

OUR AGREEMENT WITH THE SULTAN OF SULU.

GENERAL OTIS had quite enough to do in the great northern island of Luzon at the time when the duty was laid upon him to assume control of the affairs of the Moros¹ in the south. With Lawton's column making the famous march on San Isidro, Kobbé's moving up the Rio Grande, and MacArthur's covering Pampanga province, the "hermit" at Manila, who directed these operations, might have been pardoned if he had said that he could not spare a thought or a soldier. But the report had come to him that the Sultan and his *datos* were buying arms; moreover, the Spanish Governor-General had received orders from Madrid to withdraw the Joló² and Zamboanga garrisons immediately. Delay in taking possession would have invited the Moros to resist, even turning the guns in the abandoned Spanish fortifications upon tardy American troops.

A rather curious situation arose then, bringing together the extremes of experience and of opinion. Entering this field with reluctance and certain misgivings, General Otis was favored by fortune here as in scarcely any other venture. The contact of our soldiers with the most warlike portion of the archipelago's inhabitants was most peaceful; and I think it will appear that the very chapter in the story of the American occupation of the Philippines which has been most commonly referred to with confident scorn by critics of the present administration's policy is, in point of fact, the most creditable of all, or the least open to censure. I shall touch on the diplomacy employed by General Bates, acting for General Otis — the policy of conciliation and of tact as a substitute for force, which might have been equally successful in the north a year earlier — and shall consider the charge, still often repeated, that the United States entered into an

¹ The Mohammedan Malays are called "Moros," whether resident in the Sulu Archipelago or in Mindanao, this being the common name quite naturally bestowed by Spaniards upon followers of the Prophet.

² Sulu and Joló: The words are used interchangeably, though the latter is preferred by Spanish writers. As a convenient distinction, I would suggest the employment of "Joló" to designate the town and island, and of "Sulu" in a wider sense—as the Sulu Archipelago, Sultanate, and language.

agreement to pay tribute to the Sultan of Sulu, and to sanction the institutions of slavery and polygamy.

We must bear in mind that Spain's relations to the Sulu Archipelago since her little gunboats succeeded in checking the piratical raids had been indefinite and variable. Steadfast only in the design to maintain a show of sovereignty, she had at critical periods treated for peace with the Moros on terms which, oftener than otherwise, left her nothing but the symbol of authority, while all the revenues and practically unrestrained freedom of action were conceded to the Sultan and his chiefs — the half independent feudatories called *datos*. The impression which the natives received when the Spanish military forces were withdrawn was, quite naturally, that sovereignty had been reconveyed to them. The Spanish garrison's action in putting them in possession of Siassi, and promising to do the same with Joló, thus restoring the two places especially coveted, was also a further encouragement of the most tangible sort. General Otis so fully realized the difficulty of dispelling this illusion that, in his instructions to General Bates, he cautioned the latter to use tact and adroitness. "A discussion of the United States' benevolent intentions, and its wish to establish friendly relations with the Sultan and his *datos* in order to carry out those intentions," he wrote, "should precede any decided attempt at correction."

And yet, almost immediately following this good advice in the letter of instructions referred to, a passage occurs which shows an anxious, conscientious man off his guard for a moment:

"The United States will accept the obligations of Spain under the agreement of 1878 in the matter of money annuities, and in proof of sincerity you will offer as a present to the Sultan and *datos* \$10,000, Mexican, with which you will be supplied before leaving for Joló—the same to be handed over to them, respectively, in amounts agreeing with the ratio of payments made to them by the Spanish Government for their declared services. From the first of September next, and thereafter, the United States will pay to them regularly the sums promised by Spain in its agreement of 1878, and in any subsequent promises of which proof can be furnished. The United States will promise, in return for concessions to be hereinafter mentioned, not to interfere with, but to *protect the Moros in the free exercise of their religion and customs, social and domestic.*"

It is easy to see how an agent less shrewd than the one selected for this mission might have misused the authority conveyed in such words, if only in using it *all*; for unquestionably the money annuities, under the old *régime*, were adapted to a different state of affairs, while the clause which I have italicized conceded more than was necessary, to say the least.

Precisely at this point we may begin to appreciate the agent's course. General Bates arrived at Joló on July 16, and sent a verbal message to the Sultan at Maybun, his capital, twelve miles distant. There was no response. Two days later he wrote, requesting the Sultan to come to Joló "very soon." On the 19th, the Sultan's oldest brother, Rajah Muda, with two others — the secretary and an adviser of His Highness — called upon the general to offer excuses and explanations. A week passed, and nothing was accomplished beyond learning through these representatives that the Sultan's principal claims were: (1) That the Americans should not be allowed to occupy any point in the Sulu Archipelago except the town of Joló; and (2) that he himself should have the exclusive privilege of collecting duties at all other ports. Quietly accepting this unreasonable disposition as a fact, and not wasting strength in argument, or damaging his cause by threats, General Bates resolved to treat, not with the Sultan alone, but with all the leading *datos*, and to play off the local jealousies of different chiefs the one against the other; knowing well that if he should succeed in winning over such a powerful feudatory as the *dato* Joakanain, who had twice fought and defeated the Sultan, the latter would be obliged to submit.

Accordingly, we find him before the end of the month making arrangements for a visit from the *dato* Mandi of Zamboanga, receiving him and his suite hospitably, and dismissing him with "a flag and present." He had a conference with Joakanain's brother, Calbi, the day after the *dato* Mandi sailed away; and on August 1 he proceeded on the gunboat *Manila* to Lugus, where the *dato* Amir Hussin came on board, and accepted a flag and a gift. Next he went to the island of Basilan, taking another *dato*, Kalun, as a companion for a part of the voyage. In brief, his affair was marching so prosperously now that the Sultan became nervous, and sent a copy of an agreement that he wished to have adopted. This being rejected, a letter from the Sultana Inchi Jamela, "a remarkable woman, who has had great influence in these islands," arrived on the 12th, and two days afterward General Bates went to the Sultan's residence at Maybun, where a satisfactory conference was held, and the terms of an agreement were proposed and accepted. Now, finally, the Sultan would go to Joló; and he and his *datos* would acknowledge there, on August 20, by their elaborate signatures affixed to a document in English and Sulu, the sovereignty of the United States over the whole archipelago, the right of any person to purchase land, and

the duty to suppress piracy, and to refrain from further importation of firearms and war material. The interval was employed in visiting such ex-pirates as Tantung, at Bongao, far away to the south west, and in coming to a definite understanding (here, again, flag and present playing their part) with the redoubtable Joakanain. The appointed day brought the head of Islam, with about one hundred followers, to Joló, the Mecca of the Orient. The Sultan's followers were apparently well disposed, and were certainly well received by the troops.

Article X of the agreement signed on that day provides that any slave in the archipelago of Joló shall have the right to purchase freedom by paying the master the usual market value. Commenting upon this General Bates says:

"I found that the institution of slavery exists in a very mild form (in fact, the word 'retainer' expresses this condition better than 'slave'), the average price being about \$20 gold. I also found that the Moros were jealous of any interference with it; but it seemed proper that steps should be at once taken looking to the abolition of the institution. It seemed but fair that the owners should be remunerated, and I think that Article X of the agreement provides a speedy means of doing away with slavery. I had proposed a specific sum to be paid the owner, but agreed to the Moros' suggestion of 'the usual market value.'"

The Secretary of War, in a despatch to General Otis, dated October 27, 1899, said that the agreement was confirmed and approved by the President, subject to the action of Congress, but insisted that the Sultan should be distinctly informed that it must not be deemed in any way to authorize or give the consent of the United States to the existence of slavery in the Sulu archipelago. Secretary Root also directed that inquiry should be made as to the number of persons held in slavery in the archipelago, and what arrangement for their emancipation might be practicable.

The third article of the agreement promises that "the Moros shall not be interfered with on account of their religion; all their religious customs shall be respected, and no one shall be persecuted on account of his religion;" and in the concluding article it is written that "the United States Government will pay the following monthly salaries" — salaries ranging in amount from 250 Mexican dollars for the Sultan to fifteen for Serif Saguir.

According to the assurance which President McKinley gave to the Senate last February, these payments will be made from the revenues of the Philippine Islands, unless Congress shall otherwise direct:

"Such payments [the President added] are not for specific services, but

are a part of the consideration moving to the Sulu tribe or nation under the agreement, and they have been stipulated for, subject to the action of Congress, in conformity with the practice of this government from the earliest times in its agreements with the various Indian nations occupying and governing portions of territory subject to the sovereignty of the United States."

Now, payments of money which are described in the treaty as "salaries," and which may be fairly explained by reference to our dealings with the North American Indians, do not readily assume the guise of "tribute" in our minds, for it is scarcely necessary to say that those who are bent on finding cause for offence have employed the word "tribute" in the more injurious sense — as a stated sum of money paid in acknowledgment of submission or as the price of protection; nor could the use of the term in this connection have afforded them so much pleasure if there were not this implication of weakness and inferiority on the part of the nation which is charged with the payment of "tribute" to another state, and which is therefore in a position comparable with that sustained by a subject to his sovereign or lord.

A word that suggests an utterly impossible situation is usually condemned after a little scrutiny, for it is like vice itself (according to Pope), and "to be hated needs but to be seen." Accordingly I might be content to say that we evidently have to do with no such exceptional arrangement, no acknowledgment of submission, but with a mere subsidy or pecuniary aid, a feature that is surely familiar in both English and American history; and I might ask if good Christians think it such a hardship to allow the Mohammedan chiefs a little pocket-money pending the readjustment, their old revenues having been cut off? Curiously enough, however, all such payments of money by unbelievers to Mohammedans are by the latter so cheerfully misconstrued that, as I shall presently make clear, even General Bates's quite moderate "salaries" may be possibly accepted as "tribute" by the other party to the contract.

As for the objection that the clause in the agreement protecting the religion of the country practically intrenches polygamy, this surely is a charge which, while it has the appearance of truth at first sight, is essentially false. Not to the government, but to individuals — teachers, lay and clerical — must such problems be assigned. The agreement does not protect any religious custom whatever against the only form of attack which could be effective — instruction in the ways of civilized life, for which an opening and a footing have now been secured. In this particular matter, our Government,

as such, had no duties toward the Moros last summer except the duty of non-interference. Moreover, this single obligation was so enjoined upon it by the spirit of American institutions that its silence, if the subject of the natives' religion had been wholly ignored, would have meant not less than the words of Article III convey. As I write I recall a paragraph in the morning paper describing the election of a new chief by the Sac and Fox Indians, a tribe of about one thousand braves who live in Oklahoma. Wa-pa-ke-sek was duly installed as chief the other day in place of Nah-mat-way, and thus fell heir to the family of the deceased leader, which consisted of three squaws and six children. His own family numbered five squaws and ten children. Eight squaws for this Indian of Oklahoma, while the Holy Law allows to the best and richest of the Moros only four !

Here is a record which, on the whole, may be examined with satisfaction — with more satisfaction than a student is likely to feel when he examines the beginnings of our occupation of the Philippines in any other department, except, possibly, the constitution-making under American direction on Negros Island. But in the contentment with which he reviewed these successful negotiations, General Otis's optimism carried him too far, as it seems to me ; for, instead of insisting that strong military stations should be maintained, he advised the War Department that " the best means to insure success appears to be through the cultivation of friendly sentiments and the introduction of trade and commerce upon approved business methods."

One cannot help noticing this failure to apprehend fully the very peculiar situation. To speak of *insuring* success through the cultivation of friendly sentiments is so positively and dangerously misleading that one does not feel able to quote the sentence without adding a word of protest. Unfortunately, there is reason to fear that the garrisons in the southern islands are inadequate. We need not attach much importance to recent despatches which describe a certain restlessness at points widely separated — in Mindanao and the Tawi-Tawi group. The constant menace, the thing to consider, is a tenet of Mohammedan faith brutally and fiercely held among half-savage people. In spite of the treaty, our soldiers are enemies in their eyes, because they are not Mohammedans; the "salaries" paid by unbelievers may, indeed, be accepted as tribute, for the law forbidding the Moro to pay money or sell arms to infidels (lest he should be the weaker when the inevitable conflict breaks out again) also encourages him to take all he can get, with the design of increasing his own fighting

power while diminishing that of his enemies; nor will he be likely to learn from his law or its expounders that gratitude is due to the unbeliever in return for considerate treatment.

An outbreak will scarcely be headed by the *dato* Mandi, for example, who wears European dress, has travelled westward as far as Barcelona, and incidentally has learned to interpret the law less harshly; but after making due allowance for such exceptional persons, there remain at least twenty thousand hardy fellows who would hold it to be meritorious work to kill all of the American infidels for the actual or imputed offence of one. If we could change their religion in any particular by treaty, there would be little doubt where we should begin. As matters stand, let us realize fully and without delay that the Moro will not give up such inbred prejudice unless his personal observation of Americans disproves the old teaching and disproves it utterly. Let us realize at once that it is absurd to expect uniformly chivalrous conduct on the part of our soldiers if these southern garrisons are too weak to command respect; for weakness there will beget suspicion and nervousness, and very good men will swagger a bit — enough to provoke attack — when they are not quite sure of themselves and want to conceal the fact.

Abundant force in reserve — and in evidence, too — is not less essential than the conciliatory method so happily inaugurated. In the southern islands we may find the most curious and interesting side of our Philippine problem.

MARRION WILCOX.

THE ATLANTIC UNION.

FOUR or five years ago I found myself one evening, at the latter end of June, in the little town of Melrose. It was at the end of what is there called the "American" fortnight. It appears that a good many American visitors, coming over in June, begin with Scotland, and take Melrose, with Abbotsford and Dryburgh, on their way to Edinburgh. The hotel, quite a small house, had been filled with them.

When I arrived, however, they were mostly gone; only one party was left. It consisted of five; namely, two men and three ladies. They were extremely pleasant, cultivated gentlefolk — all of English or Scottish descent. They were making their first, and very probably — for they were not rich — their only visit to the land of their forefathers. They came from some central part of the United States. They found the English ways strange in almost every respect. They were keenly interested in everything: the quiet little country town; the lovely ruins of Melrose and Dryburgh; Scott's house of Abbotsford; and the fair country in which these things are placed. They had not come over in any spirit of hostile criticism. They were fully disposed to see the best side of everything, but that they were prejudiced in certain directions was a fact that came out in conversation every two minutes; and that their prejudices were founded on imperfect knowledge was equally apparent.

I learned, in the course of conversation, that they were unprovided with any letters of introduction; that they did not look forward to receiving any kind of hospitality in the country; and that they did not expect to enter any English house, or to make the acquaintance of any English people. In other words, this little company, brought up to regard things social from points of view quite opposite to our own, accustomed to quite another atmosphere, whether of religion, or of politics, or of society, were about to wander round this country, finding out differences at every turn, and asking themselves, always *from their own point of view*, how the English people can possibly suffer these differences to exist. After a few weeks,