

THE SULTAN OF MINDANAO

How Our Correspondent Interviewed His Majesty and Photographed the Ladies of His Harem.

FRANK G. CARPENTER

Copyrighted, 1900, Frank G. Carpenter. Parang, Parang, April 12, 1900.—You will at once remember the names of the distinguished characters described in this letter. They are (able to appear any day in the news dispatches from the Philippines, and that in letters of blood. I refer to the sultan of Mindanao, Datto Piang of Cottabato and Datto Bagu. They are the rulers of some of the worst Mohammedans of the far east, Mohammedans more barbarous and savage than the Moros of Sulu, of which you have read. They have been noted throughout the centuries as pirates and cut-throats and the Spaniards have for three hundred years attempted to quell them in vain. For this purpose they had warships here and at Palook, but though nominally at peace, a secret warfare was going on within the past eight years. I am told, 300 Spaniards were killed at this fort alone. The sultan did not dare to go into the interior, and the Moros were not allowed to come into the Spanish soldier's territory. I found dead. Often it would be a sultan who had been carved to pieces at his post with one of the terrible knives that the Moros use, and it might be by a Jaramatado, or Mohammedan fanatic, who had started out to kill Christians until he should be killed himself. According to his religion every Christian he killed would advance him a step up toward the top platform of the Mohammedan heaven, and his victims would be compelled to serve him there as slaves.

"EL MORO! EL MORO!" The war cry of these people is "El Moro! El Moro!" A few days ago our soldiers heard this cry and saw the Moros drawing their knives and unslinging their guns. Every one was ready to fight on the instant. There was a pushing and shoving, and Datto Bagu and his son came near being killed by one of the fanatics. The story illustrates the savagery of the people. The fanatic, who was just like any one of a thousand men whom I have walked among today, became angry at his wife. He assaulted her with his barong, a knife as sharp as a razor, and as heavy as a butcher's cleaver, and literally chopped her to pieces. He then began to kill his second wife, cutting a deep gash in her shoulder, and sending her to the floor. He then left his house and ran down the main street, striking at every man he met. He attacked Datto Bagu, who was standing on a corner, and who only saved his life by ducking his head. As it was, the knife went deep into the neck of one of the slaves, who was standing behind, and a second blow killed another of his attendants. In the meantime other Moros were shooting and throwing lances at the murderer. They failed to hit him and he turned and ran. He might, indeed, have escaped for a time, had he not met an old Moro in his path. He could not resist stopping to kill him. With one blow of his knife he cut the old man's head in two, clearing it from crown to chin. Before he could withdraw his knife the datto's warriors were upon him. A dozen companions, knives and barongs were chopping up his body, and he was actually cut into pieces before he could utter a cry or a groan. The man in this case seems to have been killed for the pure love of killing. Such cases are not uncommon, and I hear daily stories of men who have, as they call it here, "run amok" and gone off all their kind, expecting to be killed themselves.

Such things seem incredible, but they are a part of the civilization here, a civilization so curious that it can hardly make you to see it as it is. It has all the elements of an opera bouffe show and at the same time the most terrible tragedies.

THE SULTAN AND THE DATTO. During my stay here I have had many queer experiences with the Moros and have met both Datto Bagu and the sultan of Mindanao. There are, it is estimated, more than 150,000 Moros on this island—more than are in the whole Sulu group—and the most of these are subject to some way to this sultan. The Datto Bagu is one of the most powerful of the Mohammedan princes. He has several thousand warriors and has made himself noted as a fighter. There is considerable friction between him and Datto Piang, and at the time Gen. Bates was here the two came near having a fight on our man-of-war. Each had called with his retinue to pay his respects to the American general, and had, it is said, not known of the coming of the other till they met him there. There were fierce looks for a time. Kines were drawn half out of their sheaths and lances seized ready for hurling. Gen. Bates, however, so well acted the part of a peacemaker that the rival dattos' hands were before leaving. They are today as far apart as ever and their forces may yet come to battle. At present Datto Bagu has his quarters in the Spanish fort, which, by the terms of the treaty, belongs to the United States. He lives with his wives in the second story of the largest building in the fort, and usually keeps himself surrounded with armed retainers.

I have been traveling with Col. Webb Hayes, who, as the second officer of the infantry, has been making a tour of inspection of the posts at Mindanao, and it was with him and the soldiers that I marched up through the crowd of Moros to pay my respects to the sultan and to Datto Bagu. We met the dattos first. He was surrounded by fierce looking fellows, some half-naked, some dressed in skin-tight jackets and drawers of all colors of the rainbow. All wore turbans. All had great knives in wooden sheaths fastened into their belts. Several carried long spears and two were armed with Remington rifles. They were sober looking bearded men and there were more scowls than smiles. All were chewing the betel and all had teeth as black as jet. The datto was chewing and the Moros' jaws trickled down the corners of his mouth as he opened it, and showing his black teeth, bade us welcome to Parang-Parang. The datto was a better-looking man than the sultan, whom I shall describe farther on. He is, I judge, about forty years of age, of medium height and has strong Mor features. His complexion is dark brown, his eyes jet black and almost almond. He was dressed in a yellow jacket, studded with silver buttons; black trousers, so tight that they had been sewed on to his legs, and orange shoes without stockings. He wore a blue velvet cap, which came well down over his forehead. He was well armed, with the exception of a cane, which he held in his right hand. We had a few words with him through the interpreter, and later on he took part in the audience which we had with the sultan.

THE SULTAN OF MINDANAO ISLAND. Our conference with the sultan was held in the open air. His majesty,

who lives near Cottabato, happened to be visiting this part of his dominions and he was anxious to meet with the Americans. He had his chief officials with him, a dozen black-faced cut-throats, who were dressed in all colors, wearing turbans of red, brown and yellow and jackets and waist cloths of Daily Varden hues. All carried weapons and all were armed with knives, as well as naked spears. At the audience the sultan and the datto sat upon chairs which had been brought forth from the stores of the town. The retainers in many cases squatted on their heels on the ground, only a half dozen standing near the sultan. Behind the sultan were two men holding silk umbrellas trimmed with silver thread, and besides his sultan—I was going to say sultan—majesty stood two slaves, one with betel box, a sugar basin filled with what looked like red powder, but which really was the stuff which these people chew, and the other with a silver cup which served as a spittoon. From time to time during the audience the slave took out a chunk of red betel in his fingers and handed it to the sultan. The sultan popped it

into his mouth and chewed as he talked. Now and then he turned his head to expectorate into the silver cup which the slave held to his lips. As he opened his mouth in conversation I could see that his teeth were blackened and his gums apparently ran blood.

As I looked, I could not realize that this was the famous sultan of Mindanao, a man who, as far as religion is concerned, is the head of all the Moros of this great island, and one who is possessed of considerable power. He seemed like a pastiche king and a poor imitation of royalty than any I have ever seen on a stage of a second-class opera.

I would like to picture him to you as he looked when he was talking with Colonel Hayes. Imagine a slender, compact, yellow-skinned man of forty-odd years. Let his cheeks be hollow, his forehead low and his eyes small, black and twinkling. Make his nose straight and his black lips prominent and sensual. Let him have a wispy of a mustache and perhaps one hundred brown hairs two inches long on his chin. Clothe him in a jacket of woven silken thread fastened so loosely with gold buttons at the front that there is a crack down his chest and waist through which the skin shows, for he wears neither shirt nor undershirt. Let him have on tight, yellow pantaloons, upheld by a wide belt with a buckle of silver as big as the largest flatiron. Let his jacket have silver cuffs and a collar of silver, all more or less tarnished and you have the sultan as he appeared today.

THE SULTAN AND WEBB HAYES.

The sultan received us with dignity and appeared honored at meeting another distinguished ambassador from the United States. He said he was an American citizen and told Col. Hayes he was very glad to meet him. I am not sure whether it was he or the Datto Bagu who informed Hayes that the Moros of the next province he had heard of, and that he would like to have the American soldiers unite with his forces and kill them. To this Colonel Hayes replied that we believe in peace rather than fighting, and that we wished to stop war and not make it. The colonel told the sultan that the Americans were his friends, and that we propose to treat him and his subjects well with the hope that in time we might make them American citizens. As Colonel Hayes went on his heart warmed toward the savages about him, and in the generosity of the moment he asked the sultan whether he would not go back with him to the sultan's port, as our ship was going on from there to the Sulu Islands and Zamboanga. Now, when this offer was made the colonel, I think, expected it to be politely refused. He supposed the sultan would shudder at the idea of such a long journey and at being left so far away from home. He was mistaken. The sultan jumped at the proposition. With profuse thanks he told the interpreter that he would not only go with him to Davao, but that he would give him the honor of his company to Sulu, where he wished to see his brother sultan, and that he would go on from there to Zamboanga. The sultan had no quarters for first-class passengers. As I have said before, we sleep on the deck and are so crowded at the table that now and then one has to wait. The captain of the steamer is a very cringing Englishman, who objects to having any passengers at all, much less a lot of dirty Moros. I had had considerable trouble to get him to take me, and laughed to myself as I saw the complicity

Graphic Pictures of One of Our Great Mohammedans, the Religious Ruler of 150,000 Moros—How His Majesty Looks, Acts and Talks—His Teeth—His Numerous Wives and How Colonel Webb Hayes Amused Them While Their Photograph Was Taken—The Sultan's Trip on an American Transport—A Talk With the Datto Bagu and Gossip About Datto Piang—Among the Moros of Southern Mindanao, the Finest of Their Kind—A Sample Butchery Which Occurred Since the American Occupation.

into which Colonel Hayes was drifting. The only thing that Hayes could do was to hedge, and he did it beautifully. Not telling the sultan at once that he could not take him, he begged him to come out with him and look at the ship before he decided to go. This proposition broke up the audience, and ourselves and the practical gang took boats and went out to the steamer. There they were introduced to the captain and the officers. The crusty steward was persuaded to bring out some crackers and port wine, and the sultan and his retainers were asked to eat. His majesty nibbled with his black teeth at a cracker, but he refused the wine, for as a Mohammedan it is against his religion to drink. Colonel Hayes then showed him over the ship, and at the close of the trip told him that upon consideration he did not think this boat was good enough for such a distinguished character as his majesty. He said that the sultan might go to Davao if he wished, but that he feared they could not make him as comfortable as his station demanded, and that it would be much better if his majesty

and finally the colonel consented. It was indeed a ticklish matter to deal with. The wives of a Mohammedan are sacred. In Turkey no man is ever admitted to a harem, nor does a woman ever show her face to a stranger. Here the rules are more lax, but any man who touches a woman outside of those his own family is liable to a fine, and if he assaults her it generally means death. I thought, however, that we could withdraw if any ill-feeling was evident, and with this resolution we again took our disgust and were rowed across the bay to the village.

His majesty met us as we landed, and the harem, consisting of perhaps a dozen women, came out of the huts and stood and gazed at us with wonder. I doubt if some of them had ever been so close to a white man before. At the same time the officers of the sultan's staff and slaves stood about us with the knives and barongs at their waists. Most of the women were practically naked, with the exception of one strip of cloth which each had tied about her chest under the armpits and which fell to the knees or the ankles. This strip was in the form of a bag open at both

ends, and when on was fastened by a twist at the breast. Some of the women merely held up the cloth with their hands. Now and then one would give her clothing a twitch, and I several times feared it would slip to the ground.

PHOTOGRAPHING THE HAREM.

Shortly after this the sultan left for the shore with all his retinue. It was about two hours later that I was told his majesty and his harem were assembled on his royal barge, which lay at the dock, and that I might possibly get a photograph of them. For this purpose Col. Hayes and myself took a dug-out canoe and pulled back to the mainland. When we reached the pier we found that the sultan had left his boat and gone to his hut on the shore. He was about a mile away in a little thatched village, which was built upon piles down close to the water. We could see a rude tent which his retainers had put up in order that himself and his ladies might enjoy the fresh breeze on the sand away from the rays of the sun. I proposed a consultation with his majesty, and if possible get him to bring his harem with him back to the boat,

and when on was fastened by a twist at the breast. Some of the women merely held up the cloth with their hands. Now and then one would give her clothing a twitch, and I several times feared it would slip to the ground.

His chief wife was a fat old dame as broad as she was long, and she waddled as she walked. Her neck, face and bust were as yellow as saffron, her flat face was as round as the full moon, and under her thick nose was a pair of blood-stained blue protruding lips. She had black eyes and black hair, the latter combed straight back and tied up in a knot at the crown.

Beside this woman stood a younger wife, a fifteen-year-old girl, with a wealth of black hair and a face which would have been pretty had it not been for the betel juice at the corner of the lips and the black teeth. This girl wore a dress of red and gold stripes and the upper part of her body was clad in a jacket of blue silk. Then there were other wives, more or less dressed in sheets of different colors, and there were slave girls who stood about them ready to obey their slightest command.

Behind the old dame, who may be called the sultana, was a slave holding a betel spittoon of solid silver, and I noticed that her majesty now and then stopped looking in order to expectorate. The women all had their lower lips painted a bright carmine and the nails of their hands were colored red.

SANTA CLAUS AND THE SULTAN. I tried my poor Spanish on the sultan, pointing to the camera and then to his boat across the way at the wharves, then made a motion to the harem and himself, and went through the imitation of rowing to give him the idea that we wanted him to go there and be photographed on board. He caught the idea at once and seemed pleased, although the Moros about him were scowling. He finally consented, but I asked him to wait until I could make a photograph of the harem as it stood, which he did, making the Moro lady look pleasant.

During this time Colonel Hayes directed himself to making the ladies "look pleasant." We had brought a ten-cent magazine with us in order to illustrate the work of the camera. In the back of this there were a number of advertising pictures and among others a villainous-looking cartoon of Mark Twain. Colonel Hayes showed the harem this picture and then pointed at your correspondent, saying it was I. I don't know as they saw the resemblance, but they laughed, showing their horrible black teeth as they did so. He then pointed out a gorgeously colored picture of Santa Claus, which must have looked very grand to the sultan, and bowing low, gave him to understand that that magnificent personage looked like him. The harem and the sultan laughed again.

Next, with that modesty for which the army officer is noted, picked out a picture of a wounded soldier lying on a Cuban battlefield and firing at one of the enemy. As he showed this he went through the operation of firing, saying boom! boom! and pointing to his side, where he was shot in Cuba. He gave them to understand that he was that brave soldier, who, though wounded, was still keeping up the fight, and, putting his finger on the enemy, said the word "Espanol," as much as to say that he was shooting at a Spaniard. I expected to see the harem weep at this situation but they did not. The ladies and the sultan merely laughed again, and as they did so I snapped the button.

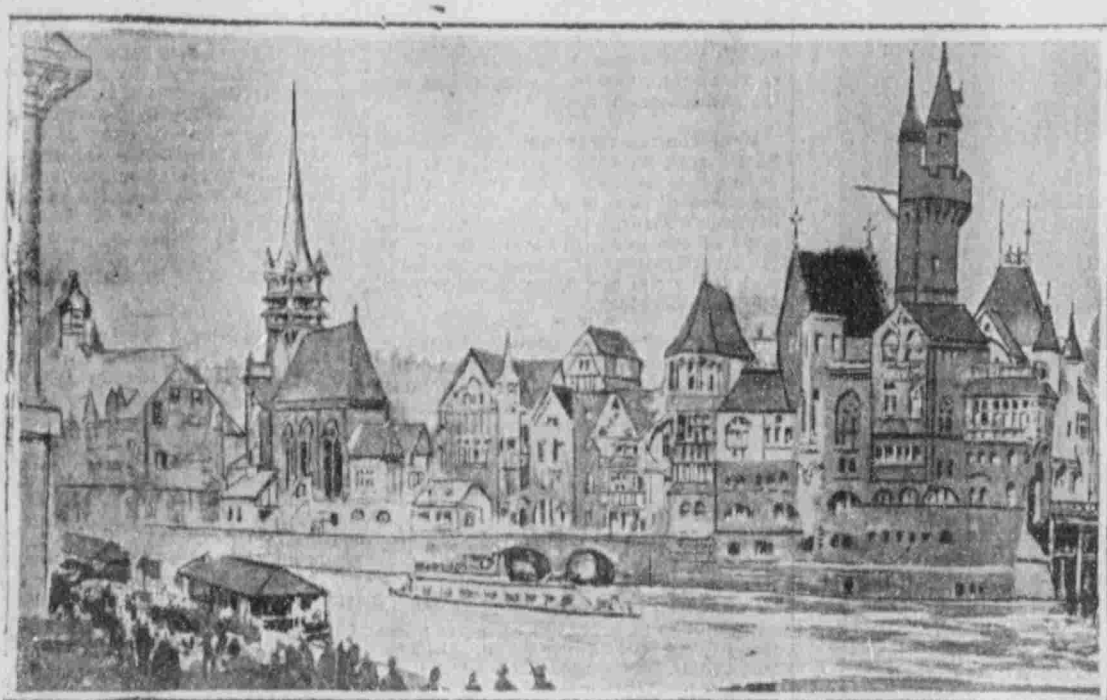
After this we stepped into our dugout canoes, which had been dragged up on the shore, and were rowed to the wharf where the royal yacht lay. Here the ladies were again posed, his majesty being placed in a position to be photographed for another photo, which I took. Upon leaving, Colonel Hayes presented the sultan with a new four-bladed knife, which had a corkscrew attachment, and his majesty, not to be outdone, offered that one of the women to other mechanics. He says: "I had a carpenter working for me who was obliged to stop work for several days on account of being troubled with diarrhoea. I mentioned to him that I had been similarly troubled and that Chamberlain's Colic, Cholera and Diarrhoea Remedy had cured me. He bought a bottle of it from the drugstore and informed me that one dose cured him, and he is again at his work."

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For Portland, Eugene, Tooele and Terminus. 7:45 a. m.

For Ogden, Portland, and intermediate points. 7:55 a. m.

For Ogden, Orono, Chama, Denver, Kansas City, St. Louis and San Francisco. 8:00 a. m.

For Ogden, Denver, Kansas City, Orono, St. Louis, and intermediate points. 8:40 a. m.

For Ogden, Butte, Helena, Portland, San Francisco and intermediate points. 10:30 p. m.

ARRIVE.

From Ogden, Chama, Orono, St. Louis, Kansas City and Denver. 6:30 a. m.

From Ogden, Portland, Eugene, Tooele, Helena and San Francisco. 6:45 a. m.

From Portland, Eugene, Tooele, Helena and San Francisco. 6:50 a. m.

From Ogden, Chama, St. Louis, Kansas City, Orono, Denver and San Francisco. 8:00 p. m.

From Ogden, Butte, Helena, Portland, San Francisco and intermediate points. 10:30 p. m.

*Trains west of Jamb do not run Sundays. Daily except Sunday.

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