

be put in the hands of a competent physician as soon as possible.

DANGER IN ANTIVENINS

The third method, neutralizing the venom after it has spread more or less widely through the victim, was thought, when first developed within the century, to be the final solution to the whole problem. Experience of a few decades has slowly brought out the fact that grave dangers are associated with this method just as with the others. This serum, known as "antivenin," is made from the blood of immunized horses, and large quantities of it are required to neutralize appreciable amounts of venom. Many human beings react violently to antivenin, either by dying instantly or by suffering severely from serum sickness some days later. Just what the dangers from antivenin are can scarcely be estimated as long as the one school underestimates them while the opposing school exaggerates them.

After a century of investigation, modern science remains unable to cope with snake poisoning. There is little doubt that if the snakes of this country, let us say, annually killed thousands instead of scores, the problem would be solved in a very short time. It is hard to interest research physicians in a problem that does not exist in big cities where the institutions of medical research are concentrated. A real cure for snake bite might not save many lives but it would give tremendous mental relief to millions of persons living in the country and countless thousands of others who seek recreation in the wilds.

AN EXHIBIT REJUVENATED

BY EMIL SELLA
CURATOR OF EXHIBITS, BOTANY

The recent installation of a large epiphytic aroid (*Anthurium acaule*), native of tropical America, is really a partial restoration. Completed in 1910, this particular reproduction remained on exhibition until a short time ago.

The species shown grows either as an airplant on branches of trees or on rocks. Its creeping stem produces large masses of aerial roots and its leaves often attain a length of four feet and a width of one foot or more. The flower spike is erect but becomes pendent when the fruit develops. All in all, its total assemblage is indeed striking.

In the course of rearranging the exhibits in Martin A. and Carrie Ryerson Hall (Plant Life—Hall 29) to take greater advantage of the recently introduced case lighting, we occasionally come across an individual specimen that requires something more than the usual cleaning and refreshing treatment. The anthurium was one of these; a close inspection of it revealed hidden damage to the leaves. This and the

considerable darkening of the various pigments made it necessary to replace the foliage as well as some of the other parts in order to justify its remaining alongside the other reproductions. There were undoubtedly other causes for this condition than the natural aging processes, such as an accidental blow at the time it was being moved from the old Museum building in Jackson Park or possible exposure to some oxidizing agents that may have been present in the exhibition case.

Fortunately the necessary living material for these replacements could be obtained through the co-operation of the Garfield Park and Lincoln Park conservatories. Yet an unpredictable amount of time is always needed for the discriminating task of replacing part of the old with the new and matching the remainder so that one may not easily distinguish between them. This



ANTHURIUM ACAULE

Model of a tropical American aroid. This creeping or climbing perennial grows on trees or rocks. Exhibited in Hall 29.

reconstruction, shown in the accompanying illustration, is the result of the combined efforts of Frank Boryca and Samuel H. Grove, Jr., Assistants in Plant Reproduction, and Artist-Preparator Milton Copulos.

Australian 'Mountain Devil'

The Museum has received a specimen of an Australian reptile, the Moloch lizard (*Moloch horridus*). The creature, resembling American spiny desert lizards, is known in Australia as "mountain devil." Specimens are difficult to find. The one received at the Museum is a gift from A. R. Main, of the Zoology Department at the University of Western Australia in Nedlands.

The Moloch lizard, about 6 inches long, lives on a diet of ants. It looks somewhat like the horned toad.

BIRDS FROM NEPAL

The Museum recently had word that Dr. Robert L. Fleming is safely back from his successful bird-collecting trip to Nepal. Bird study and bird collecting have always been a hobby with Dr. Fleming, who is a teacher in the mission school Woodstock at Mussoorie in the United Provinces of India. He has visited the Museum staff when on vacation in Chicago, and he has long been one of our most valued correspondents.

Last summer he broached the possibility of a bird-collecting trip in the little-known country of Nepal to Boardman Conover, Trustee of the Museum and Research Associate in Birds. Mr. Conover was enthusiastic, for his own notable private collection of game birds would be enriched by collections from this region, which is remarkable for its wealth of pheasants. Nepal, lying just south of Tibet, has been a "forbidden country" and our knowledge of its birds dates back over a century to the times of Sir Brian Hodgson, who was British resident there. The opportunity to learn more of its avifauna was too good to miss, and the costs of a three-month trip on behalf of the Museum were assumed by Mr. Conover. (Mr. Conover died last month—see page 2.)

From Dr. Fleming's preliminary report we learn that a collection of some 700 bird skins was made during the three months spent in Nepal (November, 1949, through January, 1950). His glowing letters tell of climbing to 15,000 feet among the towering Himalayas, of travels by elephant in the tropical valleys and bird shooting from elephant-back, of his cordial reception by the administration, and of the friendliness of the people. We gain the impression of an outstanding success. The Museum collection will be notably augmented by the birds obtained by Dr. Fleming. Further report of the Nepal Expedition will be made on arrival of the collections. —A.L.R.

ECONOMIC GEOLOGY FIELD TRIP

The Museum's 1950 Mississippi Valley Field Trip left Chicago early in May. Robert K. Wyant, Curator of Economic Geology, is in charge. Collections of the ores from three lead and zinc mining areas of the Mississippi River Valley will be made. The areas and their features are as follows:

I. *Wisconsin-Iowa-Illinois District*: Lead and zinc mining activity has been partially rejuvenated in this area by recent geological investigations.

II. *Southeastern Missouri Lead Belt*: Located in the Flat River area, this belt contains one of the most important lead deposits in the world.

III. *Southeastern Illinois*: A new zinc-producing area is adjacent to the important Illinois fluorite deposits.



1950. "Birds from Nepal." *Bulletin* 21(6), 7-7.

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