

MORO MARRIAGE CUSTOMS

By RICARDO CARLOS *

THE FILIPINOS who live in the northern provinces are unfamiliar with Moro marriage customs. To the Moros these seem, no doubt, quite commonplace, but to Filipinos who are not accustomed to them, they would seem strange, and for that reason quite interesting. I will mention some of the Moro marriage customs which I have seen for the benefit of those readers of THE YOUNG CITIZEN who live far away from the Moro provinces.

In the province of Cotabato I have observed that a Moro father who desires that his son be married goes about in search of a likely girl. There is no such thing as courtship. Sometimes the son may suggest to the father who the girl might be.

When the father has decided upon a certain girl, he goes to the girl's parents to discuss the matter of matrimony. The girl's father may decide immediately, or he may ask for time to think the matter over.

If the parents accept the young man, the next thing to be discussed is the dowry—that is, the money to be paid to the girl's parents in consideration of the marriage. The amount of the dowry will depend very much upon the girl's social standing, her physical charms, and—her ability to cook.

When the amount of the dowry is decided, the date of the wedding will be the next matter to be settled. The dowry must be paid before the date of the wedding. The payment is usually in the form of money, and sometimes in

the form of cattle, land, Moro musical instruments, and *palay*.

On the wedding day the parents of the groom and several friends go to the house of the bride. They ask the parents whether they have changed their mind and whether or not they are prepared. If the bride's parents say everything is all right, the groom's parents return to their home to get the groom.

Meanwhile the bride, surrounded by several girl companions, has staid in a room for several days. During that time she has not seen or talked to any man.

When the groom goes to the girl's home, he is accompanied by many friends who carry food and refreshments for the wedding guests.

The marriage is solemnized by a *pandita*, *imam*, or *kagui*, or several of them. The one celebrating the marriage stands at a little distance between the bride and the groom. He has his right hand extended as is theirs, holding each other. As he reads the Koran concerning their respective duties, he continues to hold their clasped hands.

When he has finished reading, he tells the bride to kneel; then he commands the groom to touch her head and breast. Once this is done, the bride has become his willing wife, his slave, and his personal property.

Moro marriages may be expensive affairs. The groom generally spends no less than a hundred pesos, and in exceptional cases more than two thousand pesos. The dowry goes to the parents and not to the girl. The *pandita*, *hadji*, or *imam* who solemnizes the marriage

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VERDI

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How was it first produced?

15. How many operas did Verdi write?

16. Have you ever heard a grand opera?

17. Have you heard songs from any of Verdi's operas?

18. Tell of Verdi's character.

19. Read this article again, and then answer these questions.

WHERE THERE'S A WILL

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tested it and found that it is true. WHERE THERE'S A WILL, THERE'S A WAY.

SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT

1. Do you think Juanito was right when he said, "An education in the elementary school is good as far as it goes, but it's not enough"? Why do you think so?

2. Why do you think Juanito was determined to have an education?

3. Why was Juanito willing to shine shoes and be a houseboy? Would you be willing to do that if necessary to get an education?

DRAGONS

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The family history of the lizard is interesting because of its many relationships with birds and mammals. At about the same time the lizards were appearing, nature was also producing from the much the same type of primitive reptiles, the first birds and the early mammals.

REVIEW

1. How many species of lizards are there?

2. What can you say of the sizes of lizards?

3. Describe some species.

4. Where are lizards found?

5. What is the food of lizards?

6. What can you say of the tail of some species of lizards?

7. How do some lizards run?

8. Tell of the "flying" lizard.

9. The frilled lizard.

10. How are some lizards useful?

11. Why is the family history of the lizard interesting to scientists?

12. How many different kinds of lizards have you seen in the Philippines?

MORO MARRIAGES

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charges a fee—usually five pesos or more. If the groom is rich, he may have some ten *panditas* to solemnize his marriage.

If either of the contracting parties lives near a river, gaily decorated launches with flags and streamers of many colors may be hired for the occasion. On top of the launches grotesque animal heads sway in the air. Bands of musicians are always aboard the launches to furnish the music.

During the marriage celebration fire-crackers are lighted, guns are fired, and men and women shout at the top of their voices.

A Moro *datu* or *kagui* can have as many wives as he wishes, provided he can pay the dowries asked. An ordinary Moro is limited to four wives. A Moro who has many wives is considered rich. A Moro who has many daughters will become rich, because of the dowries that are sure to come for his daughters.

Such are some of the Moro marriage customs—commonplace to Moros, but strange to Filipinos who are not accustomed to them.