

## A MID-MOUNTAIN FOREST IN THE PHILIPPINES

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I'VE JUST COME BACK to Dumaguete City after a week in the tropical mid-mountain forests of Negros Island. There I woke at dawn to hear jungle fowl crowing, big pigeons booming, and leafbirds singing, and at dusk monkeys squalled from the



Photo by D. S. Rabor

THE 'HORNS OF NEGROS,' PHILIPPINE PEAKS

forest edging the camp clearing as the frogs began their evening chorus. I lived in a camp just below the summit of the "Horns of Negros," the twin peaks that dominate the mountains of southern Negros.

After the meetings in Manila of the Pacific Science Congress I came down to the central Philippines where the Chicago Natural History Museum Field Associate, Dr. D. S. Rabor, is head of the Department of Biology of Silliman University. Dr. Rabor met me at the plane, had me stay with him, and arranged for me to stay in this Cuernos de Negros camp that he maintains for periodic field work by his biology classes. He not only arranged it, but saw me comfortably installed, with cook, personnel, supplies, and equipment, and he stayed a night to see that all functioned smoothly.

Seldom can one talk long in the Philippine Islands without reference to the recent war. This camp is no exception, for it is in the clearing where Dr. James W. Chapman, ant specialist of Silliman University, lived for eighteen months after the occupation before the Japanese found him and sent him to Manila for internment.

Eastern Negros is a country of small farmers of coconuts and corn, heavily settled. From Dumaguete we look up, in the early morning, to see the forested "Horns of Negros." For the rest of the day it's

usually cloud covered. We climbed up nearly 3,000 feet through the hot, sweltering foothills, through coconut groves, banana groves, sweet potato and corn fields, and abaca plantations (which yield Manila hemp). With our lunch, along the way, we had fresh coconut milk (one of the advantages of living in the tropics, Rabor says) and also toba. This last was quite new to me, but it seems widely used in Negros.

The inflorescence of the coconut is cut and a bamboo tube is attached to collect the juice. Near each house we passed we saw the tubes in the coconut palms. Each morning the men climb to gather the juice. Fresh (slightly fermented only, as we had it), I found it recalling hard cider, flavored with things I couldn't name. Rabor says a powdered bark is put into it—and also insects, rats, and even bats and lori-keets come to drink from the tubes, fall in drunk, and drown. If kept for two days its alcoholic content is

greatly increased and caution is required.

At 3,000 feet we were in the forests, and at 3,700 in the camp. Rabor and I climbed to the top of the North Horn of Negros, which is nearly 6,000 feet. It starts out as a moderate slope with fine tall forest, with ferns, tree ferns, low palms, and moss common. Half-way up it steepens. Coniferous trees come in, and great rocks moss covered and gripped by aerial roots and scrambling pandanus are conspicuous. We clambered up with hand and toe holds past mossy caves and passages. We grasped at mossy trunks that looked to be six inches in diameter to find them one-half inch in diameter and the rest moss. A misstep on a pandanus-leaf mat sent a leg through into space. When we finally reached the top, a mass of aged dwarf conifers, pandanus, tree ferns, palms, and moss, we found the clouds had

## DALLWIG TO DRAMATIZE TRIP TO THE MOON

Paul G. Dallwig, the Layman Lecturer, will take his audiences "out of this world" in his first dramatization of the season, "A Trip to the Moon—Why Not?" to be given at 2 P.M. on January 3, 10, 17, 24, and 31. The possibility of such a trip seems much more likely now that scientists have managed to contact the moon by radar, and Mr. Dallwig takes into account all that science knows so far about what might be expected on a trip of this kind. The dramatization is divided into three scenes: "The Take-Off," "The Trip to the Moon," and "A Day on the Moon." Mr. Dallwig will also explain the difference between comets, meteors, and meteorites, whether flying saucers are fact or fantasy, and other topics connected with outer space.

Museum Members are admitted to these lectures upon presentation of their membership cards; others must make reservations in advance by mail or telephone (WAbash 2-9410). There is a half-hour intermission for refreshments in the Museum cafeteria at 3. The programs begin in the Lecture Hall and progress into exhibition halls containing material that Mr. Dallwig uses to illustrate his dramatizations.

In February Mr. Dallwig's subject will be "Life—What Is It?"

closed in below us. There was no view. We were above the clouds and it was like being on a small forested island in a frozen sea of white.



Photo by D. S. Rabor

MID-MOUNTAIN FOREST INTERIOR IN THE PHILIPPINES

Though wet enough now, with water in the streams and the moss like sodden sponges, this is the start of the northeast monsoon, which is dry, and in February and

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### Illinois Audubon Society Offers Screen-Tour of Mexico

"Land of the Scarlet Macaw" is the title of a free screen-tour to be presented in the James Simpson Theatre of the Museum on Sunday, January 17, at 2:30 P.M. under the auspices of the Illinois Audubon Society. The films to be shown survey the natural treasures of Mexico in all their color and variety. The accompanying lecture will be by Dr. Ernest P. Edwards of Amherst, Virginia. The scenes recorded by his camera range from the summits of mountains and volcanoes to picturesque markets in isolated villages deep in hidden valleys.

### PHILIPPINE REPORT—

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March there is no water to be had on the mountains. On the lower slopes we found a "mixed bird party." A blue-and-cinnamon fantail flycatcher that was perching and calling conspicuously in the van was the leader, Rabor said. In this party were scores of white-eyes, a chickadee, a nuthatch, bulbuls, and leafbirds, and probably others. The drongos do not join these parties but, instead, associate with monkeys, perhaps for the insects they stir up, as cowbirds associate with cows in our country.

I was especially pleased to see on these slopes of the Horn a babbler that Rabor and I described as new to science some years ago when he was in Chicago. At that time neither of us had seen it alive. Now we both watched its actions, noting its rather undistinguished manner of poking about twigs and branches searching for its food, as do so many generalized songbirds.

Negros Oriental, contrasted with some other parts of the Philippine Islands just now, is very orderly. The people with their small farms believe in law and order and protection of property. We can wander freely. But there's one thing to watch out for, Rabor warns me: it's best to have a native guide—to keep me out of pig traps. These traps, with the aid of a bent sapling, send a spear across a trail with the object of transfixing the pig. The spear is ordinarily aimed knee high, and Rabor says that as I'm rather tall the spear would probably catch me in the upper calf. Next time I went out I located four abandoned pig traps along a trail I had passed a number of times earlier without seeing them.

In the camp clearing grow raspberries, as big as the end of my thumb, on canes fifteen feet or more long so that some dangle out of reach overhead. They're a bit dry, compared with our northern berries, but they have the same "stink-bugs" that have ruined many a mouthful of berries for me in the United States.

This is the change of the seasons, with variable weather: some days are fine, some the rain drips endlessly from sodden skies. Days when the mists roll in at noon are

like twilight, and the frogs evidently think it is, for they start their "evening" chorus then. Then it is that the big pigeons become conspicuous. Singly or in pairs, they glide down the ridges with a sizzling sound, or circle about with whistling wings. These are the birds that pigeon hunters come up here for, from the valleys below. Firearms being outlawed, they're armed with airguns, but such airguns as I've never seen before. They're made locally, of brass, and it takes all a hunter's weight to work the pump. They're evidently effective, for the other day one hunter had three pigeons. A yellow-flowered ground orchid, common here, is evidently prized for gardens below, for one day we saw three small boys with baskets of them, evidently transplanting them to gardens.

At times, especially when the clouds roll in, this country seems remote and lonely. But we're continually being reminded that it's not. Trails of pigeon and orchid hunters lead everywhere; the bamboo tapping "talk" of the villagers below comes up clearly, the sharp tapping of two pieces of dry bamboo struck in varying rhythms that seem to convey ideas if not actual messages; we're continually finding little heaps of pigeon feathers, proof of some hunter's prowess; and when there's a rift in the clouds we see the nearby islands of Cebu or Siquijor. Like most forests near settlements, this one is being encroached on, cleared for abaca plantations. And in the dry season fires can eat into its edges. So far, the ruggedness of the terrain, a welter of knife-edge ridges, has saved it. But the country is on the way to the deforested condition of nearby Cebu, which I saw from the air.

Our cook was willing, but inexperienced. One day our hunters returned in high glee with five monkeys. After the skins were saved for the Museum, the cook was instructed in preparing monkey meat for the plates (we had no table). The meat was cut in chunks from the bones, boiled for a bit, then fried for a while. As the cook turned the pieces in the pan he found them coated with loose monkey fur. So for a long time he sat, turning piece after piece in the frying pan, picking off monkey fur. Monkey meat, fresh from the monkey to the frying pan to the plate, may be a little tough but it's rich tasting and flavorful. And rice fried in the fat left from frying monkey was especially tasty.

The question of language is beyond me in the few weeks I have been here, I'm afraid. Fortunately, English is pretty widely understood. Indeed it is the official language of instruction in the schools (with Tagalog the second official language). Here with the people talking amongst themselves there are occasional English words like "sleeping bag," occasional Spanish ones like "carne" for meat, and for the rest it is not Tagalog, but Visayan, the native tongue of the central Philippines.

### Daily Guide-Lectures of Museum Exhibits

Free guide-lecture tours are offered daily except Sundays under the title "Highlights of the Exhibits." These tours are designed to give a general idea of the entire Museum and its scope of activities. They begin at 2 P.M. on Monday through Friday and at 2:30 P.M. on Saturday.

### 4-H Tribute to Museum

A 4-H Donor Merit Award has been received by Chicago Natural History Museum in recognition of its 33 years' support of 4-H Club work. The award was presented by the Co-operative Extension Service and the National Committee on Boys' and Girls' Club Work on the occasion of the annual National 4-H Club Congress in Chicago.

When I wrote by the light of the kerosene lamp in the evening the assortment of moths that came to the light was considerable. Especially noticeable among the silvery ones and the gray ones was a white one with pink bars and a pale green one. And just as conspicuous were the hemipterous bugs in varying patterns of black, yellow, and orange.

Particularly in mountain forest, the first days are discouraging—the terrain is so rugged, the trails are all so slippery, the vegetation is so dense and dripping, and the birds get about with so much more ease than I do. But my legs are now hardened to the hills. I look before I step. The dripping wet I'm used to now, and I've begun to know where the birds will be, where there's a special bulbul grove a few hundred yards down the trail, where there's an attractive fruiting tree just beyond and a little saddle in a ridge that birds favor, and so on.

It's interesting how much more satisfactory some birds are to watch than are others. For example, one evening in the mountains a flower pecker and a velvet-fronted nuthatch came into the tree edging the clearing. The flower pecker perched on a slender branch of a second-growth tree. It was a male, about three inches long, orange below, blue above, with a red spot on mid-back. Short-billed, short-tailed, it sat, like a dumpy ball of feathers, quite still, for perhaps ten minutes, then flew away. My knowledge of it was increased only in knowing that the species is very inactive.

How different was the nuthatch. It came into a branching tree, lit low, hopped up one branch, head up, looking this way and that, then across to another branch, then came down that headfirst, now belly down, now back down, as it followed the twisting and the turning of the branch. In two or three minutes it had showed me its bag of acrobatic tricks, typical, quick, active nuthatch behavior, and was gone, leaving the flower pecker still sitting soggly.





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