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EDITORIAL

DYING AT THE TOP.

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THE *Evening Post* publishes with much relish the full list of the names of the newly formed “Philippine Independence Committee”; and “pointing with pride” at the galaxy, declares it an evidence that “American ideals are not dying at the top.” A careful consideration of the galaxy proves the reverse of the *Evening Post’s* contention.

Unquestionably the Philippines as a colony present one of the darkest clouds that are gathering and brooding over the horizon of our country. It is not merely that the keeping of the Philippines has led to the first step that costs towards transforming this government of the United States into a military oligarchy. That is bad enough, no doubt; but military oligarchies can be got rid of, and once rid of the evil is cauterized; they may kill, but they do not poison or vitiate the system. The Philippines as a colony, however, are a Dismal Swamp from which must inevitably rise the miasma of corruption, inevitable upon the chase of placemen for distant offices, too distant to be supervised by the home people, and where wealth can be amassed by venality. The thing happens even nearby, at home, as the increasingly scandalous Postal Scandals show. What will it not be in the instance of a colony at the antipodes! Corruption will breed corruption. Corruptly places will be obtained, more corruptly will they be held, and still more corruptly will the official misdemeanors be cloaked over. The Philippines threaten to render the woof of the nation too rotten to hold any correctionary stitches. All this is obvious. Of course, the better informed, the Socialist, can see deeper. He realizes that the very danger from corruption presupposes home conditions too weak to resist the deadly microbe; and the better informed spend, accordingly, little time on the Philippines, but seek to restore at home the popular conditions of economic freedom that capitalism undermines. That gentlemen of high ideals and who figure in the high places of

capitalist society should not be equipped with the mental powers to see so deep is not surprising. Their class interests disqualify them. Nevertheless, blind though their class interests may render them on economics, it does not therefrom follow that they must also be dead to the ideals that rocked the cradle of their own, the capitalist system of society,—ideals which were loftiest with the capitalist revolution of America. However absurd it would be for anyone to expect to see these ideals realized in the now full grown capitalism of America, nevertheless devotion to them would still be a redeeming feature in the system or its intellectual upholders. Among these ancient American ideals is that of independence of thought. What evidence is there that it survives, or is not dying out? The Philippines Independence Committee furnishes an evidence that that ideal for one IS dying at the top; that, in fact, what is left of it is not worth mentioning.

Here we have a country of 70,000,000 people with thousands of distinguished and intellectual posts, held of course, by the most brilliant members of the capitalist class. That these realize the miasmatic influence of the Philippines, as a colony upon America there is no doubt. Nor can there be any doubt that those who gathered the committee did all they could to present as long a list as possible. And with what success? Leaving aside the calibre of the committeemen, and bringing for the present only the number under the scalpel, what do we see? Only 42 names could be scraped together for such an ideal purpose! Only 42 names, after scurrying over a country the vastness of ours, and with such a large quarry from which to draw! That hundreds and thousands of others feel the same way is unquestionable; but they dare not utter themselves, lest they forfeit they posts! They dare not utter themselves even on such a purely ideal matter as purity of government! They dare not, because the social system that has reached the rotten-ripeness when it must fall, dies at the top. Its ideals become tainted with its essence, and the greatest of all ideals, manly independence of thought and speech, is no more.

Such is the lay of the land with regard to the Philippine Independence Committee when looked at from the numerical view point only. Applying the scalpel to its quality, even that insignificant number shrivels and almost vanishes. Barely three, say, five of the names deserve any consideration. The remaining thirty-seven are just so much trash. There is, for instance, the inevitable Robert Fulton Cutting,

a picturesque moth, who would sooner die than not be on some committee; there is President David Starr Jordan of Leland Stanford University, who was perfectly willing to be reduced to the level of chief cook, or chief gardener, at any rate, of valet of the lady who virtually owns the University, by allowing her whims to overrule his opinion regarding the fitness of an instructor, and to dismiss him at her orders,—and who is happy in that capacity; there is the Rev. C.H. Parkhurst of unspeakable “tricks”;—and so forth and so on!

Aye! American capitalist society is dying at the top. Its one time ideals are no more. May the decadent body not have to linger much longer! Another social system, another class, with whom true American ideals are a living fact, is pretty near virile-ripe to take the place of the capitalist class—rotten-ripe for replacement.

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