

CHAPTER III

MEANING OF PHILIPPINISM

The beautiful city of Manila with its cosmopolitan population and rapid changes, is conscious of its position among the great cities of the Far East. Unlike the Indian and Chinese cities infested with a regular class of social parasites Manila can rightly be proud of having stamped out beggary from within its municipal area. It can also be proud of its wonderful sanitary arrangements, its interest in the cause of public health, the sewerage system, the method of discharging garbage, the beautiful roads and alleys, indeed all that make the use of the daily necessities of life safe and pleasant. Manila, the capital city of the Philippines has set an example before the whole country, of the secret of driving out the danger of tropical diseases. The authorities of the various great cities in India and China may profit much in the interest of their people, by visiting this country and studying its efficient municipal administration.

Manila has a cosmopolitan population. Races and nationalities from various parts of the world, are represented in the daily crowd which adorns the Escolta, the busiest trade centre of the city. How interesting it is to notice that many of the native Filipinos, in their physical feature, seem to show a great racial blend. Indeed I have been told that it is hard, if not impossible to find at present such a thing as the pure Filipino at Manila.

But the Malayan blood seems to assert itself most distinctly in all this race mixture. Unlike the great cities in India and China, Manila has a peculiarity of its own. When a tourist from the West visits Calcutta or Shanghai, he is conscious in numerous ways that he is in a different country of a different people with its different culture and ideal. There he meets the educated natives representing what that country represents and listens to the viewpoints in defence of their peculiarities. In Manila, however, there are a few native peculiarities, but they hardly seem to be quite represented by the cultured section of the people. Apart from the differences of physical feature, the educated Filipinos generally give the appearance of either the Spaniards or the Americans. That these peculiarities of the truly Oriental nature persist only among some of the masses, goes to show that the educated Filipinos do not defend them as worthy of their people. As the masses are scarcely educated enough to defend their time-honoured customs, these national peculiarities are in a slowly vanishing mood. Along with Manila's tropical diseases, its dirt and dust are to go all those that are reminiscent of the country's past and along with the modern ideas of sanitation, health and wealth let the rest of the West as well be welcomed.

And this is important. Manila forms the very centre of all national inspirations, good, bad and indifferent, which the people from different parts of the Philippines receive to guide their life. The prominent leaders of the land, the most important


institutions, the powerful newspaper organizations are all in Manila and the attention of the whole people is toward it. Here the people come to educate themselves in the various ways and ideas prevalent among the leading Filipinos and return home to spread them among others. So the situations among the natives in Manila are important in determining the future state of the Philippine civilization.

There is, however, an interesting contrast in the midst of this hasty westernization of the Philippines. Among the Filipinos of western tastes, one may sometimes discover a few persons with clearly a distinct outlook of their own. In physical feature there seems to be no difference, for the same Malayan blood is coursing in their vein; but there is one thing that distinguishes them from the rest—the Turkish fez. These people, the Moros as they are called, come from the island of Mindanao, to visit the capital city where the popular obsession of westernism hardly seems to affect their cultural individuality. There are again among the people some Chinese, more distinct than even the Moham-medan Filipinos. These people in their smooth black trousers, canvas shoes and buttonless shirts, carry on their peaceful avocations among others without forgetting their racial peculiarities. When one in Manila comes across a person with that glowing Turkish fez on his head and remembers the history of the Philippines, he feels constrained to bow in admiration before that worthy Moro who represents the sturdy spirit and the strong moral

back-bone against three centuries of Spanish vandalism. And the Chinese, those heirs of one of the most ancient and glorious civilizations, ridiculous as they may look according to some people, in their old national habits, give out through their usual simplicity, a wisdom of several millenniums. Those trousers, shoes and shirts still serve as a constant reminder of their Lao-tze, Confucius, Mencius and many other worthy ancestors. Their presence supplies a real lesson as to the importance of the glorious past in vitalizing the present and developing the future. A true thinker can hardly afford to overlook the truth that the West calls itself progressive by rapidly breaking away from the past and changing as fast as possible because the past of the West is in contradistinction to that of the East, hardly very inspiring. Unlike the East, the West, the 'progressive' West comes of an ancestry which probably deserves to be forgotten. To follow the West in this respect is to commit a national suicide. But perhaps this very difference has acquired for the Moros the reputation of their being backward, while the Chinese owing to their race consciousness are fast becoming undesirables. Of course, there may be other reasons, but this one seems to be a potent factor in shaping the rest.

This contrast naturally leads one to reflect upon the historical causes of the present Filipino psychology. Why does the oriental mind of the Filipino seem so unable to catch the real spirit of the Orient? The Orient in its characteristic aversion for noise and demonstration chooses to remain si-

lent even though it is not unconscious of the insults and abuses flung against it. While others may not be able to realize what this oriental characteristic actually means, it is expected that a member of the great family of Asia would not be misled by the ignorant criticism of narrow-minded outsiders. Japan has accepted some phases of western civilization, she has accepted them not by choice but by necessity. Yet the soul of Japan is most admirably alive and devotional to the silent message of the East. Behind the veneer of her dazzling modernism, she is carefully preserving her oriental soul and is ever appreciative of the ideal of the Orient. But in the Philippines the whole atmosphere seems to be so surcharged with a flaunting westernism as though she is going to be used as an effective instrument for future oppression of the Orient. Does it mean that unlike Japan the Philippines has accepted this westernism out of choice? To arrive at such a conclusion is to ascribe to the oriental Malayan a western soul. The truth is that the Philippines with its disadvantages of geographical configuration, fought and bravely fought against the coming of the intrusive West. The most immoral politics of the West with which these island people were hardly acquainted, came in under the persuasive and winning guise of religion, seized the power of the land and then began its work of ruthless destruction. The holy tradition of the Inquisition and the Crusade could hardly be expected to help the Spaniards understand the value of a people's heritage, so they successfully terrorised the



helpless natives and then used them as they pleased. For more than three hundred years the Filipinos have been tutored to regard their own culture as the work of the devil, so even what had escaped the notice of the devil-hunters was indirectly robbed of its inspiring influence over the native mind already inoculated with a sufficient dose of religious fanaticism. Besides, the people being long under the Spaniards and without any opportunity of cultural contact with the East, have grown to accommodate themselves with the Spanish ways and manners. The independent spirit of the bird as displayed in its struggling protest at the initial stage of its being caged, seems to settle down to slow resignation, as time wears on until it becomes well pleased in its caged life and loathes to go back to its former independence. It is natural for the Filipino mind thus formed by ages of Spanish tutelage, to feel more inclined to the dazzling West with its pomp and show and its vast acquisition of political powers than to the East with its simplicity, profundity and inward grandeur shadowed by a temporary misfortune.

This is, however, not in defense of many old customs which are bound to change yielding place to new. No people with its ever-surging vitality would choose to arrest progress by obstinately holding to things without regard to changing circumstances. The ideal of a people conscious of its own individuality, may remain constant in its essence while it seeks to change its form to suit the exigencies of time. As long as the people's integrity is not radically affected by foreign intrusion,

the changing forms, however different they may look from one another, do not fail to take the colour of the substance. This change of forms along with the advance of time is what generally goes by the name of progress. Progress means continuation, it is not breaking away from the past. For a people to break away from its past is to be cut off from its soul and become a moral invertebrate with no conscience of its own. The Spaniards knew that without diverting the thoughts of the Filipinos from their past it would be impossible to keep their permanent hold upon them inasmuch as their past would constantly remind them of their own distinct individuality and keep them indifferent toward Spain. So the ancient history of the people was deliberately thrown into a mist and the things that lingered in their deep-rooted habits, were at a progressive discount as the process of Hispanization was going on. Some of the native customs and ideas are still surviving inasmuch as they seem to be not injurious to the inculcation of Christian faith. And now the growing national consciousness in the land, is fast creating a desire to go beyond that Spanish period of Philippine history and realise the meaning of old Philippine life.

That the Filipinos were called Indians was not without its significance. Indeed, when the Spaniards first came to the Islands they saw that the Filipinos had many things in common with the people of India. Men in the Philippines as in India used the costume consisting of "a short-sleeved cotton tunic usually black or blue, which came below

the waist". Many of them and particularly those of Zambales used to "shave the front part of the head, but wore a great loose shock on the middle of the skull",—a custom which still obtains among the people of southern India and Orissa. They dressed in sarongs and on the head they wore the turban which they called *potong*. The women "adorned their hair with jewels, and also wore ear-pendants and finger rings of gold". Their cloth was a fine *tapis*, "a bordered and ornamented cloth wrapped around the body, which was confined by a belt and descended to the ankles." "Both men and women were in the habit of anointing and perfuming their long black hair which they wore gathered in a knot or roll on the back of the head". Professor Austin Craig says and it is also recorded in a Chinese book of 1349 by Wang Ta-yuan translated by Hon. W. W. Rockhill that the ancient people of the Philippines practised suttee. "There are some even", it is said, "who to make manifest their wifely devotion, when the body of their dead husband has been consumed get into the funeral pyre and die". And those women who did not die with their husbands were "never permitted to remarry". The religious cult of the Filipinos was not different from that of the Hindus. They paid homage to "fire, Sun, Moon, rainbow, to animals, birds and even to trees and to rocks of peculiar appearance."¹ "There was no old tree to which they did not attribute divinity; and it was a sacrilege to cut such a tree for any purpose.

¹ Elsdon Best, *Prehistoric Civilization in the Philippines*.

What more did they adore? the very stones, cliffs and reefs and the headlands of the shores of the sea or the rivers." Their God was called Diobata derived certainly from the Sanskrit word Devata. They abhorred the idea of killing any animals—a custom which reminds one of the Buddhist cult of Ahimsa or non-violence and of the orthodox Hindus who would not eat any kind of animal flesh. "There are many swine, deer, and buffalo but he who wishes them must kill them himself, because no native will kill or hunt them." They were extremely peace loving people and not given to the noises of town life. "With all the development of industry and trade during three centuries of Spanish rule, there had grown up less than half a dozen settlements of ten thousand inhabitants or over when the Americans took possession."

All these things are so characteristically Indian that without reference to the Filipino they may be taken by a Hindu reader for descriptions relating to India. While these customs have practically died out in the Philippines and have almost been forgotten, many of them in India, are still existing among her people and those that have ceased to exist are still fresh in their memory. It is said, however, that in the Philippines there are some places in the country-side where the people like the Hindus, still sing or chant their ancient myths bearing upon the old pantheistic ideas.

¹ Blair and Robertson, *The Philippine Islands*, Vol. 12, p. 256.

² Ibid, Vol. 4.

³ A. L. Kroeber, *People of the Philippines*, p. 97.

With these and many other customs the Filipinos lived a life which even when judged from the records of the highly prejudiced Spaniards, was at that time no less civilized than the life of the Spaniards themselves who came to civilize them. Indeed the records of the Spanish authorities in the Islands, as embodied in the fifty-five volumes on *The Philippine Islands* by Blair and Roberson, seem to show that the Spanish vandalism succeeded in the Philippines because the Filipinos were too good and civilized to deal with them properly. Of the various traits which the natives gave out in their every day life, it has been found that they were liberal and generous, kind and affable, clever and intelligent. They were content with little and not covetous nor fond of wealth. They were brave and courageous, cool in danger and despised all acts of cowardice. They were not simple or foolish but docile and tractable. They were highly industrious and capable of hard labour. They were polite as-tute and respectful to their elders and, the aged. They were fond of study, devout and impressed by ceremonies. They were proud of ancestry, loved home and possessed family affection. They abhorred theft and were extremely charitable. Mr. Russell from his personal study of some of the natives who did not submit to Spanish tutelage, says that in his observation "no other people have a more rigid code of personal morality in sex relation." Especially about the Tinguians in Luzon he says, "There seems to have been among these people from the earliest

times a rather stern view of sexual morality".¹ Dean C. Worcester speaking about the non-Christian tribes says that they "are a most attractive people, cleanly in their personal habits and of an excellent disposition. They are peaceable and law-abiding to an astonishing degree. Crime is almost unknown among them."² "The Indians, said an early Spanish colonist referring to the Filipinos, "always seemed fine fellows to me. They are not changeable and rough like those whom we saw in Mexico, but tractable and urbane and of special intelligence and fine ability."³

Turning again to the present state of the Filipino life we may find that in spite of the rising tide of westernism in this eastern land, there are still a few remnants of the Philippine tradition lingering among some of the masses. How in the midst of the process of westernization for the last three and a half centuries there still happen to be these few customs and ideas of old is an interesting study. The truth, is, as it seems to me, that the comparatively less educated and the uneducated people, while they may be sometimes prone to imitate the better educated class as a natural urge to become 'gentlemen' and have a look at themselves, have not altogether been enamoured of the exotic customs and habits. The Filipinos being chiefly an agricultural people were not until recently so concentrat-

¹ *The Outlook of the Philippines*, p. 37.

² *Philippine Journal of Science*, 1900.

³ Blair and Robertson, *The Philippine Islands*, Vol. 37, p. 299.

ed in towns and cities and were, therefore, not so easily affected by modernism. The average people being more interested in their natural environment than in the customs and ideas from outside are slow to change. Moreover, the Filipino women who have not yet been infected with the western idea of competing with men, constitute a good conservative force of the Philippine tradition.

The following list from among the many old Filipino customs and beliefs will interest the Hindus no less than the Filipinos inasmuch as they still exist in both countries. India is a big country and I can hardly pretend to know all the customs and superstitions existing in her various parts, especially southern India which indeed, was the source of ancient Indo-Filipino relation; or, it might have been possible for me to aver that most of the still existing old traditions of the Filipinos bear intimate relation with many of those that are still extant in India. ¹

1. Holding religious procession during an epidemic.
2. Bending the head low and putting the hands forward when passing between two persons.
3. When an owl happens to alight on the window-pane of a house, the people in that house will meet some disaster.
4. Early marriages.

¹ The list is selected partially from an article of Dean F. Benítez.

5. The belief that if a cat wipes its face with one of its feet, a visitor is coming.
6. The appearance of a planet foretells troubles.
7. If a snake called *sasa* stays in your house, you will become rich.
8. If you dream that your tooth have fallen, some body will die.
9. On all Soul's Day people rob their neighbours of edible things.
(This is similar to the custom of *Nastach-andra* in Bengal according to which if you happen to see the Moon by chance on that night, you are supposed to do likewise.)
10. Eating with the fingers.
11. The fear of eating twin bananas for fear of having twins.
12. Prohibiting children from combing their hair at night.
13. Keeping a light all night in the house when the newly-born baby is not yet baptized.
14. Burning the seeds of the fruit that has caused stomach-ache and then drinking the water in which the pulverised burned seeds have been mixed.
15. If you get a spine into your throat, have a cat's paw pass over your throat and the spine will slide into your stomach.
16. Not sleeping with wet hair for fear of getting blind or lunatic.
17. Oiling the hair and chewing bettel-nut.

18. Wearing the camisa which in Bengal is called camija.
19. The fishing nets and the small country boats like those in India.

There are many Filipino legends and folk-tales which still bear their deep Indian tint. For instance, the legend of the Manubo Ango with his whole family turning into stone or the tradition in Oriental Leyte that one committing incest will be turned into stone reminds one of the story of Ahalya in the great Hindu epic, the Ramayana in which Ahalya turned into stone at the curse of her husband because of her adultery with Indra who appeared before her in the guise of her husband while in fact her husband was away. The god Balitak of the Iphugawa is said to have drawn forth water by piercing a rock with an arrow...an idea similar to one in the Mahabharata in which Arjuna was said to have pierced the earth with his arrow to get fresh water for the dying Bhishma. There are many other similar legends which have now been mixed up with the stories of the Christian saints and have found access to their Christian tradition.

Here it may be contended in behalf of the Spaniards imposing their civilization upon the Filipinos, that if India was the source of the ancient Philippine civilization, she was no more innocent than Spain in the subsequent history of the Philippines and that ancient civilization was no more Philippine than the later one introduced from Spain. The

answer, however, is not so difficult to find. Indian civilization was not thrust upon the Filipinos. To thrust it would have required a military force—a thing which Indian culture true to its name, never allowed to travel together. It has already been mentioned, in the preceding chapter that the Filipinos as Malayans were in intimate relation with the people of southern India. These south Indian people came out and settled in the various islands where the native Malayans freely mixed with them and together attained a social unity out of which they developed their own social polity. These states as independent political units did not obstruct the streams of Indian culture quietly flowing into the land and uninterruptedly filtering into the thoughts of the people. India never thought of ruling over those nations. There was no political motive, no religious hatred, no military manoeuvre to intimidate and enslave the people. It was a natural process by which the island people received Indian civilization which formed the foundation of the wonderful superstructure of their own.

Here is the difference. Spain did not play fair with the Philippines. Her motive was from the very beginning entirely different. True to their traditional hospitality, sometimes even verging on extravagance, the Filipinos received Magellan as a stranger should be received. And true to the tradition of the West, Magellan first introduced the Cross behind which stood his military power. The liberal king Humabad of Cebu accepted it and so

Magellan succeeded in enlisting his sympathy to challenge those native chiefs who would not submit to his Cross. It was a very clever move to foment internal struggle and then seize the power. But the king Lapulapu of Mactan was no unequal match and Magellan had to pay the penalty with his life. New forces arrived and in the mean time the holy Cross was recruiting the natives in the interest of Spain. With the help of the native converts the Spanish friars and soldiers built up a power which began not only to clear the land of all ideas and traditions of the infidels, as they must have called the non-Christian natives, but also to challenge the powerful state of the Mohammedans in Mindanao. In this adventure the Spaniards used the Christian Filipinos against the Mohammedans. The great revolutionary leader Emilio Aguinaldo lamented that "every year our sons are taken away to be sacrificed in Mindanao and Sulu against those, who we are led to believe are our enemies when, in reality, they are our brothers fighting like us, for their liberty." The plastic heart of the Christian Filipino was further incited against the Chinese settlers whose proud inheritance resisted the influence of the foreign creed which they could not harmonize with their ideal. That old prejudice of the Filipinos against their Chinese fellow-citizens is still lingering among them and even the daily newspapers do not forget to use the biting sarcasm of 'celestials' whenever they may refer to the Chinese. When the Spaniards in their work of wholesale conversion found the Chinese rather hard nuts to crack,

they resorted to a legal sanction to break the Chinese morale. They issued a decree "that Chinese half-castes and headmen shall be compelled "to go to the church and attend Divine Service, and act according to the customs "established in the villages". The penalty for an infraction of this mandate by a male was "20 lashes in the public highway and two months' labour in the Royal Rope Walk (in Taal), or in the Gallies of Cavite." If the delinquent was a female the chastisement was "one month of public penance in the church." The Alcalde or Governor of the Province who did not promptly inflict the punishment was to be mulcted in the sum of P200, to be paid to the Royal Treasury." * Yet the Chinese rightly proud of their own ideal and civilization did not want to yield. And this was too much for the pious Spaniards to tolerate the Chinese any longer. "In 1755 it was resolved to expel all non-Christian Chinese, but a term was allowed for the liquidation of their affairs and withdrawal. By June 30, 1755 the day fixed for their departure from Manila, 515 Chinamen had been sharp enough to obtain baptism as Christians, in order to evade the edict, besides 1108 who were permitted to remain because they were studying the mysteries and intricacies of Christianity. 2070 were banished from Manila, the expulsion being rigidly enforced on those newly arriving in junks." * Many of these Chinese had settled in the Philippines with their families long before the

* John Foreman, *The Philippine Islands*, p. 189.


* *The Philippine Islands*, p. 111.

coming of the Spaniards and had grown to regard the land as their own country. Their efficient business system, their agricultural work and various other contributions to the progress of the land showed their deep interest in the country. But the Spaniards came in, grabbed the land and ordered the Chinese to get out if they would not give up their own ideal and accept that of Spain. The sufferings which these unfortunate Chinese had to undergo because they chose to love their own things, clearly prove how the Spaniards imposed their civilization upon the people of the land. Indeed, it can be well imagined how the Filipinos regarded the Hispanization of the land from the fact that during the three centuries of Spanish rule there were about one hundred popular revolts. The great Filipino martyr, Dr. Jose Rizal whose memory is still enshrined and will ever be, in every Filipino heart, saw clearly what all this meant. In an illuminating article on *'The Philippines a Century Hence'*, he wrote, "Scarcely had they been attached to the Spanish crown than they had to sustain with their blood and the efforts of their sons the wars and ambitions of conquest of the Spanish people, and in these struggles, in that terrible crisis when a people changes its form of government, its laws, usages, customs, religion and beliefs, the Philippines were depopulated, impoverished and retarded—caught in their metamorphosis, without confidence in their past, without faith in their present and with no fond hope for the years to come..... They gradually lost their ancient traditions, their

recollections,—they forgot their writings, their songs, their poetry, their laws, in order to learn by heart, other doctrines which they did not understand, other ethics, other tastes, different from those inspired in their race by their climate and their way of thinking. Then there was a falling-off, they were lowered in their own eyes, they became ashamed of what was distinctly their own, in order to admire and praise what was foreign and incomprehensible."¹⁰

The Filipinos had to accept the faith of the Spaniards rather than the fate of the Aztecs in America. It was not a question of choice for, they were not supposed to question why. Highly proud of their ancestors as they were, they had to disown their ancestral names and take Spanish names for themselves. Partly out of necessity for the safety of their life and partly from that slavish recognition of the rulers' superiority, they took up Spanish manners and customs, habits and ideas. The Filipinos wanted to be like the Spaniards. This long adherence to things Spanish in total disregard for things indigenous had naturally its psychological effect upon the natives. The soul of the people being pressed by things not at all in tune with it, must have cowered and contracted, separating itself from all expressions of life. The unfortunate people deprived of the ever-vitalizing inspiration of its soul and swayed by a powerful mind could have, therefore no other conscience than that of

¹⁰ Translated by Austin Craig, p. 286.



the rulers. For the native people, it is, in reality, no conscience at all as it has no relation with its soul; and where the conscience of a people is not the voice of its soul, it descends the people into a mechanical life. And then all strange social ideas, all manners and customs from everywhere find easy access and threaten the people with a moral confusion. But the Spaniards did one good service, though unconsciously, to the Filipinos. They always hated and harassed the natives. This peculiar social phenomenon kept the two peoples at loggerheads and prevented their social fusion under Spanish Supremacy. Had it been otherwise the whole Filipino people might have been entirely absorbed and forgotten. Hatred begets hatred and persecution rouses the slumbering soul. All persecutions are threats of destruction and when destruction stares one in the face he begins to think of himself for he hates to die. The soul of the Filipino people could no longer sleep, for the thoughts of the people on itself mean the invocation of its soul to arise and assert. The result was the great revolution of 1896.

But the revolution was not the expression of their hatred against everything Spanish or their love for the things of the Philippines. Political and social anomalies prompted them to take the extreme steps. At the time of the revolution they were not, although they once were, against Spanish civilization being introduced *en masse* into the Philippines. In fact, the Filipinos being long denied all opportunities to keep direct com-

munication with other civilized countries while the Spanish splendour was vaunting before their uncritical eyes, grew to regard highly of things Spanish. The native traditions failing to assimilate or even adjust themselves with the Spanish civilization, had to retire into the background where amidst native indifference they slowly sank into insignificance until in some places they almost vanished. The final overthrow of the Spanish power did not mean the end of the Spanish civilization in the Philippines. It meant rather the fullest participation of it in the Filipino life.

Then arrived the Americans who, with their democratic persuasion backed by the logic of the bayonet, assumed the sovereign power. So began the American tutelage. The soul of the people that was aroused by Spanish oppression and sought to assert itself during the revolution, has fallen again under the spell of the American civilization. This time the Filipinos are in a quite different state of things—a state which requires more sober thinking inasmuch as the old social and political anomalies have, from all outward appearances, been done away with and the old intoxication for Westernism may in this comparatively freer atmosphere, go so far as to stupefy the Oriental soul of the land. The mind that has been formed by Spain in favour of the West, requires no special persuasion to welcome American extravagance and be so lost in it as to forget entirely the meaning of ethnology, geography and climate.

What is the Filipino mentality?, says Dr. Pardo de Tavera, one of the most outstanding thinkers of

the post-revolution Philippines, "but the Latin type transplanted into our islands by the Spaniards? Was there in our country something in common with Spanish customs? Language, religious beliefs, traditions, family organizations, social relations, forms of government, the sense of justice—everything was distinct and antagonistic. Nevertheless, after three centuries of subjugation, the Filipino people of Malayan origin, of the yellow race, have come to form a member of the group of countries under Latin civilization and is entirely different from its sister-races of Asia." In this forced difference of his country from its neighbourhood Dr. Tavera did not seem to find any incongruity. Under American sovereignty he welcomes American tutelage. "It is now the turn," says he, "of the Anglo-Saxon race to be the trustee and the dictator of the highest state of civilization that we have ever known of." If this is the representative view of the people it seems then, that the coming of the West in this part of the East has not been in vain; for the Filipinos are now glad to be always taught and not to think for themselves. Mr. Buenaventura Rodriguez referred to a very suggestive statement of a Japanese journalist that "the thoughts of the Filipinos reflect a borrowed light only," and himself said, "We live too detached from our environment in the contemplation of the exotic vision that is always before us, while we are slowly being won into the belief that we are so poor in everything that even our mode of expression is borrowed from other peoples." It is the invariable logic of the introduction

of an alien civilization in total disregard for the soul of the people. This is no place to discuss the meaning of progress, for it depends more or less upon the philosophy of life which a people upholds for itself. The modern attempt to standardize progress without considering the wonderful diversities of life, is the symptom of a dangerous neurosis caused by an overdose of race arrogance. It is time that the Filipinos would realize it and think for themselves.

They should analyze their present state of things very carefully and try to evaluate it in relation to their past history. Their past was a natural growth dictated by their own thinking and initiative. The last three centuries and a half they were merely in exile. Over the face of this beautiful land in whose bosom the race was reared for centuries, there still lies that black cover placed by foreigners. Upon this cover is now painted in variegated colour the feature of an alien face. The Filipinos may feel proud of the painted face but behind the cover the real face may remain sad forever.

They should see how far the introduction of alien ideas and customs is consistent with the genius of the people. Otherwise all imported things will continue to press upon them and conspire to dissipate their native conscience. The book which John Foreman, a distinguished English author, has written after years of experience in the Philippines and which has gone through three editions, may be an exaggeration of the dark side of the Filipinos no less than *The Isles of Fear* by Katherine Mayo, but

both of them have described the Filipino mentality which is in marked contrast with what characterized the people when the Spaniards first came to the Islands. What Mr. Foreman wrote in 1906 and Miss Mayo in 1924, with regard to the character of the Filipinos, should not be discarded in blind optimism, if the present generation would claim to be the true descendants of their worthy forefathers. Just recently Dr. Rebecca Parish of a mission hospital in Manila and one of the leading women of the place, acquired some notoriety by publishing an article bearing upon the moral conditions of the people. She writes, "During ten years of hospital and other medical practice among all classes, I observed a tendency in the large majority of the Filipinos to think of the sex side of life too continuously and too sordidly. I saw a general carelessness as to the most sacred affairs of family life and heard careless, free and very vulgar talk in homes in the presence of children, and by children themselves. Even educated young people were insensitive to the niceties of conversation, action or allusion in these matters, though refined and dignified perhaps upon every other point. Children and young people were in constant contact with illegitimacy, rape, lust, and promiscuity; they had a knowledge of the prevalence of concubinage where least expected; they saw its unashamed pursuance." Dr. Parish professes to be a worker in the interest of the Filipinos and deserves the gratitude of the people for it, but she revealed her missionary mentality by publishing this article in America instead of discussing the

whole problem with the Filipinos to find out some solution. Naturally it has caused resentment in various quarters and has been proclaimed as false. But the thinkers of the land can hardly let these things pass without being wiser. True or false even a rumour of this kind has its deeper meaning of determining the future of the people.

Dr. Parish, instead of picturing the people in such lurid colour before foreigners who would hardly understand the problem of the land, could have approached the matter by trying to analyze its cause. Probably she could find something in those dazzling paraphernalia of a civilization entirely foreign to the nature of the land, unadjustable to the ideal of the people and unassimilable to their native genius, as they continue to flow in rapid succession on pretence of civilizing the natives. The very fact that the civilization is exotic is already a problem, for if it fails to be in harmony with the soul of the people it may cause even moral anarchy. What is pouring in so uninterruptedly in the name of civilization is born of situations which may not be found here. The extreme rigour of cold may require a form of society with its own peculiar ideas which can hardly be wholesome for people living in tropical heat. The food in one climate may be poison in another, stimulating ideas may turn to be demoralizing. While in the death-like silence of nature in cold regions, human life justifies itself by its din and bustle, hurry and speed lest it becomes still, in warm climate nature is ever full with the richness of life, the unceasing music that comes from her varieties of

sportive birds, from the soothing breeze merrily blowing over her luxuriant forest and prairies. Here man is bound to be meditative, simple and unostentatious; here he is born to love nature instead of machine. If machines with all their necessary accompaniments, smokes and noise, sensation and excitement, hurry and speed come to take the place of tropical gifts, they not only impede the growth of man's higher feelings but degenerate them into lower passions. That deep emotion peculiar to the tropical man remains elevated in the infinite grandeur of nature but becomes extremely disturbed and rebellious when those things capture his mind. Machine civilization is unwholesome to the tropical man because he is more emotional and if he cannot remain deeply spiritual amidst natural conditions and is placed in highly excitable environment he is liable to become animal and when man becomes animal he is worse than animal. It is time to pause for a while and think, instead of maintaining an ostrich-like idealism, over the causes of the present problems of growing complexity.

The Philippines has long been isolated from the East and persuaded by the West its self-appointed teacher, to regard the East with western attitude. With its eastern soul it could not, even if it would, before the ever vaunting gorgeousness of political civilization, receive the inspiration of oriental ideal. Small country by itself, on the lonely sea, it felt compelled to listen to the West which proved its greatness by showing its gigantic machines and huge army and navy. The people acquiesced. They

heard the misfortune of the other oriental countries, of India and China and they lost their faith. They saw the West in its blind arrogance jeering at the East and they approved. And now they hear an old old voice from the ancient land of India, piercing through the accumulated disgrace of centuries and boldly repudiating the noise of the West,—they wonder. The West is flowing into the Philippines but the *Indios* are getting interested in India.
