacy of a friend whom I thought eminently qualified for the position. It appeared, however, that the President did not look with favor upon his candidacy. The idea of my own appointment struck me with amazement, as I was then engaged in an entirely different kind of work, in the House of Representatives during the revision of the tariff.

Mr. Quezon at once enlisted the support of Mr. William A. Jones, the veteran Representative from Virginia and Chairman of the Committee on Insular Affairs, who in turn interested Mr. Bryan, Secretary of State, and four days later President Wilson sent my name to the Senate, which body, out of courtesy to a member of Congress, suspended the rules and at once confirmed the nomination. So in less than a week

after the first suggestion was made I found myself destined to immediate departure from all my customary surroundings and occupations and to an entirely novel service as the chief executive of the Philippines, twelve thousand miles away.

At a meeting of Members of Congress, a few evenings later, at the Washington home of Representative Kent of California, I was presented, through the genial offices of the Speaker, Champ Clark, with a souvenir from the House of Representatives as a token of goodwill. Speeches were made by leaders of the different political factions, including the Republican minority leader, James A. Mann, and Representative Victor Murdock from Kansas, for the Progressives.

I then made the acquaintance of General Frank McIntyre, Chief of the Bureau of Insular Affairs, a stanch and true friend in many an hour of subsequent political trial, and of Major-General Wood, who was cordiality itself. A few days later I met my immediate chief, Mr. Garrison, the Secretary of War, who had been absent on a tour of the army posts of the West at the time of my appointment. On the tenth of September my party sailed from San Francisco on the Pacific Mail liner *Manchuria,* westward bound.

These personal incidents are introduced to show the atmosphere of kindly good-will in official circles which surrounded my venture into this new line of public service, an atmosphere from which political partizanship was entirely lacking, and which left me utterly unprepared for the political hornets' nest into which I stepped upon arrival in Manila. The distant horizon seemed very bright. To be sure, I was conscious of the possibilities of international troubles to

come, for I remember my farewell to my lifelong friend James W. Gerard, just appointed Ambassador to Germany, when I told him that he and I were going to the two places in the world where something was likely to happen. It happened to him!

My experiences in the Philippines, while of an unexpected nature, were only such as any man should be prepared to face if charged with putting into effect in a remote station a policy which runs counter to the wishes or ambitions of his fellow-countrymen on the spot. All through my service I received generous support from the President and in Congress, where there was no disposition to play politics with Philippine administration. When, later on, the Republicans gained control of Congress, nothing was ever done by them to embarrass or interfere with the Philippine situation. From Americans in the islands I received very little support.

President Wilson, with his fine inspiration for political liberties, and in accordance with the successive pronouncements of Democratic platforms, was determined to bring self-government to the Filipinos and hasten the day of their independence. He would not appoint any American resident of the Philippines to the Philippine Commission. In a long conversation, the Sunday morning before I left Washington, he gave me in general terms his instructions as to Philippine self-government. I found him wonderfully well informed as to Philippine conditions, as I had previously found him a master of the intricacies of tariff revision. He was then, as always, when I have been privileged to meet him, of the most charming courtesy. In after years, thinking over this conversation with

him, I could find only one point upon which he seemed to me to have been misinformed. He told me that the Filipinos were so afraid of the Moros that one Filipino regiment had thrown down its arms and refused to go into action against them. I was never able to trace that story to its source, and all my own observation leads me to believe that the Filipino, equally well armed and reasonably well led, is the match for the Moro in any circumstances.

Upon leaving the White House, I met at the Metropolitan Club the Hon. Charles E. Magoon, formerly Governor of the Canal Zone and of Cuba. He told me of his "instructions" upon his last appointment. Passing through Washington, he was invited to the White House to dinner. As he greeted Mr. Roosevelt, the President put his finger on Magoon's shirt stud and said: "You to Cuba." "What instructions do you give me, Mr. President?" Mr. Roosevelt replied: "Go see Root." Next morning Governor Magoon reported to Secretary Root for instructions, and the secretary said, "Oh, well, I have no instructions; just go govern." This was as laconic as President Grant's advice to the Japanese, when, during his trip around the world, they asked him how they could learn the art of self-government. "Govern yourselves!" was the reply.

Few judges elected to executive office make successful administrators; their inclination is to spend all their time weighing the pros and cons of every question, when what is needed are decision and despatch. Few legislators find their previous experience particularly useful in executive office; their training is all toward talk, and then more talk, and divided responsi-

bility; they have, however, one characteristic of prime advantage in a democratic as opposed to an autocratic system: they have a proper appreciation of that peculiar psychology known as the legislative mind, and an earnest disposition to learn public opinion. The great danger to an executive, after all, is that he shall come to rely more and more exclusively on his own opinion, and lose touch with the public. In my farewell call upon Secretary Bryan I expressed the hope that with the great powers given by law to the Governor-General of the Philippines I should not become autocratic. That hope and my desire to bring all the liberties possible to the Filipino people were my qualifications for the office with which President Wilson and the Senate had entrusted me.

There is no room in the United States Constitution for colonies; officially speaking, we have none. Alaska and Hawaii are territories; Porto Rico and the Philippines dependencies, or insular possessions. Guam, Samoa, the Virgin Islands, the Canal Zone—all are naval or military stations. There are few traditions of colonial service in the United States. Perhaps that very freedom from fixed ideas and red-tape has enabled our Government to make a swifter development of policy than is possible in the European colonial offices. There is no great body of "elder statesmen" returning home after a lifetime of colonial service with hidebound opinions as to how things should be done, determined to resist any and all changes in their ideas of colonial management. The arguments in favor of a permanent Colonial Civil Service are, after all, similar to those in behalf of a permanent body of diplomatic officers; the drawbacks are the same. Such permanent officials

imbibe, in the one case, a rigid caste attitude toward the "subject races," and in the other they are affected by the atmosphere of ceremonial court intrigue and do not keep up with the progress of thought in the home land. The British, an intensely practical race, select for viceroy of their greatest possession, India, not a member of the Indian Civil Service, but some man fresh from active public life at home.

Up to 1913, the only traditions of Philippine service known in the United States were those of the "Taft dynasty," as it became known, which began with Mr. Taft's inauguration as civil governor in 1901 and continued in unbroken succession through his terms as Secretary of War and President. The generous sympathies and wise liberalism of his earlier management of the Philippine problem, which won over many Filipinos to support American policies, seem to have dwindled and vanished as he grew older and as he fell out of personal touch with the Philippines. Later a bureaucracy was built up around his policy, assuming toward the subject race all the hard and patronizing superiority typical of European colonial administrators of modern times. Distrust of the Filipino and a determination to see him kept as a dependent as long as possible were the new features of the policy. The governors-general who succeeded Mr. Taft were as able and conscientious a set of administrators as our country could wish for, but the Filipinos were becoming yearly more restless and dissatisfied, and the Chief of Constabulary, General Harry H. Bandholtz, had predicted in his report for 1912 the probability of disturbances in the provinces. Growing distrust and ill-feeling between the two races were more evident each