FUERTES' ABYSSINIAN PICTURES IN SPECIAL PUBLICATION

A portfolio of lithographic reproductions of paintings of Abyssinian birds and mammals by Louis Agassiz Fuertes has just been issued by Field Museum. These are in full color faithfully conforming to the originals made by the artist while a member of the Field Museum–*Chicago Daily News* Abyssinian Expedition of 1926–27. Their publication in this attractive form was made possible through a generous donation from C. Suydam Cutting, who was also a member of the Abyssinian expedition and a warm friend of Mr. Fuertes.

The original paintings included 108 subjects, all of which were purchased by Mr. Cutting after the artist's untimely death and presented to the Museum. From this collection, thirty-two of the finest have been selected and reproduced by offset lithography as loose plates enclosed in a portfolio of convenient form. They are suitable for individual framing or for preservation as a collection. Although intended as studies, most of them have much feeling and artistic quality, reflecting the artist's well-known ability to express the individuality or "personality" of birds.

An especially engrossed copy, bound in scarlet morocco, has been sent, as a coronation gift, to the newly crowned emperor of Abyssinia, Haile Selassie I. The emperor, formerly Ras Tafari and later Negus (king) Tafari Makonnen before his elevation to the imperial throne, had contributed much by his extremely helpful cooperation to the success both of the *Daily News*–Field Museum Expedition and the later Harold White–John Coats Expedition to Abyssinia for Field Museum. Fuertes himself attracted the admiration of the emperor, and one of his bird paintings now hangs in an honored place in the imperial palace.

By an ironical prank of fate, Louis Fuertes lost his life near his own home only a few weeks after his return from the long journey in Abyssinia where he had cheerfully accepted the dangers of travel in a remote region among wild and unruly people. This unfortunate end came at a time when he had mastered his technique and was in the fullness of a power and a desire to give rein to a freer expression of his talent than hitherto had been possible. On the Abyssinian trip, the idea of expanding his field, previously confined to North America, seemed to act as a stimulus and the paintings made, although produced under the restrictions of camp and trail, are among the finest bird portraitures ever to come from his hand.

Only a limited edition of the portfolio has been published. While copies are available they may be obtained at the nominal price of $3 each; a few copies in a de luxe edition, bound in fabrikoid, are available at $5 each.

—W. H. O.

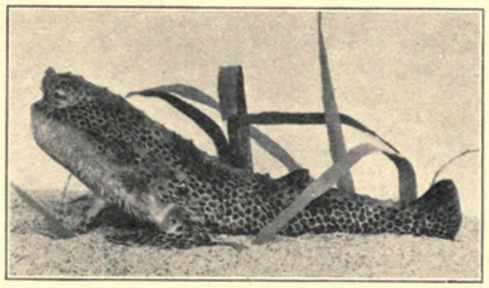
THE BATFISH

By Alfred C. Weed
Assistant Curator of Fishes

In the tropical and almost tropical seas around the Gulf of Mexico there are many miles of shore where beaches of coral sand dip under the warm waters. Where the ocean has a depth of only a foot or two, the "turtle grass" begins to grow, quite scattered along the edge, but making dense mats five or six inches tall a little farther out. Small fish and many other kinds of sea life hide in the "grass." Many other fish hide in or on the open sand while curious transparent shrimps swim above it. Among all these, one fish, the batfish, *walks* openly, unafraid.

This strange creature is so different that one is at a loss to know where to start in describing its peculiarities. Looking down from above it seems to have a body like a toad, but with a fishy tail. Body and tail are covered with warts and with a scanty growth of white whiskers.

If we look at it from the side, it seems to have four legs with finny feet. Even these are wrong. The pair close together under its throat are its hind feet, while its hands are far apart and well back. They look somewhat like the feet of a frog, but on much shorter legs. The batfish can swim with its tail, like any ordinary fish, but it usually



Batfish Exhibit—Hall 18

walks or rather hops along on the bottom. In its hopping it moves exactly in the same way as a rabbit feeding on a lawn. The weight is rested on the forward pair of feet and the rear ones are brought ahead. Then the weight is shifted to the rear pair and the forward ones moved along. In the water this fish can support its weight on either pair of fins or on either pair and the tail.

A good specimen of one of the species of batfish has been presented to Field Museum by the John G. Shedd Aquarium. An excellent celluloid model of this specimen has been prepared by A. G. Rueckert of the Museum staff and is now on exhibition in Albert W. Harris Hall (Hall 18).

MUSEUM LIBRARY BENEFITS FROM EXCHANGE SYSTEM

By Emily M. Wilcoxson
Librarian

At the close of the World's Columbian Exposition in 1893, when the first exhibits were brought together to establish Field Museum, there were also purchased several collections of books. To these were added collections received as gifts, and thus was formed the nucleus of the Library. Many other generous gifts, notably that of the Edward E. Ayer Library of Ornithology, have since expanded the usefulness of the Museum Library.

However, the growth of the Library has from the first depended very largely on the exchanges of its publications with other institutions, a service which was established from the beginning. The publications issued by the Museum have been sent out freely to universities, public libraries, scientific societies, academies and other institutions not only in this country but abroad, and from these institutions have been received in return such publications as they had to offer.

As the number of the Museum's publications has increased the number of works sent to it has also increased, until in the last year there were sent out some 15,381 copies of Museum books, in exchange for which Field Museum Library has received books and pamphlets from some 700 institutions located in all parts of the world.

SPECIAL SUNDAY LECTURES FOR MUSEUM MEMBERS

Two special illustrated lectures for Members of Field Museum will be given on Sunday afternoons in December.

On **December 7** Llewelyn Williams, member of the staff of the Department of Botany, who recently returned from South America where he led the Marshall Field Botanical Expedition to Peru, will lecture on *Amazonian Jungles and Andean Trails.*

On **December 14** the lecture will be on the subject, *Excavation in a Prehistoric Village in Colorado.* Dr. Paul S. Martin, Assistant Curator of North American Archaeology and leader of the recently returned Field Museum Archaeological Expedition to the Southwest, will be the speaker. Both motion pictures and stereopticon slides will be used.

These are the fourth and fifth lectures in the current series of eight presented for Members. The final three, to be given in January, will be announced in the next issue of Field Museum News. The lectures are given in the James Simpson Theatre of the Museum, and begin promptly at **3 p.m.**

Each Member of the Museum is entitled to two seats for each lecture, to obtain which he should show his **membership card** to an attendant at the theatre on the afternoon of the lecture. Upon presentation of the card Members will be given two tickets of admission to the reserved section of the theatre. Seats in the reserved section not claimed by 3 P.M. will be offered to the public.

MICRO-FOSSILS

By Sharat K. Roy
Assistant Curator of Invertebrate Paleontology

Fossils which are large and can easily be observed by the naked eye are called macro-fossils. Those so small they can be seen only with a microscope are micro-fossils.

The value of a fossil, however, has nothing to do with its size. A fossil one-tenth of a millimeter, tinier than a particle of dust, may have greater economic and correlative significance than one ten or more feet long. Of late, especially in oil geology, vast sums of money are being saved by the use of micro-fossils as guides in subsurface correlation. These serve as guides or horizon markers because they are limited in their vertical range. The study of the guide fossils has a far-reaching significance. It not only enables a paleontologist to state the age and character of reservoir beds and source rocks of petroleum supply, but also offers him ample data for predicting accurately what character of material he may expect to penetrate at a given depth.

Thus there is a direct relation between a fossil and the cost of gasoline or the success or failure of mining ventures.

The fossil collection made by the Second Rawson–MacMillan Subarctic Expedition of Field Museum in Baffinland, has yielded a great number of micro-fossils. They are mostly Ostracoda, Gastropoda and Bryozoa. These, when identified, will help solve some of the problems of the stratigraphy of the Arctic regions. Lack of knowledge of the stratigraphy of the Arctic lands has hindered full realization of the geologic succession in the United States.

It may be asked how these fossils are collected if they cannot be seen without a microscope? The truth is that the collector does not know that he is collecting them. They are embedded in the matrix of larger fossils and appear as surprise visitors in the laboratory.