

Philippine War Has Tended to Increasing Degeneration.

Not only in South Africa, of which we wrote specifically in our last issue, but in the Philippines also, have the inevitable cruelty and inherent wickedness of war, for no matter what purpose waged, manifested themselves in most unmistakable ways. We cannot better set forth again what we mean by this statement than by quoting from the third of the articles which George Kennan has written for the *Outlook*. It will be remembered that Mr. Kennan has had access to official documents; to letters of officers and men, and to other means of information which have been opened practically to him alone. It is significant that he should find himself compelled by the evidence to close his series of articles with what is not only a severe arraignment of the barbarous manner in which the war has been carried on, but what is, in fact, when rightly interpreted, a condemnation of war in itself as "hell," even when it does not have "Spanish improvements":

"That we have inspired a considerable part of the Philippine population with a feeling of intense hostility toward us, and given them reason for deep-seated and implacable resentment, there can be no doubt. We have offered them many verbal assurances of benevolent intention, but at the same time we have killed their unresisting wounded; we hold fifteen hundred or two thousand of them in prison; we have established at Guam a penal colony for their leaders; and we are now resorting, directly or indirectly, to old Spanish inquisitorial methods, such as the 'water torture,' in order to compel silent prisoners to speak or reluctant witnesses to testify. That the present generation of Filipinos will forget these things is hardly to be expected.

"The most noticeable tendency that has manifested itself in the progress of the war is a tendency toward greater severity, not to say cruelty, in our dealings with the natives. There is a good deal of evidence to show that, if we did not kill unresisting Filipino prisoners and wounded in the beginning, we have come to it at last. Soldiers just back from the islands do not hesitate to admit the bayoneting of the wounded, and their admission has strong confirmation in the official reports of generals in the fields. General MacArthur, for example, gives, without comment, the following statistics of Filipino killed and wounded in the ten months ended November 1, 1900: 'Killed, 8,227; wounded, 694.'

"The normal proportion of killed to wounded, as shown by our own losses in the Philippines and elsewhere, is one to two or three. In the case of the Filipinos this proportion is more than reversed, the killed exceeding the wounded in the proportion of four and six-tenths to one. The irresistible conclusion is that we increased the number of killed by putting to death the wounded. If there be any other explanation of the figures, it has not been suggested to me, and no other explanation suggests itself.

"It is a melancholy fact, which has recently had bloody illustration in China, that soldiers of civilized nations, in dealing with an inferior race, do not observe the laws of honorable warfare as they would observe them were they dealing with their equals and fighting fellow-Christians. They refer to the dark-skinned native contemptuously as

a 'chink,' a 'nigger,' or a 'goo-goo,' and treat him often as they would never think of treating a beast. For the American soldier in the Philippines—harassed by concealed foes, shot at from ambush, waylaid in places where he has not half a fighting chance, and forced to endure for hours and days at a time the strain of unseen but deadly peril—there is perhaps some excuse; but I had hoped that men of our race and nationality would show, even to a 'nigger' or a 'goo-goo,' the generosity as well as the courage of the American character.

"For the practice of torture in the Philippines there is no excuse whatever; and yet that we have sanctioned, if not directly employed, the 'water torture,' as a means of extorting information from the natives, seems certain.

"An officer of the regular army now serving in Luzon, from whose letters I have already made quotations, describes the 'water torture,' as practiced by Maccabebes scouts in our service, as follows:

"A company of Maccabebes enter a town or barrio, catch some man,—it matters not whom,—ask him if he knows where there are any guns, and upon receiving a negative answer, five or six of them throw him down, one holds his head, while others have hold of an arm or a leg. They then proceed to give him the "water torture," which is the distention of the internal organs with water. After they are distended, a cord is sometimes placed around the body and the water expelled. From what I have heard, it appears to be generally applied, and its use is not confined to one section. Although it results in the finding of a number of guns, it does us an infinite amount of harm. Nor are the Maccabebes the only ones who use this method of obtaining information. Personally, I have never seen this torture inflicted, nor have I ever knowingly allowed it; but I have seen a victim a few minutes afterward, with his mouth bleeding where it had been cut by a bayonet used to hold the mouth open, and his face bruised where he had been struck by the Maccabebes. Add to this the expression of his face, and his evident weakness from the torture, and you have a picture which, once seen, will not be forgotten. I am not chicken-hearted, but this policy hurts us. Summary executions are, and will be, necessary in a troubled country, and I have no objection to seeing that they are carried out; but I am not used to torture. The Spaniards used the torture of water throughout the islands as a means of obtaining information; but they used it sparingly, and only when it appeared evident that the victim was culpable. Americans seldom do things by halves. We come here and announce our intention of freeing the people from three or four hundred years of oppression, and say, "we are strong, and powerful and grand." Then to resort to inquisitorial methods, and use them without discrimination, is unworthy of us, and will recoil on us as a nation.'

"It is painful and humiliating to have to confess that in some of our dealings with the Filipinos we seem to be following more or less closely the example of Spain. We have established a penal colony; we burn native villages near which there has been an ambush or an attack by insurgent guerrillas; we kill the wounded; we resort to torture as a means of obtaining information; and in private letters from two officers of the regular army in the Philippines, I find the prediction that in

certain provinces we shall probably have to resort to the method of reconcentration practiced by General Weyler in Cuba.

"Was there ever a stranger illustration of the irony of fate than that presented by such a situation as ours? We generously undertake to free eight million Filipinos from the tyranny and cruelty of Spain; and then, in the effort to convince them of the benevolence of our intentions and make them accept the blessings of security and peace, we find ourselves following the example of General Weyler and resorting—if not forced to resort—to the old Spanish methods,—murder, torture and reconcentration. That such methods are general, or that they have the approval or sanction of any considerable number of American officers, I refuse, at present, to admit or believe; but that a wounded Filipino should ever have been bayoneted to death by an American soldier, that a defenseless prisoner should ever have suffered the 'torture of water' under the American flag, is reason enough for humiliation and shame. 'War,' perhaps, 'is hell,' as General Sherman said; but it need not be hell with Spanish improvements. If we cannot subdue and pacify the Filipinos without resorting to murder, torture and reconcentration, we are evidently engaged in an enterprise from which we shall never derive either satisfaction or honor."