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THE SITUATION.

If Admiral Dewey's utter destruction of the Spanish squadron, at Manila, were to be the only great naval encounter of the war, the event might prove that the victory had been too easily purchased. The odds in his favor—and in spite of the fact that he had to encounter the land batteries as well as the Spanish fleet, the odds were in his favor—do not obscure the fact that his success was due to superior skill, and leave no doubt that if the Spanish forces had been equal to his own, science would still have won the day. Success may justify Admiral Dewey's temerity in entering on an unknown field of mines, in Manila harbor; but prudent men may still think that he risked too much; the explosion of one mine, in front of his flagship, shows what might have happened if the mines had been more numerous and the hand that exploded them been more sure. The feat of destroying the squadron, without the loss of a man, is indeed a cheap victory; and it will be strange if inexperience can exercise the restraint necessary to avoid putting an exaggerated value upon it. But the war is not over, and the greatest skill in seamanship and gunnery cannot be expected always to secure equal immunity.

Before the war opened the avowed object of the United States intervention was to secure the freedom of Cuba; an intervention which, as the President thought, was to be independent alike of both the rebels and the Spaniards. Recognition of the insurgents was refused. But it was plain to lookers-on that the intervention would drift to the side of the insurgents. This has already happened; and the ideas of the object of the war are undergoing rapid change in many minds. The first real stroke of the war to free Cuba was the destruction of the Spanish squadron at Manila; and now the question is raised, what is to be done with the Philippines when the conquest of them is made, as it will be, complete? It is possible that the *ante bellum* declarations of the United States may be found to be embarrassing when this question is ripe for settlement, though it is perhaps not probable. Such things have happened before. In 1814, England finding herself in military occupation of the Ionian Islands, desired to convert the tenure into absolute sovereignty. The Russian

Minister, however, exhumed some proclamations in which a different intention was avowed before the war. The Czar objected to England holding the Isles otherwise than by a Protectorate, and Castlereigh yielded. This precedent the Americans seem to have forgotten. It is, however, worth remembering, though it would not necessarily rule in the case of the Philippines. Indeed, another British Minister in the place of Castlereigh might have insisted on and obtained a different result. The incident is valuable as showing that *ante bellum* professions are liable to count for something.

Opinion in the United States is fast tending to a retention of the Philippines. The desire of the Senate, not yet officially expressed, is known to be in favor of retention. Should this view prevail, when peace comes the United States will have thrown off her isolation and become an Eastern as well as an American power. She will then be in a better position for trading with China, a country of which the commercial development is capable of incalculable expansion. It is not every country that knows how to secure a portion of that trade equal to the expenditure made to secure it. A far-seeing Frenchman, Monsieur Caillaud (*Histoire de l'Intervention Francaise au Ton-king*) foresaw and predicted that the French expenditure in that part of the world enure to the profit of England through Hong Kong, and not to that of France through Saignon. In 1888, the trade of Hong Kong was 148 times as great as that of Saignon; to this day, all Europe, with the exception of England, which controls the great bulk of the Chinese trade, has got a share in it which is much less than that which the United States has secured. Experience shows that the attempts of France to extend her trade in China have been unsuccessful and are not much to be feared. It is probably true that her recent efforts in that quarter will bring more profit to England and the United States than to herself.

When Premier Laurier telegraphed a member of the British Columbia Legislature that the Ottawa Government did not intend to do anything farther in regard to railway communication with the Klondyke, he may have had in his mind what the English company chartered last session was doing at the White Pass. The charter gives the right to build a road as far as Selkirk. The engineers, under their chief Hawkins, are now at work locating the line. For the first section, from Skaguay to Lake Bennett, rails and other materials are said to have begun to be shipped; the rolling stock, it is added, is under contract, and will be delivered with all practicable speed. Sanguine persons expect that the section over the White Pass will be in operation in two or three months, say by the 1st of August. If this feat can be accomplished, that part of the road will be ready before the Mackenzie-Mann line was to have been open, if the Senate veto had not interposed. The present road offers a shorter route, and is approachable by water at all seasons of the year. *Per contra*, it is not an all-Canadian route; but if both countries interested in this line will be content to act in a reasonable spirit, there is not much reason why the trade should meet greater obstruction at this than at any other point where the international frontier has to be crossed. And, a decided consolation, we save the 3,500,000 acres of land which the Mackenzie-Mann contract called for.

There are signs that the Government of Ottawa and that of Washington have begun to act in a spirit of mutual accommodation in regard to the transit over the American