

which, very reasonably deny us control of our foreign affairs, though they expose us to all the consequences of a quarrel for which we may not be even remotely responsible, would ensue.

Thus, while we can easily conceive of international complications arising which would create a crisis, we are at the same time certainly suffering from internal morbid conditions of the body politic, which will call, ere long, for the application of some remedy. Nowhere in the Empire are the external and internal incentives to change as imminent and threatening as here, and nowhere are the alternative policies which offer themselves, more perplexing. No plan yet proposed meets with even wide approval, for none is free from grave objections.

The *far niente* policy would be the best if all our internal forces could slumber; and all external foes, should we have any, would remain dormant. But, if we indulge in the hallucination that while the world revolves we can stand still, we shall certainly find ourselves in the same sorry plight as the "Foolish Virgins," with no oil, no light, and no home. As a people we should act with the same prudence and foresight that we bring to bear on our private affairs; make plans for our future guidance, whether Providence permits us to carry them out or not, and face the future manfully, determined that we will steer a straight course towards