

## EXPLORING HILLS NEAR CHANTABUN AND KRAT.

BY A. KERR, HAYES (KENT, ENGLAND.)

Kao Soi Dao (and Kao Nam Koi).

In the last number of the Supplement Mr. J. J. Macbeth states that local reports of difficulties have frustrated all attempts, including my own, to explore Kao Soi Dao. This statement hardly accords with the facts. The mountain was visited in February 1882 by H. J. Murton, who collected some plants there. Later survey parties visited the mountain and cleared the top. The evidence of this clearing can still be seen. In December 1924 I myself spent some days on it and found no difficulty either in getting to the base or in reaching the top of Soi Dao, and also of a close-by peak called Kao Nam Kio. Some account of this trip will be found in 'The Record,' No. 19, 1926. The base of the mountain is, or was, not difficult of access, for it lies not far from the old main track from Chantabun to Pailin. On this account it is quite likely that the mountain has had other visitors, who have left no record of their visit. Near its base is a Chawng village, Ban Tap Sai, where I found the headman and inhabitants most kindly and helpful. The village has a comparatively large, well-built wat, where one can stay in comfort.

The mountain has its guardian spirit, which the Chawng do not regard as particularly malevolent, provided it is treated with proper respect. The real malignant spirit of this, as so many other places in Thailand, is malaria.

Kao Soi Dao is probably not very good ground for the zoological collector. All the lower slopes, at least on the east side, are covered with thick secondary growth of coarse grasses and the eupatorium weed. An evergreen forest begins beyond this and continues unbroken to the top. It is in this evergreen that plantations of cardamoms are made, for which purpose only the undergrowth is cleared, the trees being left standing.

Hills, East of Krat,

Mr. Macbeth's note about the extension of Malayan butterflies to Kao Sabap is interesting, and is supported by the evidence of the flora, the Malayan element of which extends much further

north on the east than on the west side of the Gulf. To get further evidence on this point I would suggest a visit to the range of hills lying to the east of Krat, on the Thailand-Cambodia boundary. These hills though only reaching about the height of Kao Sabap, are of a different flora. There are some delightful camping places in these hills. I have particularly in mind one spot, a patch of savannah by a rocky stream which flows through an extensive plateau at about 2,000 feet.

To reach this place one strikes eastward from Krat, reaching in a day's march the village of Ta Tum (ตาดุ่ม), where a guide to the hills may be obtained. From Ta Tum another day's march brings one to the foot of the hills, at a spot known as Tap Mamuang, from which the plateau can be reached in three or four hours. If higher altitudes are desired, another day and a half will take one to Kao Kuap (เขากว), a peak of about 3,500 feet.