

Interesting Places

Shooting the Rapids

By ELISA MARQUEZ

"Are you ready to shoot the rapids this morning?" asked our kind hostess.

As we had already put on our bath robes and taken our broad-brimmed hats to protect us from the sun's rays, we merrily went to the shore. There the expert boatmen were waiting for us in their bancas. Only two of us could ride in one banca for every vessel had to be manned by two men.

The ride to Pagsanjan Falls started. The oars of the boatmen whizzed thru the waters. Everyone was eager to reach the famous falls.

"There," warned the boatman. "Keep your hands away from the sides of the boat. We shall begin to shoot the rapids."

"I thought that the end of the ride had come. Big boulders were before us and the strong current seemed to push our light craft back. I could see the boatmen double their strength to make the boat pass thru the bubbling water and between the big rocks.



Did I feel nervous? Surely, I did, but then the lofty mountains on both sides of the stream held me spellbound. What lovely flowers grew on the wild grass! How interesting the varicolored dragon flies and birds were! With my whole attention focused on these lovely works of Nature, we passed thru the rapids not without that feeling of great excitement and awe.

"But, hush! Do you hear that noise?" I asked my companion who was craning her neck to see a cute bird just alighting on a thick bush.

"What can it be?" she asked me in reply.

"We are nearing the falls," explained the two boatmen in unison.

After several minutes more of constant rowing, we reached our goal. Magnificent! I was speechless for a moment. How great it is to see the mighty volume of water rushing down the high mountain!

People say that the ride to the falls is quite dangerous, but I assure you that the wonderful scene is something that you cannot forget.