

# THE PHILIPPINES

## A Treasure and A Problem

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Nicholas Roosevelt

*The*  
**PHILIPPINES**

*A Treasure and a Problem*

*By*  
**NICHOLAS ROOSEVELT**

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## INTRODUCTION TO THE FOURTH EDITION

Mr. Nicholas Roosevelt, the well-known authority on Far Eastern questions, made a study of the Philippine problem a few years ago, spending some time in the Islands. This book is the result of his examinations and studies.

While Mr. Roosevelt's attitude towards the subject is that of the investigator and historian, he does, nevertheless, give it as his opinion that the inhabitants of the Islands are not yet in a sufficiently strong position as a political entity to warrant complete independence. He also calls attention to the international obligations that may easily arise if the Islands are given their independence by the United States Government at the present time. His view of the situation is practically the same as that of General Leonard Wood, who knew the Philippines better than most Americans know them. As a consequence of these views of Mr. Roosevelt, the book was publicly burned at the stake in the main square of Manila in the presence of four thousand Philippine enthusiasts in the cause of independence.

In the present situation the book has distinct value for anyone who wishes to get a comprehensive view of the conditions obtaining today in the Islands.

Hence this new and fourth edition.

THE PUBLISHERS.

## PREFACE

The purpose of this book is to give a sketch of some of the important problems of the Philippines. The student seeking a history of the Islands will have to turn elsewhere.

Such atmosphere as it possesses is due to the fact that I was able to supplement my readings by a visit to the Philippines and Java in the winter of 1925-1926, during which I had occasion to talk with many Americans, Filipinos and foreigners. For this visit I have to thank *The New York Times*, which sent me to the Far East to obtain for it a closer understanding of the political and economic conditions there. Needless to say the opinions expressed in this volume are my own without reference to the views or policies of that newspaper. Owing to the prestige of *The New York Times* and the kindness of many friends who took special pains to help me get in touch with well-informed persons, I had an exceptional opportunity to make a general survey.

If the criticisms by Dutchmen of American methods and the comparisons with the practices of the Dutch in Java seem to be many, it must be recalled that the problem which the Dutch have had in the Indies is almost the same as ours in the Philippines, and that their experience covers a period of three hundred years whereas ours does not yet cover thirty years. Much can be gained

from studying what they have done and from weighing their criticisms which have been made not in a spirit of fault-finding but of elucidating differences in method wherein their success has been greater than ours.

NICHOLAS ROOSEVELT.

NEW YORK,  
OCTOBER, 1926.



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*The*  
**PHILIPPINES**

# THE PHILIPPINES

A HISTORY OF THE ISLANDS

## CHAPTER I

THE ISLANDS

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W HEN we speak of the Philippines, we mean a group of islands in the western Pacific Ocean, north of the equator, and west of the Philippines. The islands are of various sizes, and are separated by narrow channels. The largest island is Luzon, which is the seat of the government. The other islands are Mindanao, Samar, and the Visayas. The Philippines were discovered by the Spaniards in 1521, and were named after King Philip II of Spain. The islands were under Spanish rule for over three centuries, and were then taken over by the United States in 1898. The Philippines are now a republic, and are a member of the United Nations.

# THE PHILIPPINES

## *A Treasure and a Problem*

### CHAPTER I

#### EAST AND WEST

"Take up the White Man's burden,  
And reap his old reward:  
The blame of those ye better,  
The hate of those ye guard."

—KIPLING.

WHEN Kipling wrote "The White Man's Burden" in 1899 as a friendly warning of the troubles and tasks which we faced in our newly-acquired Philippine empire, he had divined the spirit of the Filipino peoples and had foreseen the results of their contact with young America. Although he had never visited the Islands, he yet knew that our wish to help the people would be met with blame and our guardianship rewarded with hate. He told how thankless would be our task and how bitter our disappointments. He even sensed that we would quickly weary of the white man's burden and would heed the echoed cry of



freedom, hoping thus to shuffle off the responsibilities which we had assumed. Being wise in the ways of the East, he urged us to go slowly, and with infinite patience to humor the murmuring peoples whom we had undertaken to guard and to lead out of bondage.

Already we have reaped the old reward. During our brief occupation we have brought the Filipinos far more health, wealth and happiness than they ever had before. In return their politicians heap blame on us for our mere presence. We have defended them and begun to develop their islands only to be denounced as "oppressors" and to be sullenly hated for our help. The truth is that we have done so much for them that we cannot expect any gratitude. Like spoiled children they are more indignant about unhumored whims than grateful for a surfeit of good things.

The average American finds this all the more difficult to understand as he gets to know the peoples of the Philippines and sees their many lovable qualities. They are by nature gentle, kind and courteous. Their hospitality is justly famous. The inherent politeness of the Orient has been overlaid with that of Spain, with the result that Filipinos of all degrees have charming manners. "I love these people" one of the Belgian priests who

had spent his life among them told me with emotion in his voice, "I cannot tell you how much I love them. They are like children, so gentle and so good." Many Americans and other foreigners who through long years in the Islands had been closely associated with the various races said the same thing to me. In the voices of all who spoke was a note of paternal affection.

Here is perhaps the greatest obstacle to that understanding between races on which rests effective coöperation. To us there will always be something of the child about these people. To them we shall ever seem inscrutable and pestiferous fools, ruled by strange gods such as Hurry, Efficiency, and Truth. We cannot understand their laziness. They cannot comprehend our passion for work and our worship of time. When we upbraid them for deceiving us they are frankly puzzled. They have never valued integrity as we do. In fact, a cheerful indifference to the correlation between statement and fact is one of their outstanding characteristics.

As a result they marvel at our stupidity in the face of guile, and despise us for being so easily deceived. Whereas their politeness often seems to us a mere mask, our brusqueness is to them little short of barbaric. Furthermore we are inclined to

look on many of their customs as strange and outlandish. The Igorots until recently indulged in head hunting. The Christian Filipinos love the cockpit as dearly as the Spaniards love the bull ring. The dances of the savage tribes strike us as particularly uncouth. And yet, when I was in Singapore on the night of the St. Andrew's Ball I could not help wondering what the natives thought of the Scotchman whom they at last saw as he would be at home, wearing a brilliant coat and a short colored skirt with a handy dirk thrust into the stocking, dancing over crossed swords like one possessed with a demon, to the accompaniment of the sobbing whistle of the bagpipes and of eerie shrieks from his fellow-barbarians.

It is in the attitude toward time and work, however, that the gulf between the Temperate and Tropical mind is widest. We have never appreciated the curse of the ready banana, nor the economic significance of B.V.D.'s. When a tasty meal can be had for the stretching of a hand to pluck the fruit from the tree, and a stylish costume obtained by dyeing a pair of B.V.D.'s, it is clear that the inclination to labor will be lacking. Effort is nowhere as distasteful as in the soft air and checkered shade of the tropics. A Hollander in Java summed it up in an almost untranslatable French phrase: "Nous

autres, nous épargnons l'argent; eux, ils épargnent le temps." We try to lay by money; they try to lay by spare time. They cannot understand our restless energy and our passion for production. The mere possession of things in large quantities has never appealed to them. Our desire to have and to hold, to make and to get and to amass, is outside their comprehension, with the result that they cannot see why we want to work so hard and, worse still, make others work. The sky is blue and the breezes fresh under the coconut palms by the sapphire sea. Why struggle for superfluous things?

So obvious are these differences of attitude that we have come to generalize too freely and to think of the Malays, for example, as a homogenous racial group. Despite the many characteristics which are common alike to the Filipinos and the natives of the Dutch East Indies they are not one people even to the extent that are the Europeans. Nor are the inhabitants of the Philippines one people like the Americans. Our politicians, blending idealism with ignorance, long ago began the practice of speaking of them as a unit. Their politicians, making the wish disguise the facts, were quick to take this up and to emphasize the alleged parallel to the United States. As a result nine out of every ten Americans