

RICHTEST OF PHILIPPINE ISLANDS

Mindanao, an Undeveloped Empire of Extraordinary Productivity, Visited by Globe-Trotter Carpenter.

(Copyright, 1900, by Frank G. Carpenter.) ZAMBOANGA, March 15.—It looks like a log of mutton, with a fat shank, a well-trimmed stem, and the bone sticking out like a handle, and it is, in fact, the richest and juiciest piece of meat in Uncle Sam's Philippine larder. I refer to the island of Mindanao. I am at Zamboanga, just on the tip of the little end of the nose, but I have gone about the coast, and from what I have heard and seen can tell you something about it. I cannot tell you much, for but little is known. The greater part of the island has not been explored, and it has many regions which have never been trodden by the foot of a white man. The Spaniards had their settlements only close to the coast, and their wars with the Moros were such that they did not care to go among the more savage tribes of the interior. The only men, in fact, who have been inland are the Jesuit missionaries. They have made maps of the island, and it is from their notes that my best information comes. These maps have been sent through General Hays to Washington, and Congress will have an opportunity to publish them.

Geological Survey will have years of work in bringing forth to the world their peculiarities of life, customs and language. The most of them go about in breech cloths. Many of them live in the tops of trees, and some make their homes in hollow logs. Among them are the negroes or little negroes, similar to the little blacks found in Luzon. There are tribes of these scattered over Mindanao, one containing about 2000, called Manana, living in the peninsula of Surigao. These people use poisoned arrows and are extremely savage. They are of a low state of intelligence and it is extremely doubtful if they could ever be civilized.

Not far from the Rio Grande River there is a race of savages called the Torayayas, who live in the mountains. Their houses are built on bamboo poles, the first floor being about 12 feet above the ground. The inhabitants get into their houses by crawling up a notched stick, which they pull up at night. The houses are made of thatch and bamboo poles and are usually very small. In some cases they consist of only a roof and floor, being without walls of any kind, and having only posts at the corners to support the roof. These people are almost naked. A man who has just returned from a trip among them says that the men he saw wore squares of cloth around their waists, and their waists and women wore skirts which were not more than a foot long. The

Before I describe its resources and people I would like to show you just where it is. It is very far out in the world, and the nearest to the equator of our American possessions. Here at Zamboanga I am as far south from Manila in a straight line as New York City is distant from Pittsburgh, and as far north from San Francisco as the northern end of Luzon, as the distance between the Great Lakes and the Gulf of Mexico. The whole of Mindanao is more than 500 miles long, and more than the Isthmus of Panama, and Zamboanga is a little more than 300 miles from that so-called hottest line of the globe.

Still, Mindanao has not a bad climate. Everywhere the troops are stationed on the island the surgeons tell me that the conditions are remarkably comfortable. There is little or no sickness among the soldiers, and considering that we are in the tropics, remarkably little among the natives. Here at Zamboanga, on the coast, I do not feel that it is more than Washington City in June, and in the mountainous regions in the interior the air should be better.

The Island of Mindanao is about as big as the State of Ohio. It may be a few square miles more or less, but no one will quarrel with me if I say that it is as big as the State of Ohio. It is more than 500 miles from here to Maui, on the east coast, where we have just stationed a company of the Thirty-first Regiment, and about 300 miles from north to south, where the island is widest. As you will see from the map, Mindanao has an enormous coast line. Its shores in places run in and out like the teeth of a saw. It has numerous bays and many good harbors. It is, with the exception of the northeastern portion, outside of the region of typhoons, and in that of equatorial currents, and although the rainfall is heavy, it is said to be a better climate than Luzon. The topography of the island is rolling. Three separate volcanic ranges cross it from north to south, the middle range being the highest and culminating in Mount Apo, near the Gulf of Davao. The top of Mount Apo is more than two miles above the sea. Its peak can be seen by our troops at the distance of 100 miles. It is an active volcano, with vapor and fire coming from its southern side. The most of this mountain is wooded, only the summit being bare. The mountains of the island are covered with a rich growth of timber, trees 200 feet high and 30 feet thick being here and there found.

at Zamboanga the buildings occupied by our troops are floored with mahogany. The soldiers stamp with their heavy boots over boards which would make piano tops, and I rode my horse today across the canal over a wooden bridge which, with the proper machinery, might have been turned into a 500 dinner table. At headquarters yesterday I put my foot on a rosewood floor under the mahogany table of Colonel Pettit, and this morning 1000 a ride in a dugout, 50 feet long, scoured out of a log which, in the United States would have been turned into walking-sticks worth \$1 apiece. Rosewood is, in fact, the oak of Mindanao, and mahogany is as common as pine is in Wisconsin.

who claimed to have secured an option on these mines, and who says he will soon go to the United States to organize a company for their exploitation. There is some coal not far from Zamboanga, but as to its quality or that in the north, I have not yet been able to learn. The gold propositions are equally indefinite. There is no doubt that there is gold in the streams in many parts of Mindanao, but whether it exists in paying quantities has not yet been determined. Foreman, a man who has written the best book about the island, speaks of a Frenchman who for a long time washed about four pounds of gold dust a month out of the Surigao district. The Chinese have been buying gold from the natives, and traces of mines have been discovered in a number of places near here by prospectors. There are a number of Californians and Australians already in the mountains, although as yet, owing to the



1. PEOPLE OF MINDANAO—The two with bamboo tubes are water-carriers. The bamboo is the water bucket of the island.



2. BANANA TREE—15 feet high. (Mr. Carpenter, who is 5 feet 8 inches, stands on fence to give an idea of the height.)



3. ROSEWOOD BRIDGE AT ZAMBOANGA.



4. IN ZAMBOANGA HARBOR.

women had brass rings on their ankles and wrists. The men were armed with bows and arrows and spears. The weapons were poisoned, the poison coming from a tree which grows in the mountains. The Mindayans are a strange people, who live in the eastern part of this island, not far from Maui. We have recently established a garrison at that point, and we shortly hope to get something concerning them. They have fair skins and look not unlike Europeans.

In addition to these there are many other tribes, some of whom, such as the Bagobos, Atas, Guyanagos and Tagacoles, are notorious for having human sacrifices. Many of the savages are head hunters, and all are supposed to be unfriendly to the whites. As to this, however, nothing certain can be known, until explorations can be made. Such of the soldiers as have gone into the mountains have not been molested, and the probability is that if the people are kindly treated there will be little trouble with them.

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Royal Principality. In this letter I should like to give some idea of the resources of Mindanao, for, as I have said, I consider it one of the most important parts of our possessions. I have spoken of the timber. The best of

high, however, and in this way prevented development. They had rigid forestry laws. The lumber had to be handled in a certain way. The logs must be cut just as they were, and there were so many fees and restrictions that every big lumber company which attempted to operate failed. I today there are many men looking into the lumber interests, and eventually sawmills will be established. There are a few mills here now, but most of the sawing and planing is done by hand. Those who bring the mills should remember that the wood is very hard, and that the circular saws which we commonly use will not cut it. The saws which are found to work best are those which go up and down,

down here, the natives draw their wine and whisky from the coconut trees. They cut off the blossoms and fasten to them bamboo tubes, into which the sap runs. Every now and then they remove the tube and empty the liquid into another bamboo. After being left for six hours it begins to ferment, and before the day is over it is turned into a liquor, which, as the Indians say, "will make the drunk come." The stuff looks like cider, and smells to me somewhat like old butter-milk. It is drunk by the natives both fresh and fermented.

the hardwoods of the archipelago are to be found here. The mountains are covered with trees. In traveling along the east and south coast you see wooded hills rising one above the other, extending on and on until they lose themselves in the clouds, which, in this latitude, always hang far from the northern coast. I met the other day a lawyer from Portland, Or.,

and band saws, or gang saws, would probably work. Mindanao is believed to be the richest of the Philippines in its mineral deposits. Coal is known to exist in a number of the provinces, and I am told that large deposits have been recently discovered south from the northern coast. I met the other day a lawyer from Portland, Or.,

interested the Moros with him, taking up claims for them at the same time. He says he was well treated everywhere, and that although he had \$200 in his valise, which was unlocked, it was not stolen. He claims to have found a distance of about 60 miles inland from Zamboanga. He claims that he found coral in every pit he excavated, and that in many

places the gold was found in paying quantities, although he did not go down to the bedrock. He has brought some samples of gold in with him. It is in flakes, like bran, and is absolutely pure. At one place the Moros took him to some mines which had been worked by their people for years, but from which they had been driven by the Spaniards. The remains of the workings could be plainly seen, although large trees had grown up in the pits. One of the captains, who is stationed at the Bay of Illana, about 100 miles east of here, tells me he has found coral in the sands of the Rio Grande River, and similar news comes from the province of Davao.

Long before this letter is published the soldiers will be well established along the northern coast of the island. This has been the source of the most of the gold found here in the past, and it may be that valuable gold discoveries will be made there. Copper is said to exist in Surigao and other provinces, and there is also said to be mercury in Surigao.

The real gold mines of Mindanao, however, lie in its soil. I cannot describe the wonderful vegetation which we have here about Zamboanga. There are cocconut trees by the millions, and such cocconut trees! They are from 50 to 100 feet high, and some of them bearing. It is said, a cocconut for every day of the year. They are so that the men who gather the nuts walk in the shell and in some parts of the tree to the top on steps. They take the meat from the nuts, chop it into little pieces and dry it in the sun. It is then known as copra, and in this shape is shipped in Europe, where the oil is pressed from it for use in the making of soap and other such things. Some cocconuts are shipped in the shell and in some parts of the island the shells are dried and their fibers used for making rough matting. Hogs are fattened on the cocconuts, and the people eat the nuts and drink the milk. What would you think of turning a piglet and getting a glass of wine from a tree? Well, this very thing is done



MAP OF MINDANAO, RICHEST OF PHILIPPINE ISLANDS.

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Table with columns: Leave, Depart, Arrive. Lists train schedules for various routes.

Table with columns: Leave, Depart, Arrive. Lists train schedules for the Yamhill River Division.

Table with columns: Leave, Depart, Arrive. Lists train schedules for the Snake River Route.

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EMPIRE LINE. SEATTLE CAPE NOME. Yukon River, after two years service as U. S. transport, has been released, and will sail for Seattle for Cape Nome about May 24.

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