THE LEON MANDEL GUATEMALA EXPEDITION OF THE FIELD MUSEUM

A ZOOLOGICAL expedition, sponsored by Leon Mandel, of Chicago, to make extensive collections of birds, mammals, reptiles and amphibians of Guatemala for the Field Museum of Natural History, sailed from New Orleans on November 22, aboard the steamship *Tivives* for Puerto Barrios.

A few weeks hence, after preliminary reconnoitering has been completed and definite camps established, Mr. Mandel is expected to join the expedition for a few weeks' vacation. This is the second expedition in which he has personally participated as a collector. In 1932 he organized and led the Mandel-Field Museum Zoological Expedition to Venezuela which was conducted aboard his yacht *Buccaneer,* making a long sea voyage and penetrating the innermost navigable reaches of the Orinoco River.

Karl P. Schmidt, assistant curator in charge of reptiles at the museum, is leader of the party. He is accompanied by F. J. W. Schmidt, biologist; Emmet R. Blake, ornithologist, and Daniel Clark, general assistant. The expedition will remain in Guatemala for about six months, surveying various regions of the country, which is remarkable for its diversification of climate and altitude. This diversity of habitat, which results in a wealth of species of animal life, reaches its maximum for Central America in Guatemala. The country is of special interest zoologically also because it is the meeting ground of North and South American types of life.

The Field Museum has for years carried on an extensive program of investigation of the fauna of the American tropics, and the present expedition is for the purpose of furthering these studies. While the expedition's primary aim will be to collect specimens for addition to the museum's scientific reference collections, it will also seek material for exhibits, including species of tropical reptiles, and of Central American birds to be used in a series of groups reproducing their natural habitats.

Leader Karl Schmidt will concentrate his efforts on reptiles, while his brother, F. J. W. Schmidt, will specialize on mammals and Mr. Blake will have charge of bird collecting. Karl Schmidt's share in this expedition will be a continuation of his work on the Central American fauna for which he was awarded a fellowship in 1932 by the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation. As far back as 1923 Mr. Schmidt made extensive collections in the adjacent countries of Honduras and British Honduras. Among the most interesting creatures to be collected on the present Guatemalan trip are arboreal salamanders and frogs, many of which have extraordinary breeding habits. F. J. W. Schmidt has for several years experimented with special methods of collecting mammals, and will apply his experiences on the exceptionally rich mammalian fauna of Guatemala in the hope of collecting new and little-known forms. Mr. Blake was one of the principal collectors on the Mandel-Field Museum Zoological Expedition to Venezuela in 1932, on which he collected and prepared more than 800 birdskins within a period of five weeks in the mountain rain forests of the Mount Turumiquiri region.

ESTABLISHMENT OF THE MARTIN GUSTAV AND CAROLINE RUNICE HANSON FUND AT THE SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION

THE September, 1933, number of *Minnesota Medicine,* page 589, gives an account of the presentation of a gold plaque to Dr. Adolph M. Hanson, of Faribault, Minnesota, by the State Medical Association "in recognition of his discovery and isolation of the parathyroid hormone and in grateful appreciation of the distinction thus conferred upon the medical profession of Minnesota." This recognition in his home community happens to coincide with the granting, after an extensive interference proceeding in the course of which four other claimants were eliminated, of basic U. S. patent No. 1,890,851 to Dr. Hanson for an "Extract of the Parathyroid Gland and Process of Preparing Same."

An interesting story lies behind this scientific achievement.

When Dr. Hanson returned from the war in 1919,[1] he left behind him an enviable record of work in neurosurgery done under the stress and strain of the battlefield; naturally he sought something to divert his mind from reliving the experiences he had just gone through. Although engaged in the practise of medicine, he decided to work toward his master's degree at a near-by college, and chose the parathyroid gland as his subject of study since comparatively little was known about it at that time. He rigged up a small laboratory in his basement and obtained permission from the college to do the necessary laboratory work there in his spare time.

After a preliminary chemical study of the gland he identified xanthine as the predominating purine body by following the standard procedure of boiling the gland in dilute sulfuric acid. He then tried boiling it in dilute hydrochloric acid to see if xanthine could be isolated in the same way, but to his surprise the solution behaved quite differently. He was led to suspect that some substance peculiar to the parathyroid glands could be isolated in larger amounts with hydrochloric acid than with sulfuric acid. This, together with the knowledge that hydrochloric acid was sometimes injected to relieve tetany in dogs, suggested the possibility that hydrochloric acid

[1] Dr. Hanson contributed the chapter on "Management of Gunshot Wounds of the Head and Spine in Forward Hospitals, A. E. F.," to "The History of the Medical Department of the U. S. Army in the World War," edited and published by the Surgeon-General of the U. S. Army.