

friends* The temptation to strike off into the jungle and explore was strong, but steep cliffs faced one on all sides. It was possible, however, to walk short distances along the shore, and Matthew and I soon found plenty of shells to fill our pockets. The birds were pretty quiet, and the only one I got more than a glimpse of were a very ordinary-looking crow and a few small swifts.

We soon found, however, it was not difficult to get over to Leyte, where it was much easier to get around. This island being much less rugged and much more developed than Samar. Tacloban, the capital, was a rather filthy town and not particularly oriental looking except for the population, but not uninteresting. The stores had little to offer.

Though we found some small but pretty, cowry shells for sale, some on necklaces or bracelets, some not. Our most successful trip took us first to Tolosa, a comparatively unspoiled little native town twenty-odd miles south of Tacloban at the foot of an interesting-looking little hill topped by a ruined Spanish fort. We intended to climb the hill after visiting the town but never found the trail and instead walked around the

* Skipper Goodhue for one

BIRDS

base on the seaward side, T.R. venturing a swim in the ^{warm and} more too clean-looking bay. After getting back to the road we hitch-hiked in stages back to Tacko-lan, walking for some stretches so as to get better views of the bird-life. Few of the birds looked very exotic, and altogether on three trips to Leyte we saw about eighteen species, most of which were later identified from my notes by one of the curators at the National Museum. They represented a dozen or more families, but of these only four or five were new to my acquaintance - Sunbirds, Old World Orioles, Wood Swallows, Bullbul, and Old World Warblers, from which our Kinglets are sometimes separated and sometimes not. The wood swallow looked like a rather chunky edition of our common swallows at home. The oriole, more closely related to crows than our orioles, which are in the blackbird family, behaved so much ^{like} a woodpecker that we thought it might even be some strange tropical member of that family. The little sunbird was perhaps the most exotic-looking bird we saw. Almost as tiny as our hummingbird, it is brown above and yellow below with a deep blue throat and has a longish, slightly down-curved bill. We saw it flitting about the tops of palm trees. The bullbul, perhaps more like our Thrasher

MORE
BIRDS

than anything else, was most interesting because of its loud notes, which seemed to proclaim its character at once. An almost pure white kite hovering over the meadows was the most exotic-looking member of the hawk family even though we did see both a white-headed eagle and a white-headed hawk unless we got the two confused. One or two inconspicuous members of the Old World Warbler tribe, a straw-berry finch, three or four members of the peon tribe and a couple of swallows made up the list.

COUNTRYSIDE

The Leyte countryside we saw was mostly open, coastal plain, which varied from narrow to wide. Palms were the only conspicuous trees except for the bits of forest on the slopes to the west. Shabby native villages, mostly constructed of palm thatch, were frequent along the road, which was, incidentally, very dirty. Altogether the landscape was somewhat disappointing. The mountains were not only inaccessible but, because of low clouds, usually inconspicuous.

HEADING
HOME

When it became a sure thing that we were to head home, there was, of course, much rejoicing and, frankly, relief, and we didn't mind