With Dr. Eric Ekman in Southern Haiti, in the Summer of 1927

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The untimely death, early in 1931, of the Swedish botanist Dr. Eric Ekman was a great loss to the science of botany, and especially to Sweden. It is doubtful whether anyone will ever match the number of discoveries of plant novelties that he made. There are few regions of the world where it is still possible to find more than 2000 new species of plants. That is the number that Ekman found in Cuba and Haiti during his more than 20 years of collection in those islands. Venezuela, the Guianas, and New Guinea are still rich in undescribed plant species, but the extreme difficulty and great expense of carrying on in those regions extensive work of this kind, for a long period, is too discouraging at the outset.

Dr. Ekman's unflagging zeal in the search for new plants led him into nearly every valley and to most of the mountains and islands of Haiti and Cuba. He knew the conditions and surroundings in detail, was widely known and on intimate terms with most of the prominent planters and officials, and always was a welcome guest wherever he went.

Ekman seldom employed a native as a guide or helper, and he rarely used a horse or a donkey. He found Haitian and Cuban natives very unreliable as assistants in his kind of work, and as a rule too lazy. He found them in no way comparable with Amerindians or Kanaka bushmen as guides and woodsmen. Long experience taught him to travel as lightly as possible and to depend on native hospitality; this was conducive to best collecting results. He seldom carried more than his plant papers, a machete, pocket knife, aneroid, and pack-sack; with blanket, a small pot to boil tea, and enough sugar and biscuits to last two or three days. For water, he depended mostly on what he could find in the for-

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est or get from natives. He always spent the nights in native huts when in the mountains, and enjoyed the cheerful hospitality of the people. Sometimes he made the grievous mistake of not carrying enough water, when climbing a high mountain or traversing an arid district; and several times he suffered great hardship from this lack of precaution.

His forays to the tops of various high mountains never before scaled brought him a rich harvest of new plants. In the high La Hotte mountains there are still peaks that have never been visited, with, undoubtedly, many new species of plants. If one should establish a camp near the top of the highest La Hotte mountain, in the summer, he doubtless could still find many new species of plants. As Ekman worked thoroughly at his collections and observations, it is doubtful that many new plants will be discovered by future botanists in his localities.

Ekman was fearless and daring. Of his many eccentricities, some were quite amusing. At times he was exasperatingly provoking. He spoke and could read and write some 7 or 8 languages, and was well versed in current scientific work of interest, as well as in history and other branches of learning. The Saturday Evening Post was his regular source of modern information; he often declared that he learned nearly all of his English from that paper.

Those of his friends who understood his whims and overlooked his often childish vanities generally found him a most interesting companion, and a brilliant scholar with a ready wit and an ironic humor. Although quick-tempered, he seldom became angry, and he was always a man of his word, and reliable. Dr. Ekman knew good manners and was courteous, but hated snobbery, and could be crude and sarcastic to anyone who did not accord him merited respect. Clothes were no object to Ekman; he expected every white person to properly regard him, whether he were in rags or in conventional clothes. Because many people stupidly think that clothes alone make the man, he at times declared that he had no desire ever to go back to a white man’s country. As the peasants almost invariably showed courtesy and hospitality regardless of the kind of clothes one wore, he often expressed his love and admiration for these simple folk of the soil, and said, “These blacks are my people, and I do not wish to leave them.”
The tendency of modern conventions and modern ideas to instill snobbish attitudes into the minds of the natives, and thereby gradually to destroy the culture and harmony of their simple lives, was an abomination such as Ekman could denounce with bitter sarcasm. Although he liked Americans and often profited from acquaintance with them, he always resented, often justly, the occupation of the country by the United States Marines, who more or less dictated the laws. Nevertheless, army officers and surgeons were his friends, and often helped him in many ways. He was given free quarters at any of the hundreds of gendarme-barracks throughout the country wherever he chanced to be, and white officers generally made it a rule to invite him to stop at their posts. He was also given free transportation on army trucks or in officers’ cars. More than once, Colonel Myers, commanding the Marines, told Ekman that he was at liberty to ride free, and as often as he wished, on army airplanes; but Ekman preferred to stick to terra firma.

He was a genius in his line of work. It was amazing to see how well he knew his West Indian flora, and how he could so readily pick out an obscure specimen of a rare plant from a distance, out of a dense tangle of vines and branches. This expertness was the result of long and constant training, coupled with a well-directed technical knowledge of botany and a keen eye for discerning special objects.

His most intimate friends in Port-au-Prince were Dr. Buch of Pharmacie Buch, and Dr. Barker of Service Technique at Damien, both eminent botanists of Haitian flora. In his younger days Dr. Buch had made many discoveries of new plants in the northern peninsula of Haiti. Dr. Barker often took Ekman in his car, on long excursions, and twice climbed with him to the top of Morne La Hotte, being the only other man that ever reached the summit of that mountain — one of the highest, and probably the most difficult in the West Indies.

Ekman had his library and kept his dried specimens in a room in Dr. Buch’s pharmacy. There he worked over his plants before sending them to Dr. Ignatius Urban at Berlin-Dahlem. Ekman also had an adjacent room where he ate and slept.

Ekman was so used to hard marches in the mountains that it was difficult for the average white man to keep up with
him. He would not waste time with people who could not maintain his pace, and he despised weak or lazy people. He rose at four and worked uninterruptedly until sundown; his daily fare was tea, sugar, Haitian biscuits, fruit, vegetables, and fish or roasted wildfowl. Food was so cheap in Haiti that one could live quite well on ten cents per day, when buying only native food. Mangoes at ten for a penny and avocados at two to four for a penny, with other fruits in proportion, were the general prices paid. Native rum or "clarine" was very cheap and made an excellent preservative for specimens. In Port-au-Prince in past days I purchased good clarine for 20 cents per gallon, at retail prices.

When I was in the hospital at Cap Haitien with dengue and malignant malarial fever, the doctor told me that he knew Ekman well. He said further that he had warned Ekman many times that if he did not get back into a northern climate soon, he was a doomed man and could not live much longer. He said that it was remarkable that Ekman had lived so long, because Ekman's kidneys were injured from the combined effects of repeated attacks of malaria, and from bad water. Twice Ekman was brought in from the mountains nearly dead from malaria, but he always recovered quickly, and quickly went back to work. Ekman seldom carried quinine as a preventive antidote, but relied mostly on his hard constitution and strong will power.

I believe that if Ekman had come back to Sweden for a year or two, and had prophylactically taken medicine against the recurrence of malaria, he could have outfitted properly and gone to Venezuela to collect with much success. It was our plan to meet in Venezuela after five years if possible. We had spoken often of this project.

Ekman nearly always lived with the natives when in the mountains, and he ate anything edible and drank any kind of water he could find, without apparently suffering any effects from contamination.

Dr. Alexander Wetmore, former director of the United States National Museum, spent several weeks near the top of Morne La Selle with Dr. Ekman. Wetmore wrote me that he had found Ekman a most excellent and desirable companion, without whom he would have been unable to reach the top of La Selle.

In the spring of 1927 I was preparing for an excur-
sion to Haiti as a private collector, with contracts to collect plants and land-shells for the U. S. National Museum, and reptiles for the Harvard museum. Mr. Emery C. Leonard of the National Herbarium (who was then working on Haitian plants and had just recently returned from Haiti) told me of meeting Ekman, and said that if I could cooperate in field work with him, he would be a good guide and a great help in my excursions.

I arrived in Port-au-Prince in June, 1927, and became acquainted with Maurice Dunlap, then U. S. consul, later consul in Stockholm. From him I learned that he and Ekman were intimate friends. Three days after my arrival I met Ekman at the consulate, and as the next day was Sunday, Ekman invited me to accompany him and Dr. Barker in Barker's car to the top of Morne-à-Cabrits. We crossed the cul-de-sac plain covered with cactus, thorny shrubs, and mesquite trees, and followed the San Domingo City road which leads to the top of the mountain. From there, one gets a splendid view of Lake Saumâtre. On this trip I had my first experience in collecting tropical plants, and Dr. Ekman kindly showed me his particular methods of collecting and preparing specimens. In this locality on a previous trip he had discovered two or three new species of plants. On the present occasion he found one or two more new ones, and collected specimens of some of those he had taken before.

On the top of this mountain are many logwood trees, upon which occur colonies of the land-snail, *Liguus virgineus*, indigenous to Haiti. The snail is alternately striped with bright red, yellow and green bands — one of the prettiest of land-shells. There was also a large millipede, some eight inches long and one inch thick, which, when disturbed sprays acid fumes of a brownish liquid at its enemies. The odor is somewhat of a blend between sulphuric and prussic acids, and the secretion burns like a strong acid. The substance is exuded from pores on the sides, and can be thrown a distance of over a foot. I did not then realize how dangerous these creatures are until a few days later, when I met Dr. O. F. Cook, American specialist of palm trees, centipedes, and millipedes. He had nearly half of the skin of one side of his face burned off, and his helper had his one hand badly burned from the results of having carelessly handled one of these large millipedes.
The following week I went by airplane to Hinche in the Plateau Centrale of Haiti. There I stopped six days with Mr. Boog Scott, and collected land-shells and reptiles in the surrounding districts, where Ekman had previously spent several months.

Upon my return to Port-au-Prince I moved my base to Miragoâne. There I was kindly given free use of a former stone gendarme-barracks, by its owner, Mr. Rogivieu, a Swiss merchant. Ekman was the guest of Mr. Rogivieu whenever he chanced to come to town. He came about a week later. One of his objects in coming to Miragoâne was to go over the same territory where in a different season he had been to collect flowers. He was especially interested in a large, single tree which stood conspicuously in dry ground on the west end of town, just above the road embankment. He had observed it before without flowers, and it did not have any at this time. This tree is the rare *Arcoa gonavensis* Urb., which Dr. Urban had recently described as a new genus and species of the family Leguminosae, and which on account of its peculiar leaves had been suspected of belonging to a new family. The leaves have the general appearance of the mimosa and the tamarind, and the natives call it “tamarind marron.” At three or four other stations Ekman had found sterile trees. These localities were Môle St. Nicolas, Gonaïves, and between La Cahouâne and Tiburon.

We made numerous small excursions around Miragoâne, including several to Lake Miragoâne, the largest body of fresh water on the island of Haiti. It is about 6 miles in circumference, is quite deep, and is surrounded by swamps. On one occasion, after having penetrated far into the largest swamp in quest of rare ferns and grasses, we became embogged. After floundering around in deep mud for some time, and often falling through the upper crust, we began to grow anxious as to how we could get back to safer ground. Suddenly we came upon a black woman engaged in setting snares for waterfowl. She was very much frightened and tried to run away, but after a little tobacco had been promised, she showed us a sort of path out of the swamp. Later in the afternoon we found a beautiful waterfall where we had a delightful bath. In the same little stream I found a rare frog, *Eleutherodactylus inoptatus*, and close at hand
a rare snake, *Uromacer oxyrhynchus*. I found in the lake a new genus (*Haitia*, Clench) and four new species of fresh-water snails. No serious work has ever been done in collecting the fauna of this lake, which ought to prove quite interesting.

I collected about 10 species of fragile, small fresh-water shells, some of them endemic species. In the West Indies there are perhaps not more than 50 species of fresh-water shells. Those in the lake are mostly forms of *Physa*, *Lymnaea*, *Planorbis*, and a *Gundlachia*.

Because of its proximity to the sea, the lake evidently was once an arm of the ocean, with a narrow, shallow entrance that later became covered with coral, sand, silt, and debris. Because of numerous small influent streams, it finally became fresh water. The streams and the heavy rains had washed fine mud into the lake; the ensuing swamp vegetation had gradually encroached upon the shores until it had reclaimed much of what was once only water. No halophytic plants were in the vicinity beyond the lake, and the vegetation was of the typical fresh-water swamp and lake forms. In casting with a dip-net for mollusks and fresh-water insects at the outlet of the lake, I scooped up a handful of a peculiar duckweed (*Lemnaceae*) which Ekman declared new to him. Here at the end of the lake were dense masses of *Utricularia* (bladderwort) and two species of water lilies, some with stems over 3 meters long. Further along the shore, in the lake, were large patches of beautiful yellow cannas interspersed with swamp-grasses, sedges, and ferns.

Among the most successful collecting trips that I made with Ekman was one to the top of the Morne Rochelois, which he had visited on another occasion. Mr. Rogivieu's chauffeur gave us a lift as far as Petite-Rivière-de-Nippes, near the mouth of the Rochelois River. There we collected a few plants, and there I made my first acquaintance with the deadly *Hippomane mancinella*. I had heard enough about how dangerous it was even to handle any part of this tree, and was careful in collecting specimens of the leaves. This tree, one of the Euphorbiaceae, exudes copious quantities of a thick, milky juice upon fracture of any portion of its leaves, bark, twigs, or fruit. It has much the appearance of a small apple tree, and its leaves and fruit also resemble the
apple. I had read stories about its deadly properties, which rival in potency those of the notorious upas tree of Java. The French colonial planters have succeeded in exterminating most of these trees, as they feared being poisoned by their slaves. Gonave Island still has plenty of these trees, but they are widely scattered on the mainland of Haiti along sandy sea-shores. Most of them are known to the local sorcerers, and I believe Ekman knew where most of them were, too.

Ekman warned me to use great discretion when handling the specimens that I was putting into drying-papers, and not let any of the juice touch my hands. In spite of all my care, I inadvertently touched some of it; when finished with the plants, I scoured and washed my hands in the stream. Nevertheless, in about 2 hours, when I was eating my lunch, my lips suddenly began to burn as from the effects of acid. If so small a quantity of the juice could be so virulent, the sap from but one tree must have very great potentialities as a poison.

Morne Rochelois is about 1200 meters high. During the afternoon, as we came into rougher country abounding in small streams, we gathered many species of ferns, one of Ekman's special interests. That evening I scouted around banana trees with a flashlight, in search of a large tree frog which made strange ventriloquial sounds. Finally I caught him by accidentally putting my hand on him in the dark. The frog proved to be a rare species of Sphaerodactylus.

We had no difficulty in finding a fairly good lodging in a peasant's hut in a clearing on the slope at Bellevue. It is quite easy to travel in Haiti in districts where there are peasants, for one is always a welcome guest, to spend the night wherever he may stop.

The next morning at four o'clock we were on our way. We passed quickly through the woods on the slope, and came into a rather level country in a more or less advanced state of cultivation. Shortly beyond were patches of virgin forest, some of which covered part of the round top of the mountain. Here was good collecting ground for both of us. I gathered about 25 species of land-shells, many of them new to me. Ekman emerged after several hours in the woods with an armful of plants, including five or six which he had not seen before. We worked very hard until late in the
afternoon, passing from one small patch of virgin woods to another. Our supply of water had already been exhausted for hours, and the nearest habitation was far away, when we sat down to eat a few biscuits. Ekman was just beginning to curse vehemently, because neither of us had had sense enough to bring water, when I mysteriously produced two green cocoanuts out of my rucksack, which I had carried for two days. I knew beforehand that there would be some fun, when I slipped them into the bag, although they made quite an additional weight. Dr. Ekman had announced, in no uncertain terms, when I purchased them in Miragoâne, that only the simplest fool would carry cocoanuts on a long hike to the top of a mountain. Of course we both had a good laugh when we drank the cocoanut water, and I reminded him of what he had said.

We walked until long after sundown, before we came to a hut. There we were allowed to cook, and a mat was provided for us by a young woman with two small children. Her husband did not come until an hour later.

I often wondered at the hospitality of these simple and trusting Haitian peasants, who only a few years ago were so harasseed and plundered by bush bandits. White men are rarely seen in these mountains, and are considered as quite a novelty. It often happened on our excursions that at the hut where we applied for a night's lodging, there would be only a young married woman with her children. If her husband happened to come later, he never resented the presence of strangers in his house. That these blacks have rather high standards of morals is quite evident, at least among the mountain people. Ekman said that in his many years of travel in Haiti he had never seen anything indecent on the part of the real peasants. There seemed to be a big difference between them and the riff-raff that one sees in Port-au-Prince and other towns.

Ekman knew the Creole language and customs of the people very well. Upon approaching a hut or a small village, he generally made a few humorous remarks to the women and children, and immediately won their favor. Drinking water was then supplied from long bamboos or from earthen pots. Homemade rattan chairs were brought forward, and at mealtime food was offered, no matter how poor the people were. At night a good mat was given the guest, although it
may have been their only one, while the host and his wife were obliged to lie on the bare ground. If one understands primitive people and can win their confidence, they are generally hospitable and kind. Dr. Ekman always made it a rule to give a small reward to the host after stopping overnight. If payment was eagerly solicited he paid less than he would have otherwise, and cursed his host for a lack of hospitality. Payment was seldom demanded and often refused.

The average Haitian peasant is kind and polite, and still retains much of the colonial French etiquette, which was inherited from his forefathers, who were slaves. The females are, as a rule, of a better type than the men. Often they are the masters of their household, because they have more initiative than their men, who are often lazy loafers. A great many Haitian peasant-men are merely household adornments, kept and fed. The women do by far the most work, especially when stimulated by the use of a Haitian drum and a little liquor.

Haiti was then (in 1927) one of the cheapest countries in the world to carry on collecting work. Wages were at that time about one shilling per diem, with food. But I am proceeding by parenthesis, in my account of our trip to Morne Rochelois . . . The next morning at daybreak we were on our way back to Miragoâne. Many plants were collected en route. Ekman was a rapid mover when he got well started on a down-hill descent and no plants merited his attention. Although loaded with specimens, we ran most of the way for three or four hours, and reached Miragoâne about three in the afternoon. Just outside of Miragoâne on the main road is a large, flowing spring of clear, cool, slightly brackish water. The spring is about 10 meters long, 4 meters wide, and from 1 to 2 meters deep. There we had a good bath, as often before, but this time it was particularly refreshing.

During the next two weeks we made frequent short excursions in the vicinity of Moragoâne. Ekman was then collecting bird skins for Dr. Lonneberg. He had learned how to do so from Dr. Wetmore, but lacked practice, and had only an old, dull pocket knife for the skinning, generally by lantern light. At such times the atmosphere in his vicinity was not generally healthy, because of his irritability.

Between us we had an ancient 22-caliber rifle for shooting
birds and reptiles — if they kept still long enough. It was often amusing to watch Ekman take careful aim at a tame bird and pull the trigger a dozen times before the cartridge fired, meanwhile repeating his favorite oath, "Devil take it!" while the bird either flew away or patiently and obligingly waited until the shot was fired.

Our most interesting and profitable excursion was on Gonave Island. Here we spent about three weeks, in the latter part of July and first part of August. My original intention in coming to Miragoâne was to go from there to Gonave Island, after I had become sufficiently acquainted with the fauna and flora of the adjacent mainland. One small, open, native sail-boat went over to Gonave Island every Thursday night; passage was $1.00, with plenty of luggage-allowance.

On the evening of Saturday, 23 July, 1927 we were ready to sail from Miragoâne; but on account of some superstition of the two boatmen, we did not get started until after midnight. It was raining hard when we left Miragoâne. Bags, boxes, and miscellaneous luggage filled the bottom of the boat, while 54 people were crowded so compactly that one could hardly lie down without stretching his legs over the body of his neighbor. The boat was so heavily laden that it nearly dipped water in a calm sea. If this is the rule, it is no wonder that so many small sailboats are sunk every year on this coast.

A favorable breeze until daybreak was followed by a flat calm. We were only a few miles from our destination. The two boatmen, splendid specimens of powerful negroes, then took turns at rowing the heavy boat with the big sculling oar at the stern, while the whole company sang melodious Haitian boat chanties. It is surprising how some of these natives can give exhibitions of strength when in the right mood, with the accompaniment of a native drum and the peculiar but harmonious singing of men and women.

We arrived about five in the morning at Point-à-Raquet-te, the largest village on the island, and were greeted by the whole population. Two weeks before, the War Department had sent a letter to the gendarmes on Gonave Island, asking them to provide accommodations for us on our arrival.

The two gendarmes stationed at this village awaited us, and soon carried our luggage up the beach. They wished us
to come at once to their house, where they had arranged quarters for us. One of the villagers, however, was very anxious for us to accept his hospitality, and begged us to stop at his hut, one of the best in the village. It was close at hand; had a good, stout fence around it, with a lock and chain on the gate, and lock on the house door. We found his house clean and roomy. He had his handsome young wife to make everything comfortable, and then turn over all of his belongings to our use. When she had arranged it all well for us, he sent her with their small children to the home of her father, there to stay until his guests should decide to leave. He then brought us a fine, new American mattress, which he needed himself, for he was just out of the hospital from a severe injury. But he would not have it otherwise, so he slept on a hard mat in a small room in the back of his house. He brought firewood and water for us, and cooked his own meals by himself. During the day, or when we were absent, he always was close by to stand watch over our property.

As soon as we had unpacked our things and established ourselves we began to do a little collecting. While Ekman was busy with his plants, I was out after land-shells and lizards. Small boys brought all sorts of rubbish. Practical jokers induced small children to bring things that the jokers knew to be worthless. One boy brought about a half-liter of cockroaches, another brought a load of common leaves, and a little girl brought a large, dead tomcat to sell, after being told that Dr. Ekman was especially fond of cat-meat. Plenty of beach-worn shells were brought to me; when I refused to buy them, they were brought back, besmeared with many colors of fresh paint to tempt me.

At the times that we were busy in the house preparing our specimens, we were surrounded by a throng of curious neighbors, some of whom thought us to be doctors or sorcerers. Our host was always proud to have these crowds visit his house, as it was considered an honor for him to have so many to see his guests.

Within an hour we found three new species of plants that Mr. Leonard had discovered on Gonave Island, and which had been named in his honor by Dr. Urban — Abutilon, Fagara and Isadorea leonardii. Abutilon leonardii was very common on the flats at the east end of the village.
The day after our arrival we explored the dense tangles of thorny jungle on the hard, rough limestone that surrounds the Saline Madame Ciade, ½ mile SE of Point-à-Raquette. Here Ekman found many rare plants, with several new species. We collected three new species of Euphorbiaceae (including *Croton chaetodus* Urban var. *gonavensis* Urb., *Pera depressa* Urb. & Ekm., and *Acidon variefolius* Urb. & Ekm., as well as six other members of the same family. Some of these have tiny, thorny leaves which sting like fire-ants. We also took a new cactus, *Cereus weingartnerianus* Hartmann, on Eocene limestone, and an endemic *Cissus gonavensis* Urb. from the branches of trees, besides several other new species.

On the rocks on the north side of the saline I found a new species of curly-tailed lizard — *Leiocephalus vinculum* (Cochran) — which, while not uncommon here, I found in no other locality. This species is closely allied to *Leiocephalus semilineatus*, that lives on top of Morne Cabrits. This saline is also an excellent locality for land-shells. Most of the snails on Gonave Island are endemic, and there are many local races.

On the following day we made an excursion along the shore to the village of Mahautiere. Here we found a grove of the rare tamarind, *Arcoa gonavensis*. Old fruits were found in abundance in the largest tree, but no flowers. The fruits, however were sufficient to identify the plant as one of the Leguminosae. Hitherto, only leaves had been collected from sterile trees in different stations in Haiti, and its family remained a puzzle until Dr. Ekman finally found flowers, when he visited Gonave Island a second time. Dr. Urban was then able fully to describe it as a new species of the new genus *Arcoa*.

At the village Mahautiere the natives — about a hundred in number — lived in a very primitive condition. The only source of drinking water was in a hole about four feet deep, scooped out of the sand a little above high-tide mark. Such a hole can be dug in a few hours by one man. The people were exceptionally indolent and stupid, quite content to drink this dirty, salty water, while their pigs, horses, and cattle drank out of the same hole.

Just beyond Mahautiere is the Saline Madame Doisy (about a mile N of Point-à-Raquette.) Between this saline
and the ocean is a band of sandy shore. Here were a number of interesting *Hippomane mancinella*, some of which were in fruit and flower. It is an innocent-looking tree, and a hungry person, ignorant of its poison, might be tempted like Adam to sample one of its apples.

There were in the saline about a dozen flamingoes, a beautiful sight, and one rarely seen in Haiti. Ekman at first wished to shoot one of them for the skin; but very humanely decided not to, fearing that he would only wound one of these splendid birds. We watched them for a long time as they strode along with their peculiar heads in the shallow water, scooping up small mollusca (mostly *Cerithium* and *Bittium*) out of the sandy mud with their inverted beaks. We tried to come closer to them, but they could always keep at about the same distance from us. Ekman shot several smaller water birds, including a stilt. As these birds are but seldom molested by the natives, some species are not at all gun-shy. Thus, one of the waders allowed Ekman to come within about six meters, when he shot and only wounded it. The bird flew around in a circle and alighted still closer than before, when another shot finished it.

On the fourth day of our stay at Point-a-Raquette, we started our first excursion into the mountains. Our objective was the top of Morne Mouri-Corps (which we reached in the afternoon of the second day.) Not far behind Pointe-a-Raquette, on the steep, wooded hillside, Ekman discovered a very rare new species of palm, which he later described as *Pseudophoenix gracilis* Ekm. En route to the mountains we found many interesting plants, land-shells and reptiles, many of which afterwards proved to be new or very rare. At night, we were hospitably received by the mountain peasants, who seemed to enjoy our visits.

Ekman had great hopes of finding this peak (as well as adjacent mountains) still covered with virgin forests, for Gonave Island had received a great influx of colonists from the mainland only in recent years. He was rudely surprised to find the whole top of the peak overgrown with Bermuda grass, that terrible pest of the native gardens. Ekman was a true lover of nature in its wildest and unspoiled condition. On beholding the deforested peak, he burst forth in a volley of curses and maledictions, directed at the peasants who had cut down the forests; and called them "the rats of
mankind.” I reminded him that the damage done by these poor natives, even to the extent of destroying many irreplaceable plants, was infinitesimal, compared with the ruthless destruction of great forests and game by careless fires and by greedy commercial exploitation in America. Wrath made him almost speechless until we reached a little ravine with a patch of virgin forest, near the summit. There Ekman soon found some strange plants, which caused him to burst forth into song. One curious plant, belonging to the Melastomataceae, he immediately recognized as quite different from any he had seen before. It proved to be a new genus, and was named and described as *Mouriria gonavensis* Urb. & Ekm. when it reached Berlin-Dahlem.

We found many patches of virgin forest on the high slopes, mostly in ravines or on very poor soil or rocks (which proved rich in desirable species); and we could only wonder as to how many kinds of plants had probably been completely exterminated by man, on these slopes.

Next day, we went back to Pointe-a-Raquette by another trail that came out of the wooded hillside to the east of the village. About a kilometer from the coast, on the east fork of the trail, was a small grove of the beautiful tree *Neobuchia paulinae* Urb., and close at hand a fine, large *Ekmaniantha* with flowers. As the tree is a rather rare species, we wished to take a good series of *Neobuchia* in flower, and also with young leaves. I went back the next day to collect this, while Ekman made a long journey with a native to see a patch of Spanish Cedar, by then a very rare species of the island. The *Neobuchia* trees (of which there were seven or eight) were too hard to climb, because of their large diameter and because the lower part of the trunks was thickly studded with short, sharp thorns. As adjacent saplings of this species look totally different in foliage and bark, one could hardly believe them to be of the same species unless one saw them growing close to the parent tree. I climbed into an adjacent tree, with a stem of a Yuca lily flower, to which I had fastened a knife. It was more than 6 meters long, dry and light as cork, and with it I cut off plenty of fruits and flowers.

Ekman used to carry along fishing-line with a lead ball tied to it, to fling into the branches of high trees, to haul down specimens of flowers, mistletoe, orchids, and so on.
For vines, orchids, ferns, and flowers in trees too hard to climb, and where they were not more than 5 meters above the ground, a long, forked stick, twisted around the plant, was generally used with good effect. On Gonave Island he made a list of all the plants he saw, and collected specimens of all desirable and doubtful species. He also checked the plants that Mr. Leonard had taken, and the only one that he could not find was a mistletoe of a new species, which Leonard had shot out of a tall tree in the interior of the island.

During our sojourn on the island, we traversed it on foot in six different lines. Gonave Island is a very rough country, but supports a population of about 10,000 natives. It is about 40 miles long and 10 miles wide, and its highest point is Morne Mouri-Corps, with an altitude of about 700 meters above sea-level. Most of the island is semi-arid because of little rainfall.

On our second traverse of the island, we visited several interesting springs. There were more than a dozen of them in the interior, each with a supported vegetation of especially-adapted species of ferns and other plants. A few species were found confined to the particular spring at which they were collected. One of the first springs visited was at Source Picmi. We had been very thirsty for hours when we came to this one, and had expected to find good, clean water. Upon arrival, we found that all the people and animals for miles around had drunk from and befouled the pool, which was not more than a meter wide. One man had led his dirty horse into the water. Tracks of cows, horses, donkeys, pigs, and people were everywhere. Ekman, who under ordinary circumstances was not in the least fastidious about water, refused to drink for fear of contamination. I told him he must, because we probably would not find any other water until next day. About an hour after I had drunk my fill, he came back and drank also. Then he scolded the natives at the spring for being too lazy to put up a fence around the hole.

At this station we took several interesting plants: *Pilea gonavensis* Urb., *Rousselia humilis*, and several others. That evening we reached the plantation of the Gros Nègre Polinice, whom Mr. Seabrook described in his book, "The Magic Isle." This gentleman was at this time on a business trip to Port-au-Prince, but we were kindly received by his two
beautiful young wives, each of whom had a tiny baby. One of these ladies was the Julie whom Mr. Seabrook so aptly pictured. She gave us a good supper and prepared a good lodging for us. Early next morning we went to the Grande Ravine not far from the plantation. There we found many good plants, including the endemic species, *Peperomia scopulorum*.

A few days after returning to Pointe-à-Raquette, we chartered a small sail-boat with two boatmen to take us around the island. We spent 12 days on this trip. Every hole along the entire coast, wherever possible, was entered. Leaving the two natives in charge of the boat, Ekman and I scoured the surrounding country for specimens. At one small cove on the Côtes-de-Fer we had to swim through the surf with our collecting equipment and climb a steep cliff. This was near Pointe Ouest. We had been told by the people of Pointe-à-Raquette that we were at liberty to shoot any of the cattle, pigs, and goats that we could find at this place, as they were all *marron* (wild). We approached a small herd of cattle but they were not at all alarmed at our presence. They had become gentle because nobody molested them, as this spot was seldom visited. One of the most interesting discoveries here was a grove of about a dozen huge cactus in flower, probably *Cereus undulosus* DC., called “torche-cardasse.” Some of them were over 6 meters tall, and had great branches nearly as thick as a man’s body. We chopped off one of these limbs to get flower-specimens. Several hours after leaving them, we discovered that Ekman’s precious machete had been left there.

We also stopped that evening at Latanier-la-Mer, a tiny village of tumble-down huts. Evidently this place is rarely visited, for the inhabitants fled at our approach. The women were very shy at first, but in a few hours they had become quite communicative. We were given fishes and large sea-snails (*Strombus gigas*) for food, and the best hut. The people did their best to amuse us that evening. They live chiefly on fish, mollusks, and sea turtles, and occasionally trade some of their fish for vegetables and fruit in the larger villages. At this place, on the sandy shore, was a little grove of a small fan-palm (*Thrinax wendlandia* Becc.), called “latanier-la-mer.” It is seen rarely in Hispaniola, and is indigenous to Cuba. Ekman later found them also on Navasa.
We stopped at La Source two days, at the quarters of the local gendarmes. As at most of the coast villages, sandflies were in abundance, and they were so persistent and vicious that it was necessary to burn smudge fires inside the house all night long. They take turns with the mosquitoes in tormenting human beings. About four o'clock in the morning, the sandflies leave, and mosquitoes and flies then announce that it is time to get up.

At La Source there were but few interesting plants, but we collected many strange insects, along with several new land-shells and a new species of lizard (*Ameiva barbouri* Cochran). The lizard was rather exceptional in color, and in length of tail. Head and body were 84 mm. long, and the tail 230 mm. in length. The tail, ventral plates, and underside of the limbs were of a brilliant cerulean blue color, and the throat, chin, and point of the snout a rosy pink.

Trou-Louis was our next stop. The most important find there was probably that of *Salicornia bigelovii*, a plant hitherto known only from Cuba. The bed covered about half an acre on one of the saline flats, and was seen only there. Less than an hour's walk from Trou-Louis is the Grande Lagon, which is several miles in length. It was inhabited by alligators and many waterfowl. Flamingoes were quite common, and built their nests there. Here we found "wells" of fresh water from springs lying in the lagoon. Surrounding such spots were abundant brackish-water and swamp plants, including the only *Typha* seen on Gonave Island. We collected various species of *Scirpus, Fimbristylis*, etc. Some of the trees and vines in this vicinity were also of interest. It is probable that a number of plants of considerable interest occur in the vicinity of the Grande Lagon, for its shores are practically unexplored.

At Anse-Galets we had dinner with Mr. Faustin Wirkus, the marine officer who acted as governor of the island. He was also the one white resident of Gonave Island. A trip was made to the spring which feeds the small brook at Anse-Galets. The vegetation was mostly of species different from those found at any of the other springs on the island.

Ekman showed an admirable trait at this spring — that of the true lover of Nature. A small fern, *Stenochlaena kunzeana* (Presl) Underw., which is very rare, but scattered in Haiti, was consistently passed up by him because he feared
that by taking the specimen he might exterminate the species on Gonave.

We arrived on the small island of Petit Gonave, of Eocene limestone, and about 6 acres in extent. Everywhere the rocks were honeycombed. Ekman noted 54 species of plants, including several rare ones. Of these, probably the most interesting was the very rare *Guettardia spinifera* Urb., discovered by Leonard. Ekman had read the description of it and recognized it immediately when he stumbled upon a bush of it in the dark. *Hippomane mancinella* is also found here.

This island has probably been disconnected from Gonave Island for a long time, although it is only about two miles from it. I found two kinds of reptiles that were not collected on Gonave Island. One of these is a rare species of blind snake; the other, quite common here, is *Cyclura cornuta*, a large, black iguana with a horn on its nose. We saw perhaps a dozen of these ancient-looking monsters crawling over the rocks. They eat mostly harsh fruits and shore crabs. One of the natives caught one for me with a piece of mashed sweet-potato soaked in rum. The creature remained intoxicated for three days when I sent it to Washington, D. C. It died soon after arrival, and was stuffed for the Museum of Comparative Zoology, for Dr. Barbour. These iguanas, relics of a very old age, are found in only four or five places, and are rare in museums.

Upon our return to Pointe-à-Raquette, we paid our host a sufficient reward for his kindness, and then we sailed over to Miragoâne in our chartered boat. A week later, with fair wind, we went to Grande Cayemite Island, about 20 square kilometers in area. Its altitude is about 150 meters in the interior, and it has a rough coast of upraised coral reefs. There were about 500 people on the island, who raised small gardens, and cattle and pigs. The cattle are exceptionally sleek and fat, although there are only three or four tiny springs on the island. Many interesting as well as new species of plants and land-shells were collected. I collected also a new species of lizard, *Amphisbaena caudalis* Cochran.

There were on Grande Cayemite Island several interesting lagoons and brackish-water swamps, with a rather peculiar fauna. The vegetation was rich, but probably much the same as that of the adjacent mainland, from which the
island was separated by only two or three miles. Much of the land had been more or less under cultivation, but there were still good stretches of virgin forest left where the soil was too poor to work. Two trips were made across the island. On the second one, Ekman had a severe attack of malaria. He was given shelter and food at a peasant's hut by the owner and his two wives. One of the wives, to my surprise, was an Amerindian, probably a Carib. She was the only one I saw in Haiti, although at Pestel I saw two or three half-castes. Both of us had forgotten to take quinine along, but one of the natives at Anse-Maisons had some. Within three days Ekman, though quite shaky, was off on a hard march again.

At Anse-Maisons are several holes in the rocks near the sea, filled with rain water. They are from one to four feet across, and from one to three feet deep. Several species of sedges (Cyperaceae) and grasses surrounded the margins, while the surface of the water was covered with duckweed. (*Lemna*).

On our last day at Grande Cayemite we went ashore at a point just before a certain village where was a good strip of woods. Ekman and I took a swim while our boatmen went ashore for wood. Ekman, of course, could not resist walking quite far into the jungle in search of plants, while I swam around the rocks collecting shells. Our clothes were in the sail-boat. The two stupid boatmen quite forgot this fact. We had told them in the morning to follow us with the boat wherever we were walking on the shore. They sailed to a point about a half-mile away. I reached the boat just in time, before it got well into the wind; but Ekman, quite oblivious to the situation, was obliged to walk right through the village, naked as he was. Few white men ever visited this island. None of these people suspected the presence of one in their vicinity, when Ekman suddenly emerged from the woods, clad only in an old, dirty cap, long hair, and a week's growth of beard. In one hand he held a large bunch of plants, and in the other a big machete. He strode quickly through the village as mad as a hornet. Some of the native women fled in dismay when they saw him, while several men "bawled him out" for such conduct.

We then sailed over to Pestel in the Gulf of Baraderes, where we obtained lodgings from the local gendarmes. Pes-
tel has a strange aspect when viewed from the sea. It is perched on a steep hillside, and the roofs of the houses give it the general appearance of a Tibetan village high up on the slopes of the Himalayas. From this village we made a three-day excursion into the mountains, and got a good collection of plants.

Ekman nearly provoked a fight with a surly fellow on horseback while we were on a mountain trail. Ekman asked the man which was the right trail to take us to a certain mountain. The native had probably been drinking rum, and was in an evil mood. Instead of answering the question, the native said something in Spanish. This irritated Ekman, words passed, whereupon the man leaped from his horse and started to come at us with his machete. Ekman thereupon picked up a stone and was about to hurl it at his head, when I reminded him of the disadvantage we were at, since the horseman was above us on the slope. Thereupon Ekman threw away the stone and we all went on our way.

On the evening of our departure from Pestel we underestimated the ability of our boatmen to forecast the weather. Much against their will we forced them to sail, regardless of what they thought about the weather. As they had seldom shown any interest in work, we naturally believed that they were only stalling because of laziness.

About ten o’clock we left Pestel with a nice, gentle breeze; about three hours afterward we were caught in a storm. We flew before the wind with a bare pole; several times the flimsy, rotten old boat appeared about to swamp, and the two boatmen were nearly paralyzed with fright. We were all quite seasick. The wind carried us nearly over to Gonave Island before it calmed sufficiently to let us tack with the rotten sail toward the mainland.

We first landed at Petit-Trou-de-Nippes, where we collected plants, and then proceeded to Anse-a-Veau. From there Ekman and I walked leisurely back to Miragoâne, while the boat sailed on ahead of us.

We made several other excursions in the vicinity of Miragoâne and Port-au-Prince, before I left for the northern part of Haiti. I was soon in the hospital at Cap Haitien with a bad case of malaria, and when I returned to Port-au-Prince I reluctantly cancelled my plans of going to the top of Morne La Hotte with Ekman and Barker. Shortly thereafter I returned to the States.
My collecting trips with Ekman were always very successful and interesting. I could not have wished for a better companion in this kind of work. I believe that people who understood him and overlooked his vanities and his often strange whims found much fascinating interest in traveling with him.

I visited Dr. Ignatius Urban in Berlin-Dahlem in January of 1929, and again in December of 1930, to exchange reminiscences of Ekman and to learn of his future plans in Venezuela. But it was not to be that he should carry out his plans for further work. Early in the year 1931 Dr. Ekman died of malaria in Santo Domingo, now Ciudad Trujillo. It is a remarkable coincidence that his old friend and collaborator, Dr. Ignatius Urban, should also have died in the same week. When I was in Saarbrücken, on March 1, 1931, I wrote much of the present paper in the form of a letter to Dr. Gunnar Samuelsson, curator of botany at the Naturhistoriska Riksmuseum in Stockholm. The three — Urban, Ekman, and Samuelsson — constituted the triumvirate of eminent European specialists on West Indian botany. Later I learned a few particulars of Ekman's last days.

Only a few weeks before his death he went through the harrowing experience of the terrific hurricane that nearly destroyed the city of Santo Domingo, and killed about 4000 people. After the storm passed, he found his precious bundles of plants of nearly a year's gathering covered with about six inches of mud and piles of debris in the ruined Danish consulate. He managed to save them by redrying and putting the specimens into fresh papers.

Of his eminence as a botanical collector and student there can be no doubt. At Berlin-Dahlem and at the Smithsonian Institution I often heard leading botanists declare that Ekman was one of the greatest botanical collectors of all time, and that certainly no West Indian botanist could compare with him.