

AN ELOQUENT STATEMENT.

Sixto Lopez Discusses "Personal" and "National" Liberty.

Capt Patrick O'Farrell of Washington recently received the following eloquently-written letter from Sixto Lopez, the agent of the Filipinos in London:—

It may be of interest and assistance to you, if I give a brief statement of the hopes and aspirations of our people, and of the way in which, from our point of view, we regard the acts which have led to the present unfortunate condition of affairs.

Elsewhere, in one of your leading American journals, I have said that what we crave is liberty; not merely personal, but national liberty. It requires neither argument nor eloquence to convince us that we should have personal liberty and "liberty of opportunity" under American rule. We are convinced that American rule would differ very materially from Spanish rule. We can well believe that even under the present administration's conception of "local self-government," by which we should be offered the crumbs of office which might fall from our master's table, we should have some advantages which we did not possess under Spanish rule. Indeed, in justice to the people of America, we might go further and admit that in the earlier stages we should have, under liberal American rule, greater prosperity than under our own administration. But even admitting that we were given the largest measure of personal liberty and opportunity, would that compensate us for the loss of national life? Therein lies the head and front of our offending. We are charged with ingratitude and many other offenses because we do not desire foreign rule, however good it may be.

But is it a crime—does it presuppose ingratitude—to crave for national life? Is it not a laudable aspiration which, instead of turning upon us the force of their might to crush, the American people ought to, and I believe will, support and encourage us in? Is it ungrateful if, while recognizing and appreciating the help which America has given us, we still prefer to be the arbiters of our own destiny, prepared as we should be to suffer the results of our initial mistakes in order that we may the sooner learn the lessons of nationhood? Personal liberty is undoubtedly a necessary condition without which nations can neither be great nor permanent. But personal liberty is neither the sole nor the chief condition worthy of attainment. National liberty must always rank higher than personal liberty. If any American fails to realize this let him ask himself if he would be satisfied with personal liberty while his country became the vassal of England, France or Germany? Is it not perfectly certain that the one thing which he would never consent to part with is his national life? Would he not be prepared, if he is a good citizen, to give up everything, even his own life, in order to preserve the life of his country and keep its banner in the heavens? How, then, does it become a crime in us if we are actuated by the same lofty aspirations? But why do we desire a condition so naturally desirable? Why do we aspire to national life? Is it because we are "malcontents"? Is it because we are "savages"? Is it that we are ungrateful for those services rendered by America? Surely it is because there is implanted in every human heart the love not only of liberty, but of national life and the desire to see one's country subject to no power save that of the Creator.

Such being our desire, does it follow that we must then make the unreasonable demands imputed to us by those who have evolved imaginary difficulties out of their own inner consciousness? We have never, for instance, demanded that the United States forces should be withdrawn from the Philippines, or that our country should be left to the supposed danger of a hypothetical state of anarchy. The suggestion comes, not from us, but from those who first tell us that we are "savages," and then charge us with doing and demanding all the foolish things which savages are supposed to do and demand. The fact is that we have never demanded anything. We have always been, and still are, prepared to yield anything and everything which will enable the administration to provide all the security of life and property that can conceivably be required or desired. We are also prepared to yield every possible right or concession as some small return for the inestimable service rendered us. But it seems that unless we are prepared to yield all this and to submit to unconditional surrender as well, the administration, though it must be conscious of its own power, will not be satisfied. We cannot imagine why a nation

like the United States should seek to crush a small and struggling people like ours. Everything that can be achieved by means of war can be better achieved without it. What we say, not to the people of America, but to the administration is as follows:—

Do you want means to secure protection to life and property? Then take whatever means are necessary. Do you want to secure rights in lieu of services rendered to us? You shall have all that you demand. Do you want to see a stable government established in the islands? So do we come and help us, or come and supervise while we establish it for ourselves. Do you want repayment in whole or in part for the \$20,000,000 too hastily paid to a defeated foe? Do you want trade concessions? Do you require a basis of operations in the far East? Do you want coaling stations or any conceivable thing which we are able to give or find? Come and take all these things. Do you want to humiliate us, and prove your own military strength? Impossible; there could be no nobility of character, no "prestige to arms," no "honor to the flag" in the strong humiliating the weak, especially when it is remembered that "the weak" once gave whatever strength it had in support of the arms of "the strong." Then there is only one thing left. Do you want our country? We cannot believe that you do. With all your millions of miles of territory, with all your illimitable wealth, with the vastness of your commerce, with the rights and concessions which we are prepared to yield to you, we cannot believe that you also want our country. But if you do want it, why not say so? Why talk of philanthropy and "peace" and "charity" and "liberty of opportunity" and the "task which Providence has placed upon you"? Why speak of refusing to accede to imaginary demands which we never made as to the immediate withdrawal of your forces? If it was your intention from the first to seize our country, why did you seek and accept our aid in the conquest of our native land? Why did you telegraph to us "come as soon as possible"? Why do you now seek to belittle our aid? Why do you charge us with having been bribed, and then allow us to spend the "bribe" in warfare against your enemy? Why did you awaken us from the delightful sleep into which you assert we had been lulled by "bribery"? Why did you allow us to cherish for months the belief that we were to have national liberty and independence? Why did you not tell us at first that it was your intention to annex the Philippines? Why did you say that "annexation was not to be thought of," and that by your code of morality it would be "criminal aggression"? Why did you not say boldly that you intended to take our country, and that you would be satisfied with nothing else? Why did you not plead at once that "might is right," and "have done with the wretched mess of misconstruction" as Col Denby elegantly expressed it.

These are the questions, which, as I have said, we address not to the people of America, with whom we have no quarrel, but to the administration. They are questions which require straightforward answers. If the administration can answer them it will, at any rate, serve to cleanse the record; if it cannot, then all men who regard integrity as of more value than territorial expansion or commercial advantage will remain unsatisfied and distrustful. But neither legal subtlety, nor politic evasion, nor an "eloquent silence" under the pretense that the questions are beneath notice, will serve. It will be useless to attempt to avoid the issue by telling us that we are "savages." Neither will it avail to plead that "no specific agreement had been made with Aguinaldo as to independence." We have our opinion as to whether there was a specific agreement. But let that, for the moment, be put out of the discussion. What we contend is that over and above any specific agreement, there was a moral understanding from which ensue moral obligations which are more binding than written agreements—more binding because the one party has trusted to the honor of the other without seeking a written bond. If I wish to secure the aid of a friend; if I tell him that I will not do a certain thing, that according to "my code of morality" it would be "criminal" to do it; and if I then accept his aid, knowing that he trusts entirely to my honor, would it be either moral or honorable to seek to escape the obligation by pleading that there had been no "specific" or written "agreement"? And no charge of "savagery" or "ingratitude" which I may afterward have made against my friend can deliver me from the moral obligation. Our case does not stand upon "specific" agreements; it stands upon inalienable rights. The administration's case does not stand upon "written" or "legal" agreements; it stands upon moral obligation. I have never doubted that the people of America will do what faith and honor demand. Sincerely yours,

SIXTO LOPEZ.