

Capítulo 24

DE OTRAS AVES PROPIAS DE ESTAS ISLAS Y SOLAS EN ELLAS

Llamo propias y solas de estas Islas a algunas particulares que se hallan en ellas (de que tratará este capítulo), y no leemos en otros historiadores ni oímos a los que han visto mucho mundo hacer memoria de ellas; aunque puede ser que se hallen en otras partes que no sabemos. Que por falta de dichas noticias las tenemos por solas y propias de éstas.

*Tabon*¹ llaman a una de estas aves, y, porque en esta lengua bisaya *tabon* es “*encubrir, tapar o esconder,*” porque esta ave encubre, esconde y tapa en la arena sus huevos, se le dió este nombre. Es su tamaño menor que las ordinarias gallinas de acá. Su color pardisco que tira a negro, o ceniciento, más claro que de estos dos colores se ven. No tiene cola, y la cabeza mal cubierta de plumas; el cuerpo algo largo; la carne insulsa y nada a propósito para ser comida. Lo que tiene singular son los huevos que, para su tamaño, son grandísimos, pues son tan largos como los de ganso, aunque menos rollizos. La corteza, o cáscara, muy dura y de color colorado obscuro.

Pone cantidad de ellos, pues a veces en una *tabonera* (que llaman acá al lugar donde se hallan) se suelen hallar más de cincuenta o sesenta, y es sin duda ser de una ave sola.

Para poner sus huevos buscan lugares arenosos, ya sea cerca del mar, (que es lo más ordinario), ya en los montes donde suelen hallarse manchas de arena, ya en las ramblas de los ríos, que

Chapter 24

CONCERNING OTHER BIRDS, NATIVE TO THESE ISLANDS AND FOUND ONLY IN THEM

I designate, as only and proper, to these islands some particulars that are found in them, about which this chapter will deal with, and about which we do not read in other historians and have not heard mentioned by those who have seen much of the world. However, it may be possible that they are found in other places that we do not know about and because of a lack of this information, we regard those of these Islands to live here and here alone.

Some of these birds are called *tabun*¹ and since in the Bisayan language *tabun* is "to conceal" or "to cover over or to hide," and as this bird conceals and hides its eggs in the sand, it is given this name. Here, its size is less than the ordinary hens. Its color is greyish and tends toward black or ashen; lighter than these two colors are seen. It has no tail and its head is poor covered with feathers; the body is a bit large, the flesh is tasteless and not good for eating. Its special quality is its eggs which for that bird's size are very large; for they are as long as those of the goose, but not as large around. The covering or shell is very hard and of a dark reddish color.

They lay a number of them, for at times in a *tabunhan* (as they call here the place where they are found) they are able to find more than fifty or sixty, and without doubt this is from a single bird.

To lay their eggs, they look for sandy places, sometimes near the sea, which is the most usual; sometimes in the mountains where they can find plots of sandy ground and sometimes in the sand flats of the rivers which can be found everywhere in these

en todas estas partes se hallan. Allí hacen un hoyo de más de cuatro palmos de hondo; ponen sus huevos, y tápanlos con la arena, que, calentada con los rayos del sol, los aviva y da el ser.

Dicen estos naturales que suele estarse la madre en un árbol, el más cercano, como en centinela esperando a que salgan los polluelos que, avivados, salen escarbando patas arriba la arena, hasta que se ven fuera de la arena, (donde se vieron primero sepultados que nacidos). Su dicha es acertar a salir del cascarón con esta postura, boca arriba; que los que nacen con la opuesta, como cavan hacia abajo, cuanto más ahondan más se entierran e imposibilitan a ver la luz. Con que serán muchos los que se malograrán, y más los que no llegan a eso por el cuidado con que los buscan los indios, que por lo blando de la arena conocen el lugar del depósito.

Estos, frescos, saben también como los huevos de gallina. Y uno vale por casi tres y lo más que tienen es yema, que la clara es muy poca; prevención necesaria para su sustento bajo de la tierra y para tener fuerzas para cabar y salirse de ella; porque aquella yema les sirve de nutrimento, así estando en el cascarón como fuera de él; pero, aunque los huevos son buenos y gustosos, (son de recia digestión y no para todos los estómagos); mas los pollos que en ellos se hallan son mucho mejores cuando ya están con plumas.

Hélos comido varias veces. Y es cierto que son tan mantecosos, suaves y gustosos como pichones. Hánse de comer asados, que, con la mucha gordura que tienen, sirven de lardo y son mejores que guisados, sin comparación.

Dúrales a estos pollos la gordura lo que les dura estar en el cascarón; que, en saliendo de él y comenzando a tratar de buscar el sol, o que por el trabajo de cavar la arena, o que por la falta de pasto, porque ya se desasieron del cascarón que les sustentaba, son insulsos, y ni aun los indios los comen. Menos malos son cuando traídos los huevos y puestos en casa, entre arroz en cáscara o entre la cáscara sola, (que es como salvados), se empollan: que entonces, aun cuando saltan (que al instante que

parts. There they make a hole more than four *palmos* in depth. They lay their eggs and cover them with sand. Heated by the rays of the sun, these come to life and hatch.

These natives say that the mother usually stays in a tree nearby, as a sentinel awaiting until the chicks hatch. When they hatch they emerge by scratching the sand above them with their feet until they find themselves on top of the ground where they seemed rather buried than born. Their good fortune is to emerge successfully from the shell in the position of being on their backs. If they are born in the opposite posture, since they dig downwards, the more they penetrate, the farther they are buried and it is impossible for them to see the light. As a result, there are many of them that do not succeed in emergence, and especially those who do not come up because of the zeal with which the natives look for them. They recognize the spot of the nest because of the softness of the sand.

These eggs when fresh, taste also like hen eggs; one is worth more than three hen eggs. For the most part, they contain a yolk; there is very little white (a necessary arrangement for their sustenance under the ground so that they have strength to dig out and emerge from it, because this yolk serves them as nourishment both while they are in the shell as well as out of it. Although the eggs are good and delicious, they are difficult to digest and are not for all stomachs. Moreover, the chicks which are found in them are much better when they have already acquired feathers.

I have eaten them various times and certainly they are as plump, tender and flavorful as squabs. They must be roasted, when eaten and the amount of fat they have serves as lard and they are incomparably better than when fried.

The fattiness of the chicks lasts for the time that they are in the shell. When they emerge from it and begin trying to find the sunlight, either because of the labor of digging the sand or for the lack of food, because they are now detached from the shell which sustained them, they are tasteless and not even the natives will eat them. They are not so bad, when the eggs are brought into the house and placed in unhulled rice or in the hulls of rice alone. As though freed, they hatch and then, even as they leap out,

se ven libres, caminan velocísimamente) se pueden comer con algún sabor aunque no tanto como cuando estaban parte dentro aun del huevo. Y por esto dice un refrán de estos naturales *macapira an tambuc sa tabon*, que quiere decir “que la gordura del *tabon* es instánea y muy breve”, que confronta con aquello del Espíritu Santo: *gaudium hypocritae instar puncti*², como con todas las cosas que carecen de fundamento sólido y de substancia consistente.

También de los mal casados tienen en este pájaro otro refrán que dice: “que los casados, que viven divididos, son como estos pájaros *tabon*, que el macho no sabe si tiene o no hijos, y sola la hembra está en la rama del árbol más cercano, esperando [a] que salgan para cuidar de su vida y sustento, ya que no cuidó de dárseles con su calor.” Y finalmente, para aquello del Evangelio: *noli tuba canere ante te, etc*³, es muy a propósito otro refrán en que dicen: “que el hombre, en lo bueno que hace, ha de ser como el *tabon*, que lo esconde y encubre muy bien, como cuando pone sus huevos”. Y si esto conocieron en su antigüedad, de donde se quedaron dichos refranes, por esto[s] y otros que hemos dicho, y, en ofreciéndose, diremos, se conoce cuán entendidos eran y aptos para ser instruidos en la fe y sus verdades y misterios, que son la perfección mayor de las potencias del alma.

*Calao*⁴ llaman a otra ave, su tamaño como el del *tabon*, menor algo que una gallina; las plumas de colorado obscuro o pardo claro y blancas; la cabeza grande y su pico mayor. Tienen la voz muy gruesa y que retumba mucho, máxime⁵ al cuarto del alba, que suelen cantar tan temprano como los gallos, y con menos engaño, pues sola [a] aquella hora es cuando cantan, y se responden muchos, (y entre día menos) porque suelen andar a bandadas. Son famosos despertadores y puntualísimos.

Ya dijimos de la simpatía que tienen con los ciervos o venados, pues donde no [se] oye el canto el *calao* (retumba tanto como el bajón), no se crían ciervos ni viven aunque se lleven allá; con que se prueba cuán conformes son en calidades, aunque de diferentes elementos.

at the instant that they see themselves free they run extremely fast, they can be eaten with some relish although not so much as when they were still half in the egg. And so, there is an adage of these natives: *makapira an tabuk sa tabun*, which means to say that "the fat of the *tabun* lasts only for a brief moment" – which compares with that of the Holy Spirit: *Gaudium hypocritae instar puncti*,² as with all things that lack a solid basis and a firm conviction.

Likewise about those unhappily married, there is another saying concerning this bird: that the married who live in discord are like these *tabun* birds. The male does not know whether he has children or not and the female is only on the limb of the nearest tree hoping that they might hatch in order to care for their own life and sustenance, since she did not care to give them this with her warmth. Finally, there is that from the Gospel: *Noli tuba canere ante te, etc.*³ There is another very appropriate saying which states: "Man, in the good he does, must be like the *tabun*, which hides it and conceals it very well when it lays its eggs." If they knew this to be true in their antiquity, from whence have come these sayings, through these and others which we have related and will describe, as the opportunity is afforded, we may realize how wise they were and apt for being instructed in the faith and its truths and mysteries, which we are the great perfection of the powers of the soul.

*Kalaw*⁴ is what they call another bird whose size is like that of the *tabun*, somewhat smaller than a hen; the feathers are dark-red or light brown and white. Its head is large and its beak greater. It has a very harsh cry which resounds *especially*,⁵ in the watch quarter before dawn; they usually sing as early as the roosters and with less deception because that is the only hour when they sing. Many reply to one another but less during the day because they travel in flocks. They are famous awakeners and are very punctual.

We have already spoken about the congeniality they have for the stag or deer, for where the song of the *kalaw* is not heard – it resounds like a drum – the deer do not propagate nor live even if they are brought there. Thus it may be proved how closely their qualities conform, although of different elements.

A los grandes vocingleros y de voz muy hueca llaman *calavun nga tao*, “hombre semejante al calao”; y de ahí lo aplican a los habladores de ventaja.

La cabeza de esta ave, aunque es respecto de su cuerpo muy grande y el pico mayor, es toda de hueso, y sólo el pellejo con alguna plumillas en lo más alto de ella; y por esto, cuando a uno le dan algo que parece mucho y vale poco o nada, dicen y es proverbio suyo: “Hánme dado una cabeza de *calao*”. Y es lo que corresponde a nuestro refrán español: un nonada entre dos platos⁶. Y así otros.

Los papagayos, que parecen aves propias de Indias, son por acá tantos que de ningunas aves hay tantas y tan diferentes especies como hay de ellos en estas Islas. Y aunque no se hallan de los grandes, como los ordinarios de España, que llaman loros⁷, (que acá son menores); pero son muy como ellos en el color, cabeza, pico y otras calidades, y exceden en las varias diferencias. Los que son más en número, y aun casi son plaga, son los que llaman estos indios *abucay*⁸, y los españoles, *papagayos* blancos o catatúas.

Son totalmente blancos y con su copete encima de la cabeza, que les agracia; y sólo de todo el cuerpo tienen bajo de la cola, cerca del albañal común, una mancha de plumas naranjadas, siendo blanquísimas las demás; (que sólo en este color se diferencian de los demás papagayos).

Aprenden a hablar también, si les enseñan, y se amansan mucho; pero son tan perniciosas, en especial para los árboles frutales y sembrados de legumbres, maíz y otros, que se pueden llamar plaga por los muchos daños que hacen. Y estos blancos exceden en ésto a todos los demás de este género.

Tienen la carne negra, comestible, y, cuando están gordos remeda a la de los tordos de España, aunque éstos son mucho mayores.

Son durísimos los cascos de sus cabezas y pican tenacísimamente; y sólo los papagayos entre todas las aves abren la parte superior del pico, porque tienen un encaje encima de él que ni otra

The extreme vociferousness and empty speech they call *kalawun nga tawu*, 'a person resembling the *kalaw*'; from this they apply it to the excessively talkative.

The head of this bird, although very large in proportion to its body and with even a larger bill, is all bone and covered only by skin with some feathers on the very top of it. For this reason, when they give something to someone, that seems like much but is worth little or nothing, they say, and it is a proverb of theirs: "they have given me the head of the *kalaw*". This corresponds to our Spanish adage: "*Una nonada entre dos platos*",⁶ and likewise others.

Parrots, which appear to be birds native to the Indies, are so numerous here that there is no bird more plentiful and of so many species as those in these Islands. However, large ones are not found like the ordinary ones in Spain which they call '*loros*';⁷ here they are smaller. But they are very similar to them in color, head, beak and other characteristics and exceed in the various differences which are very numerous. They are almost like a plague, those which the natives call *abukay*,⁸ and the Spaniards, "*papagayos blancos o catatúas*".

They are completely white with a crest on top of the head, adorning them. On their entire body they have only one spot of orange feathers below the tail, the anus; the rest is all white. Only in this color do they differ from the other birds.

They also learn how to speak, if they are taught, and they are easily tamed. But they are very destructive, especially to the fruit trees, the fields of vegetables, maize and other things. They can be considered a plague because of the great damage they do. These white ones are worse in this regard than all the others of this species.

They have a dark flesh, edible and when they are plumb, they resemble the thrushes of Spain; however, the former are much larger.

The skulls of their heads are very tough and they bite with great force. Only parrots among all the birds, open the upper part of their bills because they have a cavity above it which no other

ave ni animal le tienen, aunque del cocodrilo dicen lo mismo, y así lo reparé yo en él.

*Angag*⁹ o *ingag*, según diversas partes, llaman acá a los papagayos verdes confusamente, aunque en otras con distinción, porque *angag* son los del tamaño y mañas (aunque menos peniciosos) que los blancos, sólo que son totalmente verdes, y sin mezcla alguna de otro color. Y los que llaman *ingag* son algo menores. El color verde claro; las cabezas con bozo colorado, como cardelinas de España, aunque son tres veces mayores que ellas.

Estos son los más hermosos de por acá (quitando los que traen de Terrenate, que son hermosos, de que diremos después) y aprenden muy bien a hablar si les enseñan, y comen todo cuanto hay comestible, cocido o crudo, verde o maduro, y gustan muchísimo de caña dulce, y suelen ser tan mansos que se andan por toda la casa sin huirse, siendo el entretenimiento de toda ella.

Críe yo un tiempo, (por pasatiempo), uno de estos, que salió tan manso y entendido (aunque hablaba poco, porque no tuve flema para enseñarle mucho) que me respondía, en llamándole, como si fuera un muchacho.

Enseñéle a comer en un mismo plato con un perro y con un gato y un mono; y, aunque comían juntos, el papagayo les daba tales picazos que, hasta que estaba satisfecho, no dejaba comer a los otros; que con el miedo que al principio les puse para que no le envistiesen, no se atrevían a corresponderle.

Y no sólo a los de casa, gato o perro, investía, sino a cualquiera que subiese de fuera. Les saltaba encima de la cabeza, y a picazos los hacía volver a bajar, dando muchas veces unas como carcajadas cuando les veía huir; de modo que, si se enseñaran, fueran todos muy hábiles, como lo son los que han sido enseñados.

Cuarta especie es de otros papagayitos muy pequeños (y del cuerpo de los gorriones de España). Son verdes y colorados como los *ingag*, y les llaman en su lengua estos naturales *куси*¹⁰. Son verdaderamente hermosos, pero tan delicados que nunca viven, o raro es el que muchos días, sí se domestican y amansan. Y así

bird or animal has, although they say the same thing about the crocodile and I have observed it in them.

*Angag*⁹ or *ingag*, according to different regions, is what they call here interchangeably the green parrots, although in others they make a distinction because *angag* are of the size and craftiness (although less mischievous) of the white ones, except that they are solidly green and without the mixture of any other color. Those they call *ingag* are somewhat smaller. The color is bright green; the heads with a red fuzz like the linnets of Spain; however, they are three times as large as the latter.

These are most beautiful over here (omitting those brought from Ternate which are pretty, as we shall say later) and they learn to speak very well, if they are taught. They eat anything that is edible, cooked or raw, green or ripe and are extremely fond of sugar cane. They are so tame that they wonder through the whole house without flying away, providing entertainment to all in it.

One time, I raised one of these as a pastime; it became so tame and wise, although he spoke little because I did not have the patience to teach it much. It answered me when I called it as if it were a boy.

I taught it to eat from the same plate as with a dog, a cat and a monkey. And although they ate together, the parrot gave them much fierce pecks that until it was satisfied, it did not let the other eat. At the beginning, I put much fear into them that they did not dare to fight back.

Not only did it attack the household pets, the dog, the cat, but anyone who came up from outside. It used to jump on their heads and by biting them, forced them to descend again, giving out many times a kind of laugh when it saw them fleeing. And so in a way, if they were trained they would all be very helpful as those that have been trained.

A fourth variety is that of very small parrots with a body like the sparrows of Spain. They are green and red like the *ingag* and these natives call them *kusi*.¹⁰ They are truly beautiful, but so delicate that they would not live for more than a few days if they were domesticated and tamed. Hence, there is a proverb among

es proverbio entre ellos, para decir que a vuelta de ojos, se malogra o con mucha facilidad se muere decir, que es como este papagayito que se muere facilísimamente.

Estas cuatro diferencias son las más notables acá, aunque hay muchas más y con diferentes nombres que estos, pero todas se pueden reducir a las cuatro dichas, pues su diferencia es sólo en variar algo el color de las plumas, o el pico, que unos lo tienen colorado, otros blanco y otros casi negros. Y así no me alargo en esta especie.

Solo añadido acá los papagayos que se traen de Terrenate, (que dicen hallarse también en algunas de estas Islas, aunque yo no los he visto naturales de ellas). Son el pecho y vientre colorado, de hermosísimo color; los encuentros de las alas, azules; las plumas, aunque azules las más, y de un turquesado muy hermoso, tienen interpolados otros colores, blanco y amarillo y colorado, con que parecen mejor que pintados. Son muy hábiles y hablan muy bien.

También he visto acá unas que llaman *catatúas*¹¹, género de papagayos blancos, tan grandes como gallinas o poco menos; el pico y lengua negros, y los pies; pero hablan más claro que ninguno de los otros papagayos que yo he oído, y tanto que, sí se oye y no se ve, se duda si es alguna mujer. Suele cantar y llorar y remedar instrumentos y voces, aun de perros, gatos, etc., de modo que son de mucho entretenimiento.

Y, para su calificación, valga lo que sucedió en la isla de *Oton*¹², en el pueblo que llaman de Iloilo, presidio de españoles y donde vive el alcalde mayor, que llaman proveedor. Tenía este una *catatúa* (dijéronme era de una de estas islas, no sé si de Calamianes u otra más al poniente) que andaba suelta, del tamaño y mañas dichas.

Vínose una mañana a la iglesia, que estaba cerca de la casa de su amo, y en lo más alto del coro se estuvo callada. Era día de fiesta solemne y había sermón, que predicaba un Padre de los nuestros (por ser ministerio nuestro el de aquel puesto, como veremos en su lugar).

these which states that when one is quickly or easily discouraged or dies, such is like this bird which dies readily.

These four varieties are the most notable here; although there are more and with different names than these. But all can be reduced to these four, since their difference is only in their plumage or their beak varies somewhat in color. With some it is red, others white and still others almost black. And so, I shall not dwell further upon this species.

I shall only add here, the parrots that they bring from Ternate, which they say are also found on some of these islands, although I have not considered them as native to them. The breast and throat are of a most pretty red color; the wings, where they join the body, are blue. The plumage, although most are blue and of a very beautiful turquoise, have other colors: white, yellow and red, intermingled so that they appear better than painted. They are very clever and speak very well.

Also, I have seen some here which they call *cacatúa*,¹¹ a species of a white parrot as large as chickens or a little smaller. Their beak and tongue are black as well as their feet, but they speak more clearly than any of the other parrots which I have heard. This is so much, so that if one is heard and not seen, one wonders if it is a woman. It can sing, cry and imitate musical instruments and voices, even dogs, cats, etc., so that they are a source of great amusement.

So to be more specific, it is worthwhile to relate what happened on the Island of *Oton*,¹² in the town called Iloilo, a Spanish garrison where the *alcalde mayor* resides, called provider. The latter had a *cacatúa* (he told me that it was from one of these islands; I do not know whether one of the *Calamianes* or more to the east) and it wandered about, free of the size and cunning as stated.

It came one morning to the church, which was near the house of its master, and it hid itself in the loftiest part of the choir. It was a solemn feast day and there was a sermon that was being preached by one of our Fathers, for he was our minister at that post, as we shall see in its proper place.

Estando, pues, en lo más ruidoso y engolfado del sermón, con muchas voces, etc., las interrumpió la *catatúa*, remedando tan vivamente al predicador (era este muy pequeño de cuerpo, sardo de nación¹³, aunque hombre docto y santo) que al principio causó espanto, hasta que reparan lo que era, convirtiéndolo todo en risa.

Juzgaron algunos que había sido cosa echadiza y adrede; pero, según las circunstancias y lo que yo oí, (que llegué pocos días después de este caso a aquel lugar), no fue sino un acaso notable y no prevenido, aunque obligó, para prevenirlo, en adelante. De lo cual se colige la habilidad y verbosidad de estas aves parleras.

Vengamos a otras aves notables. Y sea, entre otras, una que por lo pequeña es rara y extraordinaria. Es su tamaño menor que el de un dedo; sus plumas algo pintadas. La hechura remeda algo a los ruiseñores de España, pero es mucho menor.

Hále [*Héla* in text] dado la naturaleza tal instinto para hacer su nidillo y guardar sus huevecillos que por solo esto es admirable. Busca para el efecto una varilla muy pequeña y delgada que sobresalga de cualquiera árbol o matorral, incapaz de poder sustentar a otra ave o animal. En ella hace en el mismo remate, o punta, un nidito como un huevo de gallina en forma, figura y tamaño, que deja allí pendiente. Deja en medio un agujerito suficiente para entrar y salir, quedando lo demás tan tupido que ni el agua de la lluvia lo puede calar.

Dentro pone dos o tres huevecillos (hélo visto algunas veces) como las menores endrinas de España en el color y tamaño, que aviva y saca a luz; pero es tan delicado este pajarito que con cualquiera olor, bueno ó malo, que sea excesivo, se muere, y con cualquiera otra calidad de frío o calor extraordinaria.

No saben que coma cosa alguna, sino que chupa como abeja las florecillas, sustentándose de aquel licor dulce que se halla en ellas. No canta de modo que se pueda oír: sólo al tiempo de criar

While he was at the loudest and absorbing portion of the sermon, with much shouting, etc., the *cacatúa* interrupted him, imitating the preacher in such a lively manner, the latter was very slight of built, from Sardinia,¹³ although a very learned and saintly person, that at first it caused fright, until they discovered what it was, and everyone broke into laughter.

Some judged that it was purposely and knowingly done, but by reason of the circumstances and what I heard about it when I arrived in the place a few days after the event, it was nothing but a remarkable incident and not planned ahead. All in all, the owner was obliged not to let it happen again. From this one can gather the skill and loquaciousness of these talking birds.

We come to other notable birds and possibly among others, one which is small, rare and extraordinary. Its size is less than one finger; its plumage as if painted. Its shape resembles somewhat the nightingales of Spain, but it is much smaller.

Nature has endowed it with such an instinct for building its little nest and guarding its little eggs that for this alone it is admirable. For the purpose it seeks out a little twig, very small and thin, which may be protruding from some tree or other object incapable of being able to sustain another bird or animal. On this it builds, at the very tip or point, a little nest like the egg of a hen in shape and size. It is left hanging there and in the middle a little hole large enough for it to go in and out. The rest is so closely woven that not even water from the rain can penetrate.

Inside it places two or three tiny eggs – I have seen it sometimes – like the small fruit of the sloe plums of Spain in color and size, which comes to life and encounters the light. But this little bird is so delicate that with any kind of odor, good or bad, that may be excessive, it dies; similarly with any kind of extreme cold or heat.

They do not know whether it eats anything but rather it draws in from the little flowers, like a bee, sustaining itself from that sweet liquor which is found in them. It does not sing in a manner that can be heard; only at the time of breeding it warbles

gorgea algo, pero muy quedito, de modo que en todo parece más sombra que pájaro verdadero.

Sivit llaman en Ibabao; y en otras partes *tamsi*¹⁴, que por la duda, si lo es, por ser tan pequeño, le llaman con el nombre genérico que *tamsi* significa pájaro. No se vé en tiempo de aguas ni vientos ni se sabe donde se recoge; sólo en el de secas y templado, que es cuando cría.

Otros pajarillos, algo mayores que estos y en todo semejantes a los ruiseñores de España, se hallan acá, que en el color, pico y talle y todo lo demás se les semeja[n] mucho. Canta también y con voz mayor diez veces que sus cuerpos; y se puede decir de ellos el *totus vox*¹⁵, etc. Remedan algo a los ruiseñorers de allá, pero no llegan de mucho a aquella dulzura, gorjeos y quiebras que aquellos, aunque parecen de la misma especie. Y estos, aunque comen mosquitos y moscas, se sustentan también del rocío, o licor dicho, que buscan en las flores de los árboles, y otras matas o plantas que las dan por acá y también, como los ruiseñores, se ven poco sino al tiempo de la cría.

Dejo otros muchos pajarillos muy pequeños y de varios colores, todos distintos de los de por allá. Tampoco trato de las oropéndulas, que acá son muy hermosas. Añado sólo, por lo raro, a otro pájaro que en todo se semeja al que llaman en Valencia *putput*, y en Castilla *abubilla*. Llámamla acá los indios *palalaca*¹⁶ y los españoles el “herrero” o “pico de hierro,” porque con él agujerea los troncos de los árboles bien grandes, abriendo en ellos, como se pudiera con un escoplo muy amolado, capaz agujero para vivir y hacer sus nidos. Y es con tan grande ruido que se oye de muy lejos, o ya sea que los árboles (que comúnmente son muy altos y grandes) por lo hueco retumban, o ya por la fuerza con que los hieren; aunque yo me inclino más a lo primero, porque es cierto que ningún hombre con su escoplo y *ma[c]jeta* hiciera tanto ruido como hacen estos pájaros. Y así es refrán entre estos indios, cuando se hace grande ruido, decir que “parece[n] a este pájaro *palalaca* cuando da con el pico.”

a little but very quietly, so that altogether it seems more a spirit than a real bird.

In *Ibabaw* they are called *siwit*; in other regions *tamsi*,¹⁴ for there is a doubt as to what it is; since it is so small they call it by the generic name, for *tamsi* means bird. It is not seen during the rainy season or winds; neither is it known where they gather; they propagate only when it is dry and temperate [weather].

Other birds, somewhat larger than these and all similar to the nightingales of Spain which are here, are very similar in color, beak, size. They also sing and with a voice which is ten times greater than its body; we may say of them as the *totus vox*,¹⁵ etc. They imitate somewhat the nightingales from there, but they do not care for sweetness, chirpings, and fast musical changes, although they appear to be of the same species. These, however, eat mosquitoes, flies and sustain themselves of the dew, or the said liqueur, that they find in the flowers of the trees, or other branches or plants that distill them here and also like the nightingales, they are seen little except during the time of breeding.

I omit many other birds, very small and of various colors, all different from those over there [i.e. in Spain]. Nor will we treat about the *golden oriole*, which over here are very beautiful. I add only, because it is rare, another bird which in everything is similar to that which is called in Valencia '*putput*', and in Castillian *abubilla*: *hoopoe*. The natives here call them *palalaka*¹⁶ and the Spaniards "*herrero*": "smith" or "*pico de hierro*": "*iron beak*", because it bores with its beak holes into the trunks of very large trees, opening in them, as it were with a very sharp chisel, holes sufficiently large for them to live in and make their nests. It is done with such great noise that it can be heard at a long distance; whether it is due to the trees (which are commonly very tall and larger), because they are hollow and resound or due to the force with which they strike them. I am inclined to the first reason, because it is certain that no individual with his chisel and hammer could make such a noise as these birds do. And so, it is a saying among these natives when a great noise is made, to say that "they resemble this *palalaka* bird when it is striking with its beak".

Lo cierto es que es señal de su mucha dureza, pues puede con tanta facilidad abrir los palos verdes o secos, y a veces en un mis[mo] tronco se hallarán diez y doce o más agujeros; porque, según parece, cada año hace el suyo para hacer su nido.

Tiene el cuello casi sin plumas, pero la cabeza colorada, con su flueco de plumas que imitan a un bien hecho copete, o a las crestas de los gallos; y, cuando alguno, sin ser valiente (que a estos se les permite, como dijimos ya) se pone paño colorado o *pudung* en la cabeza, le dicen que es como este pájaro *palalaca*.

Segunda especie de estos es el que llaman *tacduduriu*¹⁷ o *iling*¹⁸ en todo semejante al otro, si no en el tamaño del cuerpo, que es menor; y las plumas, aunque pintadas o varias, no de tantos colores como el otro mayor. Hace los agujeros de la misma manera y con igual ruido, con que los que no los conocen los confunden; pero realmente son muy distintos.

Digamos, por conclusión de este Capítulo, algo de las aves que llaman “del paraíso,” y de otras que llaman *salangan*.¹⁹ Estas son pequeñas a modo de golondrinas. Crían cerca de la orilla del mar, en cuevas o vacíos de peñascos. Háylas en el cabo del Espíritu Santo, en una concavidad grandísima que hacen allí las peñas, y, por ser muy profundas y de peña tajada, no se atreven a bajar allí los indios, por no tener avideros, con que al subir o bajar, agarrarse.

Los nidos son comestibles, y muy sustanciales. Hélos comido yo por probar, y saben a sopas de buen pan de trigo, y se ablandan mucho. Son cálidos y por esta causa los usan comer algunos viejos por la flaqueza del estómago. Háylas en las islas de Calamianes en mucha abundancia y son de mucha estima según dicen, en la Gran China, porque usan, o abusan, de ellos para avivar la lujuria.

La materia de estos nidos no se sabe qué sea. Téngolo por cosa sacada o cogida cerca de la mar, porque al tacto parecen un poco de trapo basto, o de corteza de árbol, estoposa, de color pardisco, pero, estofados en el caldo, crecen mucho y se ablandan tanto y más que un migajón de pan; y, aunque el sabor de suyo no es malo

It is certain that this is a sign of their great strength, for it can with equal facility, open up green logs or dry ones. At times in the same trunk ten or twelve or more holes will be found, because each year, apparently, it makes its own in order to build its nest.

It almost has no feathers on the neck, but the head is red with its tuft of feathers which resemble a well-formed crest or the comb of the roosters. When someone who is not brave, for this is permitted them, as we have already stated places a red cloth or *pudung* on his head, they say that he is like this *palalaka* bird.

The second species of these is one called *takduduru*¹⁷ or *iling*¹⁸ in every way it is similar to the other except in the size of the body, which is smaller, and the feathers, although colored or variegated, do not have as many colors as the larger ones. It makes holes in the same manner and with equal noise so that those who do not know them confuse the two, but in reality they are distinct.

As a conclusion to this chapter, we shall say something about the birds which are called of 'paradise,' and others which are called *salamgan*.¹⁹ These are small in the manner of swallows. They propagate near the shore of the sea in caves or holes in large crags. They are found in *Cabo del Espiritu Santo* in a huge cavern which the rocks form there. And because it is very deep and of jagged rocks, the natives do not dare to go down in there, since they do not have the means for holding on in descending and ascending.

The nests are edible and very nutritious; I have eaten them to try them and they taste like good wheat bread and broken up for soup they become very soft. They are hot and for this reason they offer them to elderly people because of their weak stomach. They are found in the Calamianes Islands in great abundance and are greatly esteemed, they say, in *Gran China*, because they use or abuse them to excite the lust.

It is not known of what material these nests are made. I consider them as a substance taken out of, or gathered near the sea because to the touch it seems like a bit of rough cloth or the filacious bark of trees. The nests are colored gray, and when boiled in a pot they swell greatly and become softer as much or more than

ni bueno, con los ingredientes y especies con que se adereza el caldo, parecen a unas buenas sopas de buen pan, como dije. Los indios no hacen caso de ellos, y, si los buscan, es por el precio con que los compran los españoles o los *sangleyes*.

Del ave del paraíso se dice comúnmente que no tiene pies. Y es engaño, porque los tiene, aunque muy pequeñitos y que parece le servirán poco o nada. Hélas visto yo con ellos.

Tráense acá del Maluco, y aun dicen que tal vez llegan a la isla de Mindanao (que, por la punta de San Agustín,²⁰ que nosotros llamamos, está no muy lejos del Maluco, y confina con lo que es de Bisayas, continuo con la costa de Caraga).

Su comida nadie la sabe. Sin duda serán mosquitos u otras musarañas del aire de que viven muchas aves.

El lugar donde anidan es las espaldas del macho, poniendo sobre ellas la hembra sus huevecillos. Y para el efecto, dicen tiene un hoyito al propósito y allí se avivan hasta que vuelan. Y, aunque dicen de ellas que nunca se asientan ni hacen pie, estoy informado de testigos de vista que es verdad que jamás se ven [en] el suelo, (como en España sucede a los vencejos, porque no se pueden levantar por la cortedad de sus piernas, que no dejan batir las alas); pero sí en árboles altos, porque dejándose caer, toman aire para volar.

El color de los que por acá vemos es pardo por las espaldas; el pecho algo amarillo y blanquizco; la cola de los mismos colores, muy larga, algo encarrujadas las plumas, y como una hermosa garzota con que sirven enteros para adorno de un altar y para plumeros, juntando algunos que imitan a las plumas del avestruz, y aun son más delicadas.

También se hallan acá las plumas de que se hacen en España los martinets, que son de unas aves que acá llaman *talabong*²¹, y son muy blancas como las garzas blancas de España y de la misma figura, si ya no son de la misma especie.

a large piece of bread. Although the taste is not good or bad in itself with the ingredients and spices with which the soup is flavored, it resembles a fine soup of good bread, as I said. The natives have no use for the nests and if they search for them it is for the price at which the Spaniards or the *Sanglay* buy them.

About the bird of paradise, they say everywhere that it has no feet; it is an error because it does have them, although they are small and it seems, are of little or no use to it.

I have seen them among the birds coming here from Malucco; they even say that perhaps they came to the island of Mindanao, by way of the *Punta de San Agustin*,²⁰ as we call it. This is not far from Malucco and borders upon the territory of the Bisayas adjoining the coast of Caraga.

No one knows what these birds eat. Undoubtedly it may be mosquitoes or other insects of the air on which many birds live.

The place where they nest is the back of the male where the female lays her little eggs for this reason they say that it has a little depression and there they are raised until they fly. Although they say that these birds never perch or stand, I am informed by eyewitnesses that it is true that they are never seen on the ground, as what happened in Spain in the case of the swifts. For they cannot rise due to the shortness of their legs which does not permit them to flap their wings. But on tall trees, by letting themselves fall, they plunge into the air in order to fly.

The color of these that we see here is gray at the shoulders; the breast, somewhat yellow and whitish. The very long tail of the same colors and the feathers a bit curled; it is like a beautiful heron plumage used entirely for the adornment of an altar and for feather dusters when joined together. They resemble the plumage of the ostrich and are even more delicate.

There are also over here the plumage like those from which *martinetas* are made in Spain. There are some birds over here called *talabung*;²¹ they are very white like the white herons of Spain and of the same shape, if indeed they are not of the same species.

Estas garzas andan en estas islas de bisayas, (por particular providencia), a manadas, siguiendo de día las vacas que por acá tenemos, que no son muchas, y les son de mucha importancia porque las limpian, quitándoles las garrapatas o reznos, que con los calores se crían por acá en estos [sic] animales con abundancia; que de otra manera se murieran, (como sucede, a las veces, a las terneras) si no tuvieran este beneficio. Y así no sólo no las ahuyentan las vacas, sino que se paran, dejándolas estar sobre sus espaldas y cabezas y picar todo el cuerpo, reconociendo el beneficio que de ellas reciben.

Otro género de garzas negras (dejando las pardas) hay que crían martinete, y, a mi parecer, más fino que el de las blancas. A estas llaman *casili*²², que quiere decir anguila en esta lengua. Y verdaderamente son aves en el aire y anguilas en el agua, porque nadan como ellas y siguen por dentro del agua a los pececillos y otros animalejos de que se sustentan, estando muy grandes ratos sumergidas. Y salen después tan enjutas como antes que entrasen; y, si tal vez por estar mucho tiempo bajo del agua, se les humedecen las alas, al salir se ponen sobre un árbol y las tienden al sol, estándose un buen rato con ellas tendidas en cruz, hasta que las enjugan, como lo vemos por acá muy ordinariamente, causando no menos admiración su ligero volar que su nadar, y la industria, tan a propósito, de enjugarse las alas.

These tamed herons wander in these Bisayan Islands for a providential reason following the cattle which we have here by day. There are not many of these; the birds are of great importance because they clean the cattle, taking off the ticks and lice which the heat here causes to grow in great abundance on these animals. Otherwise they would die, as often happens to the calves, if they did not have this help. Therefore, not only do the cattle not drive them off, but they stand still, letting them sit on their backs and heads and pick over their whole body realizing the benefit that they receive from them.

There is another kind of black heron (I omit the gray ones) which grow a crest and in my opinion, much finer than that of the white variety. They call these *kasili*,²² which means to say eel in this language. Truly, these are birds in the air and like eels in the water, because they swim like the latter and dive under the water for little fish and other small creatures by which they sustain themselves, remaining submerged for long periods of time. They emerge finally as dry as before they went under. If by chance, because of being under the water for a long time, their wings become wet, on coming out they perch on top of a tree and extend them towards the sun, remaining for a long while with their wings extended like a cross until they are dry, as we witness here very often. Their swift flying causes no less admiration than their swimming, and the casual effort in drying their wings. □

Chapter 24

ANNOTATIONS

[1] *Tabon. Tabun.* A bird which does not have a tail. It lay eggs which are as large at those of the crocodiles and a little smaller than that of a hen. It lays its eggs during the *vendaval* season; it sets them about one *vara* in the ground and primarily on uninhabited seashores. "They say all are females, without male and that from a branch it hatches the eggs".

Tabunan, the place where the eggs are hidden and hatching. Also, *tabunal*. Sánchez, *op. cit.*

Tramp give us a more detailed entry: megapode, *megapodidae sp.*, a mound-building, extremely large-footed bird. Also, to close; to conceal in the ground; to cover; to cover entirely; to hide. *Op. cit.*, p. 414.

Tabun: "to cover, to hide what is hidden." – s. A bird about the size of a regular hen; brownish or ashen plumage with some streaks.

The dedicated Fr. Felix de la Encarnación writes in his excellent *Diccionario Cebuano*: "When the time arrives for laying eggs the *tabon*, with natural instinct, searches for deserted places. Sometimes it searches out beaches populated with these and hides them in the soft sand. They do this by digging out a hole of two or three *varas* in depth and then deposit or lay the eggs there. When it is finished, it covers the hole with the eggs with its wings and abandons it all permanently.

The warmth of the sun and the earth hatches the eggs; when the hatchlings crack and break through the shell, they break out of the prison where nature has placed them. They struggle hard to release themselves from where the mother has placed them. They surface above ground and begin their life on their own with the hope of finding in the open air the means of survival.

"Eventually, and at an opportune time, these too will repeat the process of nature and do the same. The manner and the way in which these birds penetrate the hard soil is almost a mystery and hard to understand. It is a particular ability which the Creator had given them. The eggs usually hidden at such a depth, and are set there so quickly, come to about fifty, a hundred or even more. This so much so, that it is unknown whether these are from a single bird or from many. Their eggs are larger than those of turkeys or geese and not as delicious as those of the hens. Its shell is not white but a kind of reddish brown in color." De la Rosa-Alcazar [1914], *op. cit.*, pp. 322-323.

[2] *Gaudium hipocritae instar puncti.* The happiness of a hypocrite lies on a point.

[3] *Noli tuba canere ante te, etc.* Do not blow the trumpet before you.

[4] *Calao. Kalaw.* A rufous or writhed-bill hornbill – *bucerotidae sp.*; tarictic hornbill, *Penelopides panini samarensis*. Tramp, *op. cit.*, p. 81.

“*Kalaw*: A large bird in a kind of dark, reddish color; also it has a large beak and a very loud shriek or cry. It is edible.” De la Rosa-Alcazar [1914], *op. cit.*, p. 78.

A parrot with a large beak and an enormous shriek: they go together and when they sing, they make a lot of noise. *Kalawun ng tawu*, a man of big hollow voice and very talkative. *Babaun, balanghagun*, loud voice and talkative, who talks much and loud, with little consideration for others. Sánchez [1711], *op. cit.*

[5] *Máxime.* Spanish word from Latin meaning – greatly, largely, at most.

[6] *Una nonada entre dos platos.* A Spanish proverb, meaning – nothing of great importance.

[7] *Loro.* A Spanish word for parrot.

[8] *Abucay. Abukay.* A parrot similar to the *papagayo* but white in color “and they go together. They can consume very quickly a planted field of rice or corn.” *Ginabukay an atun uma; anibun ta na an hinugkay kun diri pagabukayun.* Sánchez [1711], *op. cit.*

Again Tramp is more detailed and descriptive – *abukay*: Philippine cockatoo; a white parrot, *kakatoo haematutopygia*. *Op. cit.*, p. 3.

“*Abukay: Catatúa.* A bird that has a beautiful and a showy crest which unfurls when irritated. It is of a white color and is edible.” De la Rosa-Alcazar [1914], *op. cit.*, p. 6.

[9] *Angag.* A certain bird like the *abukay*, which eats bananas. *Ginangag or ginkarangag an akun saging.* Sánchez [1711], *op. cit.*

“*Angag*: A bird which is white in color.” De la Rosa-Alcazar [1914], *op. cit.*, p. 17.

[10] *Cusi. Kusi.* A bird with the appearance of the green *papagayo* which is very delicate, “when it is taken, due to any little things it dies soon, like if it is salty things or smells something strange. It loves the tuba and steals it even from the palms.” *Daw nalingyu lamang dayun sin kamatay. Pananglitan*, it is said of those unlucky and who die soon or suddenly. *Daw minira, daw namira nga kusi*; about the shortness of our life. *Madali mamatay kun pagbuhubuhun. Baga binulag nga kusi, бага miniribir nga kusi, бага linmingi nga kusi.* *Ibid.*

Tramp gives these added details – *kusi*: *Guaiabero, bolpopsittacus lululatus intermedius*; Mindanao lorikeet; Philippine hanging or *kulasisi* parakeet, *Loriculus philippinensis* (Worcester): a kind of small bird having green feathers and a red bill resembling a parrot. As a v. to destroy; to tear off; to tear clothes or paper. *Op. cit.*, p. 120.

[11] *Cacatúa*. A Spanish word for cockatoo.

[12] *Otón*. This is a *pueblo* on the Bisayan Island of Panay which measures about 4,448 square miles and which belongs to the Western Bisayan Region. The Western Bisayans comprise the provinces of Iloilo, Capiz, Aklan, Antique and Negros Oriental. In ancient manuscripts and histories the Island is frequently referred to as Oton.

[13] *Sardo de nación*: A Sardinian.

[14] *Tamsi*. In Samar it is a general term for all birds, like the *lamgam*; particularly it is a little bird, very small; it builds the nest like an egg; it hangs it as a cocoon, although it is made of little hay. *Lamgam*: generally speaking 'a bird': *kalamgaman*, place for birds, multitude. *Diri lamgamun nga tuud ini nga banwa*, the land is not abundant in birds. *Lamgam* in Samar and Leyte Ibabao it is called the *gatu*, *ika*. Sánchez, alphabetically under *tamsi* and under *lamgam*, *op. cit.*

According to Tramp – *tamsi*: plain-throated sunbird, *anthreptes malacensis griseigularis*; yellow-breasted or olive-backed sunbird, *Nectarina j. Jugularis*; general term for bird. *Op. cit.*, p. 425.

"*Tamsi*: bird, an oviparous bird belonging to a class of vertebrates that have a greater part of the body covered with feathers; the beak is hard, two feet and two wings, used logically to fly. De la Rosa-Alcazar [1914], *op. cit.*, p. 340.

[15] *Totux Vox*. A Latin phrase meaning "all voice".

[16] *Palalaca*. Unable to find a word with this spelling in Sánchez. Tramp has a word similar to it under the entry – *palalatuk*: woodpecker; brown shrike, *Lanius cristatus lucionensis*; Philippine black-headed or Schach shrike, *Lanius schach nasutus*. *Op. cit.*, p. 324.

[17] *Tacdudurice*. "A bird thus called." De la Rosa-Alcazar [1914], *op. cit.*, p. 324. A dwarf, according to Tramp, *Ibid.*, p. 415.

[18] *Iling*. A certain bird, like the thrush or a blackbird. *Baga na ka salid nga iling*, "de los inquietos y muy desasosegados. *Kay ba mahalaguk an iling, di hamumutang sa lunang*. Sanchez [1711], *op. cit.*

According to Tramp – *iling*: a black-backed coledo, *Sarcops calvus melanotus*. *Op. cit.*, p. 206.

"A black bird with a bald head." De la Rosa-Alcazar [1914], *op. cit.*, p. 167.

[19] *Salangan*. Unable to locate the word anywhere. The *Muñoz Ms* has it as *salamngan*; while the *Copia Naval ms* has it as *salangan*; under neither spelling could one find the word and its meaning.

[20] *Punta de San Agustin*. Situated on the southeastern tip of Davao Oriental Province on the Island of Mindanao.

[21] *Talabong*. A white heron; a bird. *Bagha talabung na, kun magpapa-naptun na sin puti ngatanan*. Sanchez, *op. cit.* Tramp's added details run thus: little egret, *Egretta g. Garzetta*; cattle egret, *bubulcus ibis coromandus*. Carabao *bubulcus ibis*; snowy egret, *regretta garzetta nigripes*; heron; white heron. *Op. cit.*, p. 421.

Should read – *Talabung*: “A white bird of the wading class and of the heron species. It is said among the Bisayans that no one was yet able to find or discover their nests. Rarely are they ever seen alone but always in flocks and travel thus. They frequently gather in the fields where the Bisayans are preparing the soil for planting; also on beaches and primarily on shores that are dry and where the tides recede.

The Bisayans believe and say that these birds do not lay eggs, something which is not credible; however the truth is that up to now, their eggs have not been discovered [i.e. in 1914].” De la Rosa-Alcazar [1914], *op. cit.*, p. 333.

[22] *Casili. Kasili*: An eel; lamprey, according to Tramp, *ibid.* Sánchez simply gives the entry as an *anguila* or eel. *Daw kabuhian nga kasili*, said of those who miss the chance and fades away, slips in between the fingers like the eel. *Op. cit.*

A fresh-water snake. De la Rosa-Alcazar [1914], *op. cit.*, p. 88.