The "HIGHEST" Observatory *in the* PHILIPPINES

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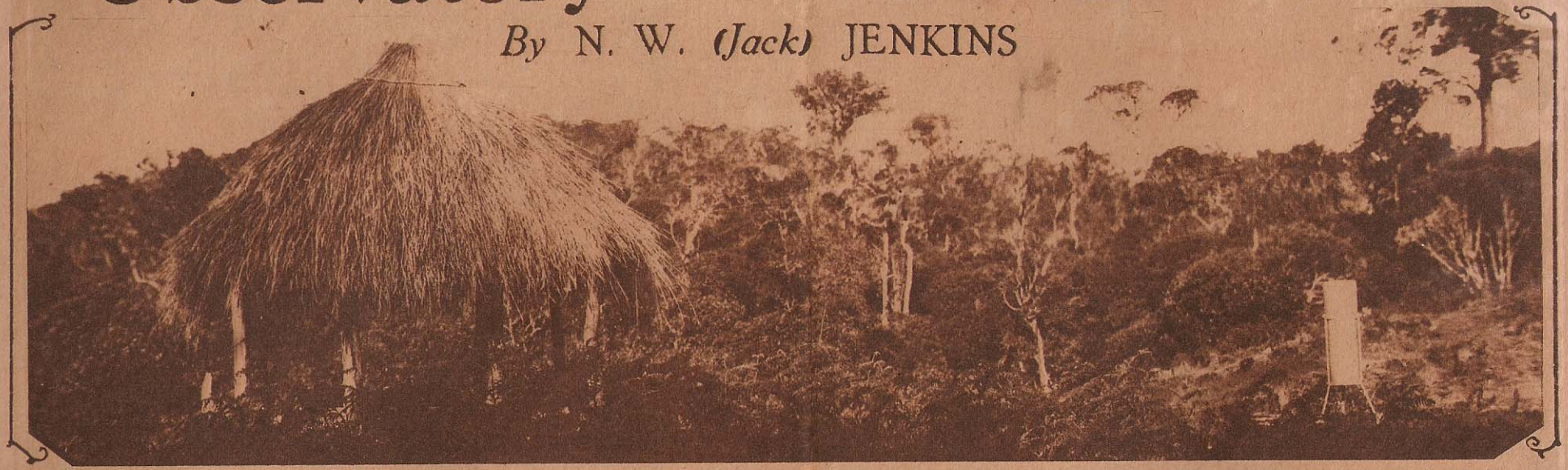

The small grass thatched shelter at the left is the Mount Paoay headquarters of the Philippine weather service. The maximum thermometer that shows the point of greatest heat during the twenty-four hours and the minimum thermometer that records the lowest degree of cold registered during the night are found here. At the right is the raingauge, simple but ingenious recorder of rainfall.

MILT GROSS, author of Nize Baby and other Gross exaggerations, was a mere newspaper man before he became famous. As he became famous he acquired one honor after another and prized each accordingly. Finally he was honored with a banquet attended by Jimmie Walker and all the really great.

The toastmaster introduced Mr. Gross, listing his many accomplishments, civic, social, literary. When his laudatory introduction ended Mr. Gross sprang to his feet.

"I am also a justice of the peace," he declared.

Recently the *Tribune*, announcing this series of articles, honored me with mention of my journalistic and literary career. It was remarkably laudatory. Well....

I am also a Weather Observer!

It is quite possible to understand the enthusiasm of Milt Gross for what —conceit would perhaps be the better word.

Why not? When in pursuance of my duties I crawl out of bed in that "darkest hour just before the dawn." I am one of an army of men with the same animating purpose.

At Mirador, world-famous Baguio observatory, men celebrated in the scientific circle to the outer rim of which I cling are recording their observations the same as I. Their instruments, vastly more complex, are not more accurate than mine. And mine possess the distinction of greater altitude, for they are the highest in the archipelago.

From Outlook, just behind me, I look down almost four thousand feet to where in the dim dawn of day Baguio is waking to life. Still southward, another four thousand feet down, is Manila and the Observatory where Father Jose Algue gave a life of tireless devotion to the service of science.

The stars fade. The moon is at the zenith. The first rays of the

strument back to this morning's temperature, which the ordinary thermometer tells me is 7.4. The minimum thermometer is to be read at 2:00 p. m., but I glance at it to know the lowest degree of cold registered during the night and find that it was 6.1.

Outside the shelter again I visit the raingauge, simple but ingenious recorder of rainfall. It has a thin film of water at the bottom of the cylinder, not enough to record except with the more delicate instruments of the large observatories. I pour out the few drops to leave the gauge in readiness for a rainfall which is not likely to occur at this season of the year.

A walk down the hill into the depression back to the instrument shelter brings me to what I call my frost proving ground. No instrument is necessary here. The tall, stiff clump grass is covered with frost crystals that sparkle in the light of the approaching morning. At the edge of

knowledge.

The meteorological station on Mount Paoay is important because it is at the one location in the Philippines where snow may fall—"might fall" is possibly a more accurate term. Snow *did* fall on Mount Paoay in 1926 — until the Weather Bureau dispelled the rumor with the statement that it was not snow, but fine hail or sleet, that fell. The Weather Bureau is a stickler for accuracy. The frozen crystals, which any boy accustomed to sleds and snowballs would certainly call snow, fell to a depth of twelve inches on Easter Sunday of that year. Visitors to Haight's Place were so delighted with this rare tropical visitation that they forgot to photograph the phenomenon until it was partially melted.

Although snow (or sleet) is rare, water often freezes on Mount Paoay during the months from November to March. Ice has been taken from the mill pond at Haight's that measured more than half an inch in thickness.