

*San Francisco Examiner*  
May 10, 1902

### *The Bald Campaigner*

“No,” said the Bald Campaigner. “I am not concerned to march to the relief of the American army in the Philippines, the beleaguering force of eloquent civilians do not in my judgment seriously imperil it. An army always has to fight facing both ways. So far, no American army has failed to come out of the contest with honor and glor. You’ll not persuade our people of the total depravity of their soldiers by pointing out the fact that the American way of making war is the dear, familiar way practiced by all the sons of Adam since the inconsiderate old gentleman raised Cain.

“We have no record of any wars devoid of barbarity—not even the holy wars of the Chosen People. As Sherman said in a correspondence with the opposing commander at Atlanta, “War is cruelty and you cannot refine it.” (Thank you I’m aware of the popular version of the remark). Suppose you could—suppose war had been so refined that the actual killing and wounding in battle were its most cruel features; how long would the humaniacs and sentimentaliters be content to let it go at that? Why, sir, you would hear the most earnest lamentation about the needless barbarity of shooting down an enemy in battle!

“If these impracticables were permitted to have their way they would divest war of so many of its horrors that no gentleman would accept a commission.”

The Bald Campaigner relighted his failing cigar and lost himself in meditation on the picturesqueness of the horrible.

“Do I justify the ‘water cure’ as a military method? No, I have very little knowledge of it—I have never seen it administered. Doubtless it is liable to abuse. Even the comparatively simple suasion known as ‘bucking and gagging’ is not always applied with humanity and discretion; and I have seen a man put astride a wooden horse with too sharp a back, or with stones attached to his feet (the man’s feet) that were too heavy for the character of his offense. The Filipinos may not be so uncandid as they seem, and might be persuaded to the truth by milder measures. Only those ‘on the spot’ are qualified to judge.

“The ‘water cure’ has at least this merit: it may not always induce the taciturn Tagalog to unfold his tale, but it has notably diminished the garrulity of the American civilian with regard to the ‘British atrocities’ in South Africa, a welcome effect! Not for weeks have we had in this country that tiresome ‘song and dance.’ Whatever has accomplished a result like that is not altogether to be deplored.

“As to ‘devastation’—making Samar a ‘howling wilderness,’ and so forth, that is the purpose of war. War is made, not against the bodies of adult males, but against the means of subsistence of a people; against a country’s resources. The fighting is incident to the devastation: we kill the soldiers because they protect their material resources—get between us and the fields that feed them, the factories that clothe them, the arsenals that arm them. We cannot hope to kill a great proportion of them at best; the humane thing is to overcome them by means of hunger

and nakedness. The earlier we can do so the less 'effusion of blood.' Leave the enemy his resources and he will fight forever. He will beget soldiers faster than you can destroy them."

The happiness of the Bald Campaigner in this felicitous speech was duly (and lonesomely) celebrated at the sideboard.

"What, again?—do I honestly advocate physical torture? Physical torture of whom, by whom and for what purpose under what circumstances?—be pleased to cultivate the habit of intelligibility. By the way, that is a fine boy of yours. Ever lick him for lying?"