MORO PROBLEM IN PHILIPPINES

Difficulties Encountered in Dealing With Uncle Sam's Mohammedan Subjects in Our New Eastern Possessions—Soldiers Cut to Pieces.

(Copyright, 1900, by Frank G. Carpenter.)

POLLOK, Island of Mindanao, April 19. —I despair of giving you an adequate idea of the Moros of this part of the world. They are more barbarous and savage than anything you can imagine, and they act very much as though they thought we were the same. There is, I believe, bound to be trouble with them sooner or later, and we should have trouble here now were not the soldiers very careful in their treatment of them. When I wrote from Parang Parang, the Moros were in possession of the Spanish fort there. Captain Gillenwater, who was the first officer to command that station, had but one company, and as Raqui, the datto who had possession of the fort, claimed to have 4000 fighting men, Gillenwater did not risk forcing the issue. Since then, however, Captain Reynolds has come with a second company, and he and Lieutenant-Colonel Hayes recently counseled together and decided that the Moros must be gotten out of the fort, as in case of trouble the place would be of great advantage to us. They sent word to Datto Baqui that he must vacate and take his soldiers and wives to other quarters.

The great datto grumbled. He said he had no place to go, and asked if the Americans would not allow him to take up his quarters in the church. He was told no, and he grumbled the more. All this happened the night he was told that he must leave.

Our soldiers, including the officers, did not sleep much that night. They were not sure what the datto would do. If he refused, it meant war, and, with his superior numbers, there was no surety how the war would turn out. A great commotion was observed in and about the fort all night, and when the troops marched up to the fort the next morning they fully expected a fight.

When they arrived, however, they found the datto moving out bag and baggage. He told them he would go, but at the same time he pointed out to the bay,

Covered With Moro Boats.

The Americans looked and saw that it was covered with Moro boats. From every quarter the Moros were coming toward Parang Parang. Some of the boats had flags flying in them; all were filled with men armed with lances, guns and krises, and it looked as though the Mohammedans of all Mindanao were coming to wipe out the Americans.

The Datto Baqui pretended that he did not understand it, and a guard of soldiers was sent down to the pier to intercept the crowd upon landing and to learn what was really the matter. The officers went with them, taking the big army wagon which had recently arrived and the four-mule team.

At the wharf they found that the invading Moros were the forces of old Datto Utto and of several other chiefs, who, learning that one of the higher officials of our army was present, had come to hold a conference with him. Thereupon, much relieved that there was to be no fighting, the Americans asked the dattos to get in the army wagon and ride up to the town. As none of them had ever seen a wagon or mules before, they were delighted. They crawled in, stumbling over their weapons as they did so. The mules were whipped up, and they were carried on the gallop over the stones to the town.

They were taken to the gate of the fort, but not admitted inside, as treachery was feared. Chairs were brought out for the dattos, and with armed soldiers around, nominally as a matter of honor, but really as a guard against attack, a council was held.

The chief datto of the party did not speak. He was too old to do so. I refer to Datto Utto, who, next to his hated rival, Datto Piang, is the strongest Moro of Mindanao Island. He has for many years had a large army and waged war with all about him. At one time he said he would drive the Spaniards off the face of the earth. He swore they should never enter his territory and organized the chiefs of the other Moro tribes to resist them. They put up forts and dug pits for ambuscades, but were defeated and Utto submitted. Since then he has fought again and again, and of late, although he is now almost 90, he has been waging war with Datto Piang, the datto of this region who was the first to come to the support of the Americans.

A Thrifty Chief.

Datto Piang is a thrifty chief. He is the son of a Chinese slave, who by his own ability has made himself a datto, and who by the commercial strain of Chinese blood which he has in him has amassed lands, houses and gold galore.

As the council proceeded it was seen that the Moros present were all enemies of Datto Piang, and that they had come to hatch up a scheme to conquer him. One of Datto Utto's men, a fierce, dark-skinned fellow, with a big kris at his waist, presented the case. This man was an orator. He first dilated on the greatness of his tribe, and then spoke of the outrages which this son of a slave, Piang, had perpetrated upon them, stealing their lands and growing rich by plundering them. After a long preamble, he came to the purpose of the visit, and bluntly proposed to the American commander that he should unite his forces with those of Datto Utto and march against Major Brett and the American soldiers at Cottabato and Datto Piang. He said he believed that by such a union they could wipe out Piang and the Moros, as well as the American troops, and they would then be supreme in this part of Mindanao. As he spoke Datto Utto and the other Moros present applauded and assented, and they evidently all held to the idea that Reynolds and Brett were little independent Dattos, each of whom would gladly wipe out the other. Our officers in reply stated that such a combination was impossible; that all the Americans were as brothers, and that they wanted peace, not war, although they were always ready to fight when necessary.

Shortly after this the big mule wagon was brought around, and the dattos were told that the troops hoped to have the honor of driving them again to their boats. To this, however, old Datto Utto decidedly objected, and the others made signs that they would rather walk than be so shaken up again. There was one of our warships in the harbor, and as they left this gave them the honor of a parting salute.

It is impossible for me to describe the barbarity of our Moro fellow-citizens. They are in many respects as savage as any tribe of the African wilds, and I prophesy that Uncle Sam will lose many good American soldiers before he has brought them within the pale of his civilization.

MORO BOYS, OF THE PHILIPPINES.

Frightful Butchery.

Since the first part of this letter was written, the report of the first butchery has come to hand. The event happened the other day, on the Island of Bongao. This island is at the southwestern end of the Sulu archipelago, within about 40 miles of Borneo. It is so small you will need a large map to find it, but look for the island of Tawi Tawi, and you may know that it is just off the western end of it.

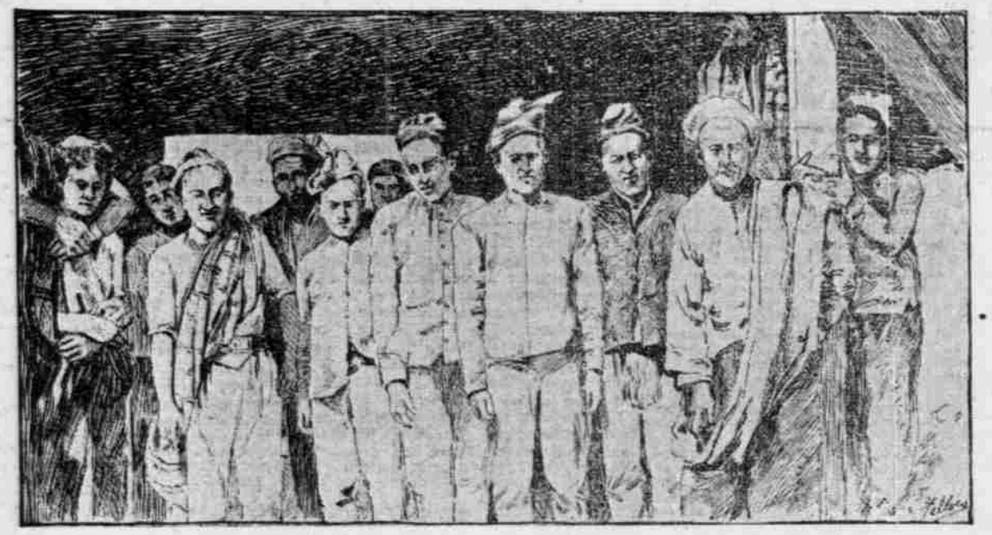
We have a company stationed at Bongao, the soldiers living in an old fort and barracks there which were occupied by the Spaniards. The Moros were supposed to be very friendly, and the soldiers thought nothing of going off into the woods in small parties to fish and hunt. They mixed with the Moros and treated them kindly. The other day a party of five of our soldiers had gone some miles away from the camp on a hunt. They stopped near a Moro village, and while one of the men took a bath in the stream the other four sat down on the bank and played cards.

They stacked their guns near them, and were having a pleasant game, when 10 Moros, armed with krises and barongs, came up. The soldiers greeted them, and demand they were also handed over. The soldiers took the murderers and camped with them that night near the village, intending to take them back in the morning. They made them go after wood and water for the camp, but as soon as the Moros neared the woods they tried to escape, and every one of the 10 was shot dead by the guards. I am told that this attempt to escape was a genuine one, but I doubt not the soldiers were glad of the chance it gave them to avenge the death of their comrades.

Life is, in fact, the cheapest thing in this part of the world, and death can be had on slight provocation. I have not yet heard of the Moros having prisons or jails, although they may have them. It is cheaper to kill a man than to feed him in prison. I see stocks here and there, and the Datto Baqui had a prisoner so fastened at the time our troops took possession of the fort. The chief punishment for all offenses is death.

Not long ago Datto Mandi, the great Moro chief of Western Mindanao, sent for one of his men to appear before him. He failed to come. The Datto sent again, and again he did not respond. Then the Datto sent word that if he did not appear within an hour he would have his head brought in on the point of a kris. The man knew this meant business, and came. Had the Datto killed him for his tardiness it would have been taken by the rest of the people as a matter of course. The kris and the barong are the common ways of settling disputes, and, as every boy and man carries one of these weapons, it is wonderful that there is not more bloodshed than there is.

I was taking photographs the other day outside a Moro village when a cock fight was going on. There were at least 200 Moros about the pit inside the fence, and another 100 wandering about outside of it, when a Moro, who had lost in a bet, grabbed the stakes and ran. In a moment there was an uproar, and every Moro present had his hand on his sword. Some brandished krises and ran after the thief, others went for their spears and lances, which were hidden in the houses near by, and one black fellow, clad in only a breech-cloth, rushed about with a Remington rifle strapped upon his bare shoulders. The man escaped to a boat and got away, but I am much mistaken if his life does not eventually pay for his theft.



DATTO PIANG, OF MINDANAO, IN PHILIPPINES, AND HIS SUITE.

Chinese Do All the Business.

I am surprised more every day at the lack of education and industry among these people. They have no business apparently but fishing. There is a market at Parang-Parang, and a Chinese store there. There is a Chinese store or so here at Pollok. The Moros have, so far as I know, only one store in this part of the world, and that is a store at Jolo on the Sulu Island. They allow the Chinese to do all the business. The little they sell themselves is in the market, and this is very little.

There is some weaving done by the women, and there is a blacksmith shop t Parang-Parang, where Moro knives of various kinds are made. The machinery of this shop consists of a rude iron anvil, more like the head of a sledge-hammer than anything else, and a set of bellows. The bellows are two bamboo tubes as tall as your shoulder and as big around as a man's thigh. These are connected by a pipe at the bottom, which in turn is connected with another pipe of bamboo running under the fireplace. In each of the big bamboos is a washer, which is moved up and down just like the dasher of an old-fashioned churn. Each washer has a handle attached to it, and a half-naked Moro, standing on a platform above the bamboo tubes, pulls these up and down, thus forcing the draft into the coals. The blacksmith sits down as he works, and with this rude machinery makes swords, spears and daggers, which take an edge like a razor, and which for excellency of workmanship cannot be surpassed in Sheffield itself.

With all their barbarity, the Moros have some praiseworthy customs. They do not seem to be quarrelsome among themselves, and they are, according to their own religion, well behaved. They do not get drunk, and so far the Dattos have refused the wines offered them by our officers upon state occasions. They will not eat pork, because that is against the Koran. From our ignorance of these facts some interesting situations have arisen.

When General Bates was on the Island of Basilan, he was called upon by a party of Moros. There were several Dattos among them, and the General wished to do them honor, so he asked the captain of the ship to give them a lunch. The captain thereupon set out a spread of ham sandwiches and Champagne. The Moros politely refused the champagne, saying that their religion did not allow them to touch intoxicating liquors, but they accepted the sandwiches, which were so made that you could not see the meat inside of them. As they bit into the bread they tasted the ham and realized that they were sinning by eating pork. They jumped to their feet and spat the meat and bread out over the side of the ship, calling for water to wash out their mouths.

Beans Would Kill Him.

At another place one of the soldiers offered a Moro some baked beans. He declined to take them, saying that they were cooked with pork and would kill him. A Visayan, standing by, said: "I ate some, and they did not kill me." "Ah," said the Moro, "no matador (kill) you, but matador me."

Some of our greatest troubles with the Moros will probably come through their jealousy, not only as regards their women, but also as to the treatment of themselves by the officials. Each is jealous of the other, and if one chief receives something that another does not the latter is angry. They are like children in this respect. When our officials first came to Jolo they had a bicycle with them, and were about to take it out and exhibit it to a party of Moros, when Mr. Schuck, the interpreter, advised that the show be postponed until Dattos Jokanine and Kalbi arrived, as they would resent it if the others saw the bicycle first.

In the same connection Captain Hagadorn gives me an incident which occurred at a native feast. Among the dishes on the table were carabao meat and chicken The captain took the carabao meat, but refused the chicken, whereupon the native said the chicken would be jealous of the carabao. It was the same with the drinks, the Moro advising the captain not to slight anything on the table.

As to their women, the Moros will not tolerate interference, and the soldier who attempts to court one of their black-teethed daughters or wives will in all probability be killed, and may at the same time bring on war. One dare not touch a girl in any way, and even to look at one is not considered polite.

There is now friendship between us and the Moros. There was nothing of the kind between them and the Spaniards. The Spaniards treated them like dogs. They had their dead lines about their military posts, and the Moro who stepped over one of these could be shot without warning. The Spaniards, as a result, did not dare to go into the country, and so we have today the whole of this great Island of Mindanao unexplored and undeveloped.

Our kindness to the Moros surprises them. The other day Colonel Petit was standing on the wharf at Zamboanga, when he noticed a bright little Moro boy at his feet. While waiting for a boat he amused himself by asking the little one questions, offering to buy him of his father for 10 cents. The boy was afraid at first, but after a time he in turn questioned the Colonel as to who he might be, saying in his poor Spanish: "Usted Espagnol?" "No," replied Colonel Petit.

Spaniards Different.

"Usted Americano?" (Are you an American?) asked the boy.

"Si" (yes), was the reply.

"Officer, Captain?" said the boy.

"No," said the Colonel.

"Usted ,no Colonel, Gubernador?" was the next question, put tremblingly.

"Yes," was the reply.

At this the little fellow was terrified at his presumption in addressing the governor. He could not realize that so great a man would talk to a boy like him, and finally said that the Spaniards did not do that way, but kicked and cuffed him about.

The officers here are trying to encourage the good will of the people. They do not make any more demonstrations of their arms than is necessary, and near Zamboanga they go about among the Moros unarmed. It is the same on the Island of Sulu, but it should not be so here at Parang-Parang. Indeed, I think it is a question whether it should be so anywhere.

The soldiers who were killed in Bongao were undoubtedly murdered for their guns. Our weapons are a surprise to these people, and the great ships and big cannon on them fill them with dread. They are surprised at our size, for we are a head taller on the average than the Filipino and bigger than the Spaniards. The mules are as great curiosities as elephants, and all modern inventions are new things here. Ice is one of the greatest wonders. The Moros had never heard of it, and when an ice machine was erected in Jolo, the Sultan of Sulu became almost panic-stricken. He could not understand how out of fire cold could come. The ice machine was put up by a civil engineer, Mr. Cherry, of San Francisco, and as soon as it was working, the Sultan came to see it. He would not go near it, however, unless Major Sweet was with him and would not touch the ice until he saw the Major pick up a piece in his own hands.

We find that the Moros are very good traders. They come about the ship to sell arms and increase their prices according to the demand. They understand what silver is, but few of them appreciate the value of gold. Datto Piang, the half-Chinese Datto of Cottabato, is an exception. He wants all the gold he can get, and is always ready to exchange silver for it. He bought five $10 gold pieces the other day to use as coat buttons, and he now swells about with the American eagle flying all the way from his neck to his waist.

Speaking of Americanism among the Moros reminds me that I have not told you of a curious incident that occurred when Datto Baqui was ousted from the fort at Parang-Parang. Before he left, the Datto insisted that his flag should be run up side by side with the American flag.

"Old Glory," Itself.

Little things of that kind mean much among these savage people, and the officers were at first disinclined to permit it. They did not know what the Datto's flag might be, and visions of the piratical black jack and other barbarous emblems passed through their minds. At last, seeing that there would probably be trouble if the request was refused, and wishing to avoid any appearance of strained relations, they consented, and Baqui ran up his flag. And what do you think it was? It was the Stars and Stripes, Old Glory, the emblem of the American Mohammedan Moro beside that of the American Christian!

Nearly every one of the high-class Dattos now has his American flag and they float them at the mastheads of their barges of war.

FRANG G. CARPENTER.

MOROS, OF MINDANAO.

First Regiment of Kind.

The new regiment of Foot Guards, which Queen Victoria has ordered to be formed, will not be the first of Irish nationality. Two years after his restoration to the throne Charles II formed a corps of household troops which he called Our Regiment of Guards in the Kingdom of Ireland. This corps, had it survived, would have ranked as the Fourth Regiment of Foot Guards. It was originally raised in England and does not seem at first to have been composed of Irishmen, but in the days of James II, it became much too Irish to remain in the British service.

Tyrconnell cashiered the Protestants in its ranks and filled their places with Roman Catholics, so that in the revolution the regiment gave its adhesion to James II. and fought for him against William III. at the Boyne and at Aughrim. After the capitulation of Limerick what remained of it went into the French service and in the wars in Flanders carried on by William III. and Marlborough, it more than once fought against British troops. At Malplaquet it crossed bayonets with the regiment which alone of the Irish corps raised by the Stuarts had passed over to King William, and formerly numbered the Eighteenth Regiment of the line, is now known as the Royal Irish.

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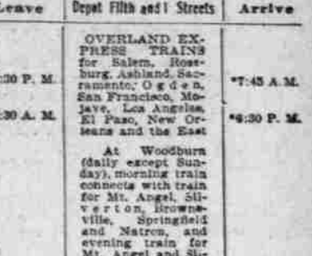
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