

SANITATION AT THE SWORD'S POINT

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MISS MAYO lived for eight years in Dutch Guiana where she first studied oriental peoples. Later, she investigated our administration in the Philippine Islands. Still more recently, Miss Mayo's courageous exposure of social conditions in "Mother India" have startled the world. It was because of her long experience among backward peoples that the Editor of THE FORUM asked her if she would advocate sanitation at the sword's point for the backwash of civilization. This article is her answer.

BRITISH officers are not responsible for our insanitation," writes Mr. Gandhi, bewailing the filth and disease of India. "Indeed, if we gave them free scope in this matter they would improve our habits at the point of the sword." * In that one utterance, the famous Indian provides a measure of his own grasp of the Occidental viewpoint. Contrary though it is to his Hindu creed, he has accepted our idea that

filth and disease cripple human progress; but he cannot yet credit that other half of our working belief — "the health of a people can never be permanently achieved by outside force, but must rest on the people's own desire and active coöperation."

Great Britain, the world's pioneer in public sanitation, has long applied this creed to India. Pressing a siege of suggestion, diplomacy, education, and example against entrenched ignorance and superstition, her Indian task has been and remains the most difficult in the whole history of sanitary effort. For, while in many another country ignorance, inertia, and tradition delay light, in India alone does the most respected intelligence of the land set itself to fight off the forces of rescue. Gandhi, with his wholesale denunciation of Western doctors, medicine, hospitals and modern methods now newly reasserted†, with his proclaimed disbelief in Western honesty of purpose, and with his demand that all patriots give political power first place in their scheme of effort for their country; Tagore with his serene contempt of our medical science, and with his rather embarrassing indifference to sewage disposal, exhibit thereby the quality of Hindu leadership.

Unsuspected of themselves, with one hand they beat back the very thing after which the other clutches — the political peerage of their peoples. Our modern congress of nations could hardly be expected cheerfully to welcome a new member that either refused

* *Young India*, Oct. 29, 1925, p. 371.

† *Young India*, Sept. 15, 1927, and *New York Times*, Oct. 10, 1927.

or neglected to make itself, in the physical sense, a reasonably safe associate. Yet while the few Indian leaders exhaust their strength in words decrying the stranger in the land, that stranger, working among the voiceless masses almost unaided and against unparalleled odds, slowly and silently undermines their resistance to liberation. Indian ameliorative effort exists, and grows, but as yet manifests slight strength and infinitesimal proportions.

"Why has not Britain cleaned us up?" runs the frequent complaint of those few Indians who are willing to admit India's need of cleaning. "Because," the obvious answer appears, "in view of the attitude of native leaders, and in view of the strength and character of the Hindu socio-religious practice, India to-day could be rendered clean only by force of arms, only at cost of seas of blood and the raising of passionate hatred. Britain applying armed force to the sanitation of civilian India would be Britain belying her own common sense, pulling down her own handiwork, and casting aside the best lessons of administrative experience."

If there be, in practice, any exception to this rule, it lies in the British control of shipping leaving Indian ports. Other governments exert sanitary authority over vessels entering their harbors, the United States even maintaining health officials in certain foreign seaboard towns to inspect ships clearing for America. But the Government of India does more; in view of the physical conditions that the mentality of the country inflicts upon itself, and pending that control which can be achieved only by the slow — in India, perforce, deadly slow — processes of education, the Government of India recognizes its duty toward other powers by subjecting all vessels and passengers clearing from India to strict medical inspection, for the protection of the outer world against India's constant, banked-up flood of epidemic and endemic contagions.

How much we in America owe to this measure — how much its vigorous enforcement means to us in peace of mind and in general well-being — may be inferred from the fact that both plague and cholera, for example, can easily be carried around the world on ships; that both those mortal scourges are always largely present in India; and that, excluding sailing ships from the reckoning, one hundred and thirty-three British and American vessels, with a total of 529,088 tonnage, cleared Indian ports for the ports of the United States in the twelvemonth between April 1, 1926, and March 31, 1927.

The gravity of the matter may here serve as excuse for recalling that tragic outbreak of bubonic plague on the Californian sea-board in 1900, when the state, in her sudden panic, denounced and disgraced the port health officer for daring to name the terror that had come upon her, and when only federal threat to put the whole commonwealth into quarantine, for the safety of the rest of the Union, finally awakened her to her senses and to the necessity of recognizing and grappling with her own desperate danger.

I do not know whether the source of this particular plague infection was ever surely determined. But, in view of India's condition, such an incident can but suggest the importance to us of a constant and well enforced scientific control of ships clearing that country for our American seaports.

To turn to the problem of the Philippines, after that of India, is like turning to the problem of a single state after considering that of our whole Union. But the sanitary history of our Far East affords an excellent object lesson in the pitfalls and promises of public health administration.

When we took the islands from Spanish hands in 1898, the words "sanitation," "public health," "quarantine" held no meaning there. From immemorial time the archipelago had been a hotbed of pestilence. And the city of Manila was a reservoir of ancient and modern dirt. Our army, aghast at the sight, first told Manila to its face that it was a malignant cesspool, then charged on the run, with shovels and carts and chlorate of lime.

Manila ground its teeth, raging, helpless to resist, understanding nothing, learning nothing, doubly vowed to the past.

Then, presently, the deadly bubonic plague rolled up in epidemic form. And the army, seizing the population by the scruff of its neck, pumped under its skin the preventive serum that saved its lives. From this brusque rescue the population ran away when it could; or, when it couldn't, shivered with indignation and fright and cursed the tyrant who molested its peace.

Again, when cholera blazed abroad in the palm-leaf villages, and the villagers, dying like flies, would not clean up, the army, to show it was in earnest, burned a few villages to the ground. And the people, seeing in cinders nothing but inexplicable madness, lied about their next cholera cases and tried their best to conceal them under their own bed covers.

In general, the army certainly pushed the death rate down. The sights and the smells abated. Yet, with all our exertions, we

were not constructively affecting the status of the people, who, obviously enough, would sink back into their ancient habits the day that coercion relaxed. Meantime, they cordially hated this new foreign devil called Sanitation. And the annual death-rate of a population of seven million could still include the following approximate figures: tuberculosis, 50,000; smallpox, 40,000; malaria, 40,000; cholera, 150,000; while some five thousand lepers continued to roam at large, spreading their grim malady. So passed the first years, while the army labored heavily to establish order, prime requisite, in the savage chaos of the islands.

Then, that end being largely attained, and civil government rendered possible, a regular Public Health Service was established, of which Dr. Victor G. Heiser became Director.

The chronicle of this service, fairly told, could make a book of intense interest, full of strange stories ablaze with color, full of wild adventure and free inventions, full of humor and of pathos, of high courage and devotion, and of human sympathy carried to the final climax of sacrifice.

Under the system inaugurated by Dr. Heiser and by him long directed, smallpox, plague, and cholera were soon practically wiped out, while a general attack upon living conditions made heavy and increasing inroads upon the mortality total. The underlying secret of their success was that which must everywhere inspire practical rescue work for the masses of ancient darkness — an imaginative and conciliatory diplomacy backed by vigorous, vigilant, and efficient official control, which, in turn, rests upon a decisive power whose physical intervention is invoked only in dire public necessity.

Through a full decade of effort as hard, as unselfish, as enlightened as our best minds knew how to put forth, our achievement grew in beauty, until it had become the hope and the cynosure of the whole Far East. Then, suddenly, came a complete change. A new Governor-General, Francis Burton Harrison, disregarding his official instructions and taking advantage of Washington's preoccupation with the Great War, tossed his responsibilities, his authority, and with them the good name of America, into the hands of a small native political ring.

"You think you can run the country? Well, run it," said he, "and don't bother me. I want to play."

So he played. And a Filipino oligarchy ran the country, while America fought her War.

When the War was done, and America could afford a glance over her shoulder, to see how her honor had been kept while her back was turned, behold, the good work of the past lay in ruins, those who had wrought it had been chased away or frozen out, and the best of the Filipinos confronted her with dropped hands and scowling brows, wrath and disillusionment in their hearts.

The insular death rate, during Mr. Harrison's presence, had increased by thirty per cent. Cholera, which had been practically wiped out, had become a monstrous epidemic. Dysentery raged, with a terrible mortality. Smallpox, rendered almost extinct through our earlier work, had carried off, in Harrison's later years, over one hundred thousand victims, a figure almost equaled by the sudden soaring of malaria deaths. Bubonic plague alone remained extinct. For, plague having once been driven out, its continued absence rested with the Quarantine Service; the Quarantine Service, curiously enough, had escaped Filipinization, and plague, consequently, had not crept back into the islands.

As to the Public Health Service as a whole, the very strength of the organization has proved its death-knell. Its ramifications had penetrated so far and wide among the scattered populace that they offered the best of track-way for spreading political influence. Accordingly, the whole system had been reduced to a mere bait — or bludgeon, as the case might be — to accomplish the will of plunderers in office.

Such was the atmosphere, such the field, into which, in 1922, we sent Major General Leonard Wood, to redeem our tarnished honor. The spectacle of needless human suffering, of jetsamed altruistic achievement, as it now unfolded before him, cut deeper into the heart of the new Governor-General than did any other one feature of our inclusive tragedy. With characteristic directness, he turned at once to the originator of the now ruined sanitary edifice.

"Heiser," said he, "you built the machine. You, therefore, could reconstruct it more easily than anyone else. Nothing is left of it but pieces. But you at least will recognize the parts, when you see them lying about. Will you come back?"

"*Adsum*," answered the doctor.

Hand in hand, the two men labored, bit by bit restoring to the patient masses those good gifts once given only to be filched away. As their work unveiled fresh wreckage, "How could you let these calamities happen?" Dr. Heiser would ask of the Filipino public

health officials, great and small, many of whom he himself had trained for office and knew to be able men.

"Well — it was different when you were here. Then you told the people what to do, and they did it. When we speak they pay no heed. How can we force them?"

Yet, when they dared, these same men could put their case less weakly. As:

"During the régime just closed, your American Governor-General gave us no support. If any of us, in the pursuit of his duties, aroused the resentment of a rich man or of a voting district, or of a political boss's friend, he got broken for his pains. And your American Governor-General Harrison was not remotely interested in the affair or its consequences. We had no backing; therefore it was that the people died. The blame is not ours, but America's, who deserted us."

That charge could never be lodged against General Wood. Not only did he, as Governor-General, support every effort and every measure brought forward for the redemption of the islands, not only did he himself constantly originate new activities and expedients, but also he made it his own daily concern, often at great personal inconvenience, to inspect the health work and encourage the health workers, Filipino or American, wherever he might be in his constant inspection tours of the archipelago. Because of his own medical training he understood their difficulties as a layman could scarcely have done. But beyond all that lay their lively consciousness of his presence, as a just judge, a kindly friend, and a tower of strength, backing them always.

"Do your duty. If anyone threatens you *come to me!*" he quietly told the sanitary staff day by day, and made good to the full the implication of his words.

The ghastly record of disease and death rolled up during their years of license just past — or rather, the spreading of that record before the outer world — had somewhat disconcerted the Filipino oligarchy. And the General, with his ripe and generous understanding of their psychology, never forgot in dealing with them to leave loopholes for their pride and so to make easier such degree of complaisance as they now saw fit to render.

That modicum, none the less, was grudgingly given, the more especially when America's lack of interest in Philippine affairs began to be discerned. But, during the final two years of his governorship, the period in which, for the first time, the hearty

support of Washington stood plainly visible behind him, Governor-General Wood let the oligarchy as well as the sanitary officer feel strength within the velvet glove. As a result, at the time when the world lost him, Leonard Wood had restored the public health of the Philippines very nearly to the height from which, by the catastrophe of 1914-20, it had been thrown, had lowered the yellow flag from over the islands, and had gone far to wipe out a fair international grievance against us.

Much remains to be done. Whether the pace shall be forward or back, toward life or toward death, depends on the next Governor-General. The world has a right to demand of America that she protect it from the Philippines; just as the world has a right to demand of Britain that she protect it from India and India from itself; both while the two areas are being trained in world-ethics — trained to police themselves into responsible world-citizenship.

But such training, the declared object of both suzerainties, cannot be accomplished "at the sword's point." For the bare sword's point secures only momentary obedience, at the prohibitive price of opposition and hatred. Neither can it be accomplished by precept laid on the lips of an undisciplined, unconvinced, and uncontrolled people. We, in the Philippines, have a long job ahead of us, demanding patience, faithfulness, sound practical sense, unwearying purpose and a valiant and continuous effort to grasp the fact that the Filipino is a person whose conscience does not work as does ours. But the Filipino needs health of body, mind, and estate, exactly as we do. We are bound to help him to it, and the same is true, in infinitely greater degree, of Britain with her appalling problem, India.

Not the sword's point, nor abandoned authority, will help either one, but rather, linked with unfailing human sympathy and understanding, so true a loyalty to our own basic ideals and so strong a faith in ultimate good, that no clamor can bemuse us, no weariness deflect us, from working out our job to its honest end. Given time — God only knows how much time — even the Hindu's religious and social offensive and defensive against health and cleanness must wear down. As to the Filipino, with his more open mind and his freedom from a religious code that destroys vitality at its source, his rise is sure, if only America will stand true to him, and steady him on his way.

THE LEAVEN AND THE LUMP

ALFRED JAMES LOTKA

IF any further evidence were needed to prove man a unique species, we have it here: surely no other race of creatures ever worried that it was increasing too fast. Yet this is the problem on which a certain fraction of our thinking population are exercising their worrying faculties to-day. To be a little more precise, the worry is not so much about the simple phenomenon of absolute increase as about the spectre of a relatively greater increase among the less exalted types of man, accompanied by an actually diminishing trend among the most desirable.

The matter has been discussed at length in several books of recent, as well as of more remote, date, among which the effort of Malthus occupies a venerable place of honor. And magazines and scientific periodicals have contributed briefer disquisitions to the same general topic. It is not intended here to recount what has by this time become familiar to most reasonably well informed readers. There is, however, one aspect of the matter that has not received due attention: before we indulge in the somewhat lugubrious pastime of bewailing the impending fate of mankind, suppose we investigate our title to wail. Foresight is a commendable virtue; but there is such a thing as crying out before we are hurt. Suppose the worst: good men are scarce, and their sons more scarce. What of it? How many such men does the world need?

That depends, of course, to some extent at least, on what we mean by a good man. Let us draw our lines closely. Let us speak of men of outstanding genius — Newtons, Einsteins, Voltaires, Shakespeares, Aristotles, Christs, Confuciuses, Buddhas, and their like. Suppose the management of the world were given into our hands for a while — and in the matter of breeding men, at least, the thing is not altogether a fanciful dream. Suppose we peopled the earth exclusively with men of the heroic calibre or even approaching it. It requires an effort of the imagination to picture the resulting state of affairs. Think of five hundred thousand Shakespeares digging in dark mines for coal and a thousand Einsteins sweeping the streets of New York; half a million Voltaires occupied from nine A. M. to five P. M. with books — account books, if you please; an army of Aristotles shining shoes, while