CHAPTER VIII

MILITARY RED TAPE

*

FURTHER reconnaissance flights! Here is a chance for another interesting book which I shall not write—about the workings of a certain type of military mind. But I shall tell enough to explain partially why the army aviators—brave and enterprising men—have not yet explored the unknown regions near their bases on the Canal Zone.

As soon as I got back to Panama, I reported to General Sturgis, successor to General Babbit as ranking army officer in the Zone. I expressed my thanks and appreciation for the flight over interior Darien.

"What?" he cried. "You've flown over interior Darien?"

"Yes," I said, somewhat taken aback.

"By what *authority,*" he cried, "did you make this flight?"

I don't like that word "authority" when I hear it from an army officer, so I answered very mildly. I explained that General Patrick, head of the Air Service in the War Department at Washington, had written a letter to Major Walsh, head of the Air Service in the Canal Zone, directing him to give me all possible coöperation. I had presented this letter to Major Walsh and his staff. And the Major had told me to report at seven the next morning for the flight. The official negotiations had been very easy and simple.

"But you had no *authority* to make such a flight without

my permission. Major Walsh has no *authority* to make flights without my approval. Such flights must be approved by *me;* then sanctioned by the Panamanian Government through the intercession of the American Legation. You have put me in a very humiliating position, subject to criticism by the Panamanian Government."

President Porras, I thought, would be rather amused at this. But I did not smile. I told the General that the President was my friend, and that I would see him at once and ward off the threatened criticism. I hastened over to the Presidential Palace and described the whole squabble to President Porras. He laughed delightedly. Evidently the General's discomfiture was not entirely unpleasant to him. He immediately drew up an order appointing me his military representative in Darien. Then he dictated three letters of instruction addressed to the *Altos-Comisionados* or High Commissioners of the Lower Bayano, the Upper Bayano and the Upper Chucunaque, informing such imaginary officials that I was conducting an investigation of interior Darien under Presidential approval, and that such *Altos-Comisionados* should hold themselves subject to my orders, and give me whatever assistance I requested.

Handing these letters to me, President Porras said, "Now, my good friend, show these letters to your General and tell him you have my authorization to go anywhere and do anything you please in Darien."

It did not matter that both the President and I knew that there were no such *Altos-Comisionados* in Darien. Presumably when I met anybody there whose services I required, I was first to appoint him *Altos-Commisionado* and then direct him to do as I wanted. (I tried that later on a Cuna Bravo subchief, carefully translating the President's order, but the sub-chief disdainfully answered that he took his orders only from his Indian superiors.)

President Porras and I thoroughly understood each other. It happened that I had been the direct cause, while in charge of the American Legation in Panama, of bringing about the conditions which made possible his election to two four-year terms in the presidency, and he always showed me an honest and sincere gratitude. I only regret that he couldn't have been kept in that office for the rest of his life.

Late that afternoon Major Walsh called on me, stating that he had had a most severe "dressing down" from General Sturgis and had been ordered not to place any more airplanes at my disposal. That was serious.

Next morning I appeared again before the General. I showed him my letters from President Porras, but he was not mollified. He informed me that not only would he permit no further use of army airplanes for my purposes, but that he would have nothing whatever to do with my expedition. No army man would be allowed to accompany me, and no army equipment would be available to me.

When he finished with me, he went on to higher matters, attacking General Patrick, head of the Air Service at Washington. He had no right, he declared, to issue orders direct to Major Walsh, but must do it only through him, General Sturgis.

It was then that I woke up to what was really the matter. Apparently I had become a sort of test-case in the bureaucratic battle raging in the Army and Navy between the old-line officers and the newly developed and rapidly expanding Air Service. General Patrick, General Mitchell, and others were waging an uphill fight for an independent Air Service. The Generals and the Admirals wanted to keep the Air Service subordinate to their departments. General Patrick's audacity in giving orders to the Canal Zone Air Service direct, instead of through the official hierarchy, was enough to make General

Sturgis tear his hair. He saw a chance to put the upstart airmen in their proper places. And I, the innocent bystander, was picked for the goat.

I had no desire to mix in this typical Army quarrel, but the success of my expedition was at stake. And I had a few aces up my sleeve. I cabled frantic appeals to the Departments of Commerce and War, and to General Goethals to bring pressure on General Sturgis. The pressure was brought all right. The General got his orders hot off the cable. But then I had a new demonstration of the power of Army red tape.

Two days later the General summoned me into his presence He had his instructions. The War Department had ordered him to provide me with the men and equipment I desired and also to put airplanes at my disposal. But here was the catch. I don't know by whom the clause was inserted, but the General was left the judge of whether the proposed flights were "too dangerous." It was enough for General Sturgis, who knew his red tape, if nothing else.

Solemnly he made his pronouncement. The flight over interior Darien, he declared, was so extremely dangerous that he could not allow any plane to make the attempt. As for the army men who were to accompany me, they would be permitted to go at their own desire, but as this was a scientific and rubber hunting expedition and not direct military service, those army men would have to be put on furlough without pay and any accidents or death met by them could not be compensated for as if they were in active service. As for the equipment, if I would make out a detailed list of what I wanted, he would have the Quartermaster allot it to me, but again, as this was not for direct military purposes, I would have to deposit in advance with the Quartermaster in cash the full value of the equipment, and any losses or damage to this equipment would have to be paid for by me. Even the Signal

Corps vessel, the *Coco Solo,* the only boat in Panama waters which was suitable for carrying our large party to Yavisa, would have to be leased and paid for by me—and at what I considered an exorbitant rate.

The loss of further airplane surveys was a great blow and handicap. The only practical modern way to explore considerable areas of jungle land away from navigable waters is to determine from the air the points to be aimed for and follow up by surface parties which know their objectives. Otherwise jungle exploration is too much like hunting for a needle in a very difficult haystack.

But I had not the time to conduct a lengthy struggle with the General over the airplanes. I knew only too well the resources of Army red tape in the hands of a determined officer. My large party was running up too much expense in the excellent hotels of the Canal Zone and was subject to too much unaccustomed temptation in the "wet" and otherwise diverting Republic of Panama across the boundary. Also it was January and the dry season was due to end in April. I wanted to reach my goal before the really serious rains set in.

At midnight on February 5th we finally put out from Panama City on the Signal Corps vessel *Coco Solo.* She was a very seaworthy boat, between sixty and seventy feet long, with a seven-foot draught and ample cabin room. There was a canvas covered upper deck large enough for the army cots of the white men. The negroes slept on the lower deck.

The sea was calm. By daybreak we reached the channel between the Pearl Islands and the mainland. Already we were well off the beaten track. The shipping lanes all lie to the west of the islands. Only a few small coastal vessels take the northeast route, and these pass at very long and irregular intervals.

The name "Panama" comes from an Indian word mean-

ing "abounding in fish," and no more appropriate name could have been chosen for this section of the Pacific coast. The surface of the deep blue water swarmed with life, and the air was full of sea birds of many types, soaring up, diving, and plunging for their prey.

Breder, our ichthyologist or fish expert, stationed himself in the bow with proper professional attention. His chief reward was a strange fish about three feet long and shaped like an American pike. Numbers of these creatures would leap out of the water just ahead of the bow of our boat, and holding their bodies at a 60 degree angle, would slither along the surface supported by the lashing of their broad tails. Their open mouths and big eyes which seemed to look sideways and backwards gave them the appearance of deliberately laughing at the intruding vessel.

Breder said they were a species of "bally-hoo," not unknown in other waters, but generally smaller and never so abundant. We had no luck trying to catch them with lines and spinners. A shot-gun seemed more promising, but we had no time yet to start collecting specimens.

This section of coast from the mouth of the Rio Chepo to San Miguel Bay is almost, if not completely uninhabited—for reasons mentioned above, chiefly the swampy character of the coast and the wide belts of liquid mud which fringe the shore. By mid-afternoon we had reached the head of San Miguel Bay, the entrance to beautiful, landlocked Darien Harbor. We had passed to the south the mouth of the Rio Sambu, where Shea claimed to have shot the "man-beast." To the west stood Mt. Sapo, 6,000 feet high, the first peak in the "Andean Range" rising higher to the south.

The mouth of San Miguel Bay is sixteen miles across, but the passage from its head into Darien Harbor is only three miles wide and is blocked by a group of small islands with

passages between them only a quarter of a mile wide. Beyond the islands Darien Harbor extends southeasterly for twenty miles, with a maximum width of four miles. Two of the passages between the islands are safe for large vessels, but only at high tide and slack water.

The Pacific Ocean at this point has a twenty-three foot tide, which gains tremendous force after crowding into the San Miguel Bay. When it is running full, the passages between the islands are whirling mill-races impassable for any vessel except small canoes literally scraping the shore.

In Darien Harbor itself the tide produces a "tidal bore" or wave several feet high like the wash from an enormous boat, which roars all the way up the Tuyra River to the mouth of the Chucunaque. It is similar to the well-known bore in the lower Orinoco. Indians in small canoes make for the shore and beach their craft when they see it coming.

We had intended to time our arrival so as to reach the entrance of Darien Harbor at high tide, but we got there about an hour too soon and had to wait among the mud banks of upper San Miguel Bay until slack water. Then quickly and safely we made the run through the "Boca Chica" channel into the harbor.

We anchored for the night in front of the negro village of La Palma, for we had something interesting to investigate.

CHAPTER IX

THE ISLAND OF THE MUSICAL ROCKS

*

LA PALMA ISLAND is the largest of the islands in the passage between Darien Harbor and San Miguel Bay. It is about a mile long and half as wide and is bounded by "Boca Chica" and "Boca Grande" (Little Mouth and Big Mouth), the two chief channels in the passage. The island rises in a smooth curve to an altitude of about fifty feet above sea level, and it is remarkable in being free from jungle. It is mostly covered with short grass, with a few coconut trees scattered along the shore and in the interior, which gives the effect of a large, well-kept park.

From the highest point in the center of the island rises an incongruous wireless tower with an American frame cottage and outhouses at its base. This is, or was, a secret wireless station of the United States Navy—a "secret" now well-known to all interested nations—which was erected during the war to guard against any attempt by Germany to make Darien Harbor a submarine base for attack upon the shipping of the Panama Canal. There was a similar station on the Caribbean coast at Puerto Obaldia on the boundary between Panama and Colombia to watch over the Gulf of Urabá.

Several of us took a small dingy and rowed across Boca Chica to the island. The American "garrison" consisted of two young wireless operators and a Naval doctor. They were not

entirely isolated by any means. In fact there were a number of good-looking young Chola Indian girls attached to the station. But they were glad to see us. We were bringing them their mail, and white visitors are always welcome in such places.

We weren't merely paying a social call, but were following up a strange tale told us by army officers in the Canal Zone. The wireless men were eager to tell us all they knew—in fact, the story seemed to be the chief item of interest in their rather monotonous lives.

They said that every month, on one of the first four days following the full moon, a strange group of Indians would appear off the island. They were not coastal Cholas, and they seemed to come from the mouth of the Savanna five miles away across the Harbor. They never came near the wireless station, and they never permitted the local Cholas or negroes to approach them, but warned them away with unmistakably hostile demonstrations. They appeared just before sunset and gathered on the southern point of the island. Then, when the moon was at its highest point, a powerful "music" like the sound of a gigantic organ would come from the Boca Chica.

The wireless operators said they had heard this "music" often. It never occurred except on one of the four days following the full moon, and it always came on the night immediately after the arrival of the Indians. They had reported the phenomenon to the military authorities of the Canal Zone, and a number of army officers had come down to investigate. But the Indians never let them approach Boca Chica on those particular nights, and on other nights they could see or hear nothing to account for the sounds. The official explanation was that the sounds were caused by the high spring tides acting upon partially submerged caverns in the rocks.

This explanation does not account for the fact that the music was heard only on the night after the Indians arrived—

which might be any of the four nights after the full moon. They must have been instrumental in producing it, or it would have occurred in more regular relation to tidal phenomena. My best guess, which is only a guess, is that the Indians remove large stones closing the mouths of submerged caves, and the rushing waters of the spring tide produce the sounds.

Unfortunately the moon was not full when we were at La Palma, so I could not make a personal investigation. But the story interested me greatly—particularly its ethnological aspect. The Indians who come to La Palma Island are not local Cholas, and there are no Indian settlements on the lower Savanna except a few Chola huts near the mouth. But I know that there are very interesting Indians in the interior valley of Darien near the headwaters of the river. These could come down the Savanna at the time of the spring tides in their small canoes.

I am more and more convinced, from other evidence which will appear later, that Darien in very ancient times was the seat of a highly developed culture which was destroyed long before the coming of the Spaniards. Certain remnants of it are still preserved among the Tule tribes. So perhaps this ceremony at the time of the full moon is a religious observance of ancient origin. La Palma Island is held in great respect by the local Cholas and is called "The Island of the Musical Rocks."

We could not wait until the full moon to make further investigations, so we returned to the *Coco Solo,* which was anchored off the village of La Palma.

Early the next morning we started up Darien Harbor. We passed the wide mouth of the Savanna to the north. The "Marsh Range" on the other side of which was the interior valley, could be plainly seen. A brackish swamp fifteen miles inland, about level with the sea at high tide and high but

not dry at low tide, extended clear to the foothills of the distant range. It was one of the largest and most impassable swamps I have ever seen, thirty-five miles long and averaging ten miles wide.

Twelve miles up Darien Harbor, on the west side, is a second negroid village, Chepigana, now largely deserted, which is dominated by a large dilapidated Catholic church occasionally visited by a priest from Panama City. Near the mouth of the Tuyra River, we passed the large, flat, densely wooded island of Resaca, once the field of a bloody battle between English buccaneers and the Spaniards guarding the approach to the gold fields of Cana. To the south we could see the mouths of the Marea and Tucuti rivers whose headwaters rise in the unknown southwestern district of Darien.

We were now entering the Tuyra River proper. The stream at this point is about two miles wide, with a swift alternating tide. It is a novel experience to speed *upstream* on an "up" current, and we had timed our departure from La Palma to follow the ascending tidal bore. A mile-wide swamp now bordered the southern bank, while the northerly swamp narrowed as we approached the "Marsh Range." The gap through which our airplanes had flown was plainly visible.

The lower stretch of the Tuyra is infested by the largest crocodiles I have ever seen. All the white members of our party will testify that the largest seemed at least thirty feet long—though my friend Dr. W. W. Mann, Director of the National Zoo at Washington, D. C., says that this is "highly improbable." (The Panaman members of our crew will swear they were fifty to sixty feet long!) Anyway they looked it. We amused ourselves by practicing with our rifles on these long targets, which suddenly changed from what looked like huge logs half buried in the mud banks to agile monsters racing to deep water. I don't think we did them much damage. This

would be a great place for a crocodile-skin collector, if he could devise some way of salvaging his victims out of the mud.

At five P.M. we reached the junction of the Chucunaque and Upper Tuyra, which combine to form the Lower Tuyra. Here we planned to stay for the night, and the captain dropped two anchors to steady the boat against the recurrent tidal bore and its swift following cross-currents.

The gold fields of Cana lie due south from here, on the Upper Tuyra thirty miles by air line, perhaps one hundred miles by water. Yavisa and the Chucunaque valley lie due north. A number of small dilapidated negro villages line the course up the Upper Tuyra to Cana. Yavisa, fourteen miles above the mouth of the Chucunaque, is the last negro settlement on the route to the interior valley.

Some of our party took a small boat and rowed one mile up the Upper Tuyra to the village of Real (full name "Real de Santa Maria"), and soon returned, accompanied, to my amazement, by four Americans. They turned out to be employees of the Sinclair Oil Company, which had just secured an exclusive option from the Panama government to explore for oil "ten miles back from the Pacific coast of Darien." With great liberality and generosity (to itself) the company had chosen to interpret the term "coast" to mean the limit of high tide. As the high spring tides can be felt perhaps twenty miles above Yavisa on the Chucunaque and twenty miles above Real, it claimed oil-right jurisdiction over much of interior Darien.

The oilmen were pleasant and agreeable fellows, very secretive, of course, about the results of their explorations. They had been in the neighborhood for about two months. They had ascended part way up the Chucunaque to be turned back by menacing Indians. They had attempted to ascend the Savanna River to be turned back by the "mud-glacier." And now had about completed their exploration of the Upper Tuyra. What-

ever the real intentions of the Sinclair Oil Company may have been, I was convinced its men had spent more time looking for gold than for oil.

I later was informed they had found no indications of oil in interior Darien, but had found hopeful signs at Garachine Point near San Miguel Bay on the Pacific. I also learned that the leading oil explorer went to London to interest British capital in a gold development project on the Upper Tuyra.

They reported seeing numerous white Indians—"white as any white man," some on the lower Chucunaque and some on the Rio Paca, a tributary of the Upper Tuyra. The oil men were all suffering from malaria, which was only to be expected since they made their headquarters in the negro village of Real. They were planning to leave in the next day or two for Panama City.

They had a small thirty-five foot gasoline cruiser, drawing three feet of water. So I made a deal with them, offering to send them back to Panama City on the *Coco Solo* if they would lease their small cruiser to us. This they accepted willingly. Their boat was rather small for that coastal trip in case of a storm, while the captain of the *Coco Solo* was only too pleased, as he was afraid to take his big boat, drawing seven feet, up the narrowing Chucunaque to Yavisa. So we decided to unload our cargo from the *Coco Solo* at Real, and send it on in several trips by the small cruiser to Yavisa, permitting the *Coco Solo* to return to Panama City with its new passengers. At Real we also hired several immense dugout canoes from the recently established Chinese trader there.

While the cargo was being transferred to the cruiser and the dugouts I sent Lieut. Townsend and Lieut. Rosebaum up the Chucunaque in a small canoe with negro paddlers to pick a suitable camping site not too near Yavisa. I remembered an attractive coconut grove on the opposite bank, about a quarter

of a mile down stream from the village and directed the lieutenants to investigate it. They returned later in the day to report that the grove was an ideal site for a camp. Benton and the other men completed the transfer of our cargo to the smaller boat. Next morning the *Coco Solo* departed for Panama City with the Sinclair explorers, while we proceeded up the Chucunaque with the *Marguerite* and its following convoy of dugout canoes.

The coconut grove on the opposite bank below Yavisa proved a perfect camping site. The bank here rose at a steep slope of about forty-five degrees to a secondary bench thirty feet above the river level. This bench was practically flat, extending back about two hundred yards to the base of the low foothills near the gap in the "Marsh Range" through which the lower Chucunaque emerges from the central valley. The level stretch paralleled the river for nearly a quarter of a mile.

Most of this area was covered by a healthy grove of bearing coconut palms, apparently about ten years old, planted by no one knows whom. The coconut palm, of course, distributes itself naturally only along the sea coasts, where the floating coconuts are washed ashore by the wind, tides, and currents, but when propagated by man the tree grows and bears far in the interior. I have seen healthy, bearing coconut trees two thousand miles up the Amazon and far in the interior of Luzon in the Philippines, disproving the common belief that the coconut thrives only along the seashore. But in these interior places the original distribution was by man.

There is a rumor that at the beginning of the Great War, in 1914, the German Government established a secret wireless station on the Caribbean shore near the boundary between the Republic of Panama and Colombia, intending to use the Gulf of Urabá as a base for submarine attacks against the shipping of the Panama Canal. Neither Panama, Colombia nor the

United States had yet taken sides in the War, all three being technically neutral. Such a wireless base was a clear encroachment of sovereignty on the part of Germany and a technical breach of neutrality on the part of the nation claiming sovereignty over the locality.

Great Britain solved this problem with its usual direct practicality. A war vessel appeared off the site of the wireless station, and the sailors were given "shore leave" on that jungle bound coast. When the "shore leave" was over, there was no more wireless station, and there were no more Germans. Months later a bedraggled and exhausted German officer turned up in Panama City, having crossed somehow from the Caribbean to the Pacific and worked his way up the coast to Panama City, only to die raving with fever shortly afterwards. The negroes of Yavisa say that another German appeared in their village well supplied with money, cleared and planted that level bench to coconuts, built a comfortable shack, and then "disappeared" a few years later. Whatever may be the virtues of this story we were grateful to that hypothetical German for the coconut grove.

CHAPTER X

THE CHOCOI INDIANS

*

LIEUTENANT TOWNSEND took charge of establishing our main base and laid out our camp so efficiently that we named it "Camp Townsend." For some strange and thankful reason, none of the Yavisa negroes appeared on the scene, though their village was just around the bend, up stream on the opposite bank. But we were delighted with the arrival of a large group of fine looking, clean, muscular, light copper-colored Indian men, who watched our unloading operations with friendly interest, and then volunteered to help unload the boxes, equipment and supplies from the *Marguerite* and her convoy of canoes.

I had gone up on the ledge to discuss the arrangement of the tents with Lt. Townsend when a series of loud shouts drew my attention to the river bank. Professor Fairchild, inarticulate with amazement, was waving to us from the crest of the slope. Every one at the camp, white men and negro laborers had congregated on the bank.

Among our numerous pieces of cargo was one which had been anathema to everybody who had touched it from New York to Darien. It was a huge traveling-salesman type of trunk, particularly strong and heavy, in which were many of the articles intended as gifts for the Indians—machetes, axes, hunting knives, beads, mirrors, etc. That trunk weighed 370 pounds,

a figure I could not forget because of the numerous excess baggage charges I had paid on it. In New York it required four baggage men, liberal tips, and vehement cursing to get it moved. And the same process, only with more men, was repeated each time it was handled in Panama.

Benton, supervising the unloading of the *Marguerite,* was preparing a skid of heavy planks to get the trunk ashore and was planning another plank skid on which to push and pull it up the steep bank. Three of our Indian visitors, watching the proceeding, went down to the *Marguerite* and motioned Benton's crew of negroes aside.

One particularly powerful Indian bent over in the shallow water alongside the boat, while the other two, on deck, easily lifted the trunk and placed it on his arched shoulders and neck. Then with a hand forward and aft to steady his burden and grinning from ear to ear, he dug in his wide spreading toes and walked straight up the steep slope. Arriving at the crest of the slope, Townsend directed him to the site of my headquarter's tent. There the Indian easily and gently let the trunk down on the ground, and stood erect, still smiling.

I have seen remarkable feats of physical strength and endurance among the northern Chinese and Mongols, even among some mountain tribes in the Philippines, and among the Quichua and Aymará Indians of the Andes in Peru and Bolivia, but for spring-steel muscles and inexhaustible endurance, pound for pound, I have never seen the equal of those Darien Chocoi Indians. And yet they are not big men—in fact, in stature they are rather small, seldom over 5 feet, 4 inches in height, with symmetrical well-shaped bodies, full deep chests, powerful shoulders and finely muscled legs. It is not the size of their muscles so much as the quality, which gives them their great physical powers. I later saw them pole their dugout canoes up swift mountain streams, from daybreak

to midnight with never a sign of weariness, while our most powerful negroes became so exhausted after one hour of the same work that they literally fell overboard from sheer exhaustion.

Our entire party stopped work to watch and follow that Indian. I opened the trunk on the spot and took out a beautiful little six inch marble hunting knife in a pretty leather scabbard, to present to the Indian strong-man. He looked at it with appreciative amazement, looked at me, and when I motioned to him to fasten it to the waistcord of his loin cloth, he and his companions let out a joyous boyish shout, and all rushed back to help unload the remaining cargo.

The unloading job was well accounted for from then on. Benton brought his negro crew up to Townsend to pitch the tents, set up the army field kitchen, prepare a latrine, etc. In a remarkably short time, the essential job was done, and the cook and his assistants were preparing our first camp meal. Then I opened the big trunk again and presented each Indian with a new shiny *machete* or long jungle knife—a valued possession to them. One of the Indians spoke some Spanish. Later a half-breed negro-Indian interpreter joined our party, and we had no difficulty communicating with the Indians from then on.

It was an auspicious start. My whole plan of action was based entirely on winning the friendship of the Indians by kindness, generosity, fair treatment and absolute justice. My experience had taught me that the full-blooded Indian will tolerate a half-breed when he has to, because the half-breed has an Indian mother, but avoids the negro whenever possible. So through the interpreter I told the Indians that they were always our friends and were always welcome to visit our camp as our guests, but that no negroes were welcome except those we brought with us or should hire as laborers. Rather hard

on the negro, perhaps, but necessary in an Indian country, and besides I am not responsible for Nature's differentiation between the Negro and the Indian.

By nightfall, Camp Townsend was established with fine military style and efficiency. As I planned to spend several weeks there, every effort was made to make it comfortable. I had brought a good deal of dressed lumber on our boat, from which Townsend constructed a fine dining table, with benches for the mess tent, benches for the scientists' laboratory tent, tables for my headquarter's tent, etc. Each white man had a folding canvas steamer chair. Each living tent, housing two white men on folding army cots, had an extra fly in front as a porch. The entire camp faced the river, close enough to the bank to observe all passing canoes. The kitchen tent was joined to the mess tent by an open tent fly. The negro laborers had two large wall tents for their living quarters.

Pinzon, the cook, and his assistant got a big dinner prepared on the military field stove, and we all prepared to celebrate our establishment in our new home. That evening many more fine looking, friendly Chocoi Indians visited our camp, and one, a particularly handsome, dignified and self-possessed man of about forty, who spoke considerable Spanish, was announced as the Chocoi's head chief. Asked his name, he replied, "My Spanish name is Chief Avellino." Asked for his Indian name he only smiled. It was my first experience with a strange custom of the Chocoi. A few of the leading Indians, who have had contact with Spanish speaking people of the coast, have adopted Spanish names which they readily divulge. But all have Indian names also, which they never tell to strangers. Never in the six weeks, during which we established very friendly relations with the Chocoi and were even permitted to observe many of their tribal customs and learn some of their secrets, did we ever learn the Chocoi name of a single

individual. They apparently have a belief that to tell their real names in some way places them in the power of others.

I invited Chief Avellino to take a seat next to me at our table and treated him as an honored guest, even to the extent of a little appetizer of brandy which he appreciated with the rest of us. While he was a bit awkward with his knife and fork, he maintained his dignity and composure to the evident appreciation of the numerous Indian spectators.

I told the chief I hoped on the next day his people would bring their wives and children to visit us, as I had many presents to give them. His hesitation was apparent. I then told him that every man in my party, white and black, understood that he was in no way to mistreat any Indian woman or child; if any man of my party did so, I would shoot him; and if he, the chief, overheard that one of my party had offended or abused an Indian woman or girl and notified me, I would shoot the man on the spot. This actually was the understanding I had reached with every man of my party before leaving Panama. I knew such practices, customary among "civilized" white men in contact with primitive people, invariably antagonize the Indian men, and my only hope for success was to win the confidence of the Indians. Avellino replied that he would bring his own wives and children to visit us the next day. The other Indians could do as they wished.

The first thing next morning, while Townsend and the rest were getting settled in camp, I took Charlton and Benton and two negro paddlers and went by canoe to Yavisa. My first thought, of course, was to visit the white Indian house which I had seen six months before. I inquired among the slovenly negroes for the old head-man and was told he was dead. The other negroes were plainly antagonistic. I asked if the white Indians were still in their house, and was told they were gone. Leaving the others in the village, I went up the same trail

along the river, now already partly overgrown with jungle, and found the house of the three little white Indian girls abandoned and already partly dismantled. Returning to the village, I again tried to learn of their whereabouts, but could get no intelligible answer. They were gone. That was all.

While disappointed, I had expected as much. So I decided to settle down to a carefully thought-out plan of action. It would be hopeless to try to find the white Indians if they did not want to be found. If an Indian wants to hide in the jungle, he can always do so with little difficulty. My only hope was to make friends with successive groups of Indians and let the news spread gradually that my expedition was friendly and well disposed. The first step would be to cultivate the Chocois, who were already friendly and accessible. In the meantime my companions could go ahead with the other object of the expedition—a thorough scientific investigation of this portion of Darien.

My scientists were well pleased. True scientists are trained to "make haste slowly." They were content to "dig in" at Camp Townsend and get to work.

Major Malsbury also had his work cut out for him. His first job was to establish our precise latitude and longitude, a more difficult job near the equator than in higher latitudes. Our military "portable" wireless outfit was soon set up with its sixty foot telescopic tower and at noon demonstrated its ability to receive the time signals from the U. S. Government wireless station in the Canal Zone. But all attempts to "talk" with La Palma, Port Obaldia or the Zone were failures. We soon learned that our set would receive, but would not send, and later I learned it had already been condemned for service before being allotted to us—covered by a deposit at full value.

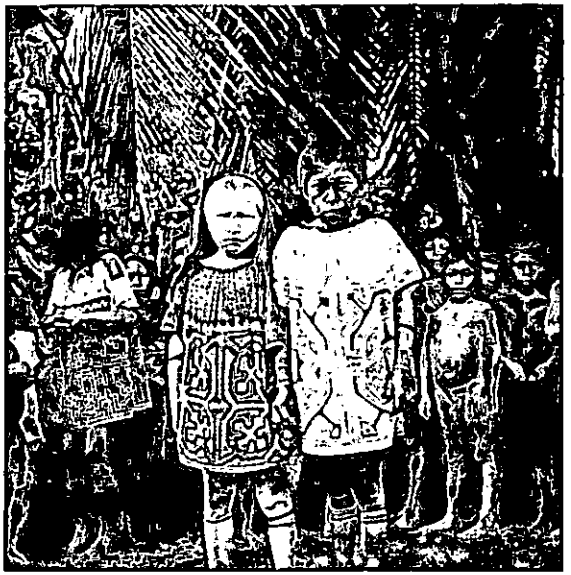
But the other army men as well as Benton, and Charlton, craved action. So leaving the scientists to "dig in" for their

detailed investigations, aided by Major Johnson, the naturalist, I organized the army men, with Benton, Charlton and myself into a "Flying Squadron" for quick, short exploration trips. Before attempting the "Great Push" up the Chucunaque, the difficulties of which I alone appreciated, I intended to learn as much as possible about southern Darien, toward the Colombian border, as well as to toughen and acclimate my party for the work I knew was to come.

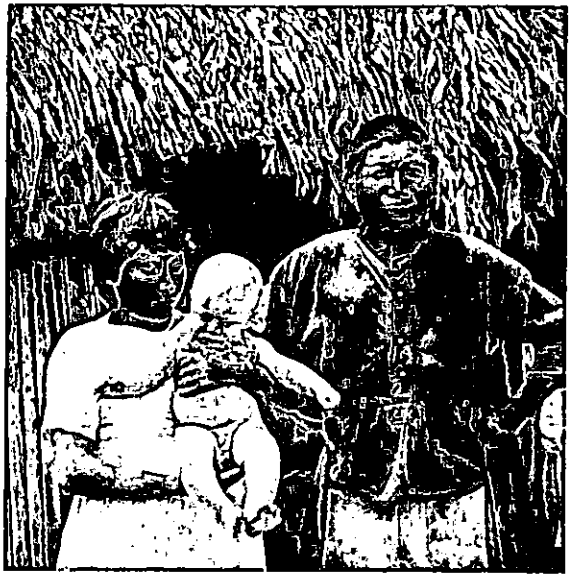
The Elto outboard motors were tuned up. Small fast dug-out canoes were finally secured after much persuasion from the negroes of Yavisa and Real through the intercession of the Chinese trader, who had accommodatingly moved up to Yavisa from Real and established himself as the leading citizen of that community.

Avellino, the Chocoi chief, returned in the afternoon with his entire family, consisting of two wives and numerous children, boys and girls from about eighteen years old down. The elder wife, a slender, good-looking, dignified woman of about thirty-five, showed an intelligent interest in our party. The younger wife was a buxom young girl of perhaps eighteen, attractive physically but rather stolid mentally and decidedly subservient to wife number one. While polygamy is practiced and frequent among the Chocoi Indians, the first wife always holds an honored position and is the domestic head of the household. In fact, the polygamy of the Chocois is much like the Chinese system of one wife and as many concubines as the man of the house can provide for. In all our six weeks among the Chocoi, we never saw any indication of strife or discord among the feminine portions of the household.

The Chocoi men wear a "gee-string" or loin cloth, sometimes of cheap traders' cotton and sometimes of a native-made bark cloth, while the chiefs and leading men generally have hand-beaten silver wrist bands, occasional large silver earrings,



White Indian Girl, San Blas Coast



White Indian Child Mendelian Recessive. Each Parent Had a White Indian Parent

and as many beads of gay colors as they can drape across their chests and around their thighs.

The women wear larger loin cloths of the same material wrapped around the waist extending nearly to the knees, and as many necklaces of beads, shells, and silver ornaments as they possess. Amongst hundreds of Chocoi, men and women, I saw only one set of gold earrings, whereas the Tule women, as we learned later, invariably wear large gold earrings and nose rings, never silver, though they do wear silver necklaces. In fact, the Chocoi may be called a silver people almost exclusively, while the Tule adhere to the gold standard for most ornamental purposes.

Both men and women of the Chocoi wear the hair long, falling down over the shoulders, though some of the younger women trim the hair to "bangs" in front. Avellino and some of the leading men on festive occasions wore a girdle or circlet of braided yellow flowers on their heads.

Children arrive amongst the Chocoi as rapidly as the laws of nature allow, but the high rate of mortality among them, as among the Tule people, holds down the population. There is no birth control in Darien, as there is among certain Indian tribes in the northerly Amazon headwaters.

I placed a large extra tent at the disposal of Avellino and his family and prepared to cultivate his friendship. A five foot strip of beautiful cloth of gold was presented to wife number one for a new gown, and another of bright crimson cotton to wife number two. All the others were presented with ten-cent store bracelets, necklaces, mirrors and scissors. The children got toys, harmonicas, etc. To Avellino I gave a single-barreled breech-loading shot gun, and a set of brass shells with powder, shot, caps, and a reloading tool which he readily mastered. Avellino's party stayed three days. After the first day, continual delegations of Chocoi men with their wives and

children appeared every day, many staying overnight. All received some pleasing trinkets. At night they were entertained with the portable victrolas and a modest display of fireworks. The Indians must have thought that "Santa Claus" had come, and they found no "catch" or trick as yet.

The final conquest of Avellino was with dynamite. The Chocoi are great fishermen. I told Avellino I could show him a new and better way to fish and tossed a weighted stick of dynamite, with lighted fuse, into a deep hole at the mouth of a small creek near by. Nearly half a small canoe-load of fish, mostly of a sturgeon type, came to the surface, stunned or dead, and were promptly gathered in. That impressed the Chief more than all the rest of our white man's magic. Avellino must have some dynamite. I explained to him carefully how to use it, warned him of its danger, and gave him three sticks with caps and fuse attached. He disappeared with numerous of his followers up a tributary near by and later returned with his canoe-bottom strewn with sturgeon, cat-fish, and a small sword-fish which had evidently worked up into fresh water from the coast. It was a great triumph for him, and I knew he was at last our sincere and loyal friend.

Then, and not till then, I told him I had come to find the white Indians I had seen six months before. Avellino's face fell. He said I must not go up the Chucunaque. Even the Chocoi could not ascend the Chucunaque above a tributary known as the Membrillo, which was about two days' canoe trip above Yavisa. Beyond that point were numerous Tule Indians who would kill all intruders.

Avellino also said that the second night after we had made camp at Camp Townsend, a party of white Indians had passed in front of us in a canoe and had now gone up to the headwaters of the Rio Chico, his own river and territory. He could give me Chocoi Indians to ascend the Rio Chico if I

wanted to visit his house. But he could not help me go up the Chucunaque.

I told Avellino I would go up to his house the next day and then push on up to the headwaters to find the white Indians. Immediately he called his family and followers together and told them to get ready to return to his home at once and prepare for our arrival next day. He left several Chocoi men to guide and help us reach his place.

CHAPTER XI

AVELLINO'S HOUSE

*

WE started early the next morning as we understood it to be a seven hours' trip. The Indian tells time by pointing to the sky and tracing with his arm the arc which the sun describes in the specified time. A six hours' trip, starting at daybreak, is indicated by sweeping the arm from a horizontal position pointing to the east, to the zenith directly above. A twelve hour period is indicated by an 180° sweep from east to west. Nine o'clock in the morning is indicated by pointing to the east, arm elevated 45°, etc. In this way the Indian indicates accurately both time and duration of time.

Besides the "Flying Squadron" consisting of Lieutenants Townsend and Rosebaum, Benton, Charlton and myself, I took the three scientists, Baer, Breder and Brin, Major Johnson, the naturalist, and two American negroes, Arthur and "Dirty Dick," whom I had hired at Panama. Benton and I occupied a large canoe, carrying considerable camping equipment and supplies, manned by the two negroes, while the rest of the party occupied smaller canoes manned by the Indians, who led the way. A word here about Arthur and "Dirty Dick" is appropriate. These two negroes, who originally hailed from Mobile, Alabama, were huge coal-black men over six feet tall and powerfully muscled. They had come to Panama several years before, spoke considerable Spanish, and claimed to have for-

merly gathered rubber in the lower Chucunaque Valley. I hired them in Panama at rather high wages on their general appearance and representations. They claimed to be expert "palanque" men, expert at poling canoes through swift water where paddles are of little use. I was soon to find out they were neither "palanque" men nor any other kind of canoe men, and had never been in Darien before. But otherwise they were comparatively loyal and powerful bilingual negroes. They were an interesting pair, very devoted to each other, very formal and dignified, and held themselves, in some respects rightly, as far superior to the Panamanian negroes. In a way they were like the famous "Amos and Andy," Arthur being the level headed, quiet, more capable member of the pair, while "Richard," as he called himself, was the talkative, emotional and pompous one. As my own given name happened to be Richard, or Dick for short, the party decided to dub Richard the negro, "Dirty Dick" to distinguish between us, which I was supposed to interpret as a compliment.

Anyway, Benton and I in our big canoe with Arthur and "Dirty Dick" brought up the rear of the party, and we remained in the rear. We headed up the Chucunaque to Yavisa, and there entered the mouth of the Rio Chico, a main tributary which entered from the east with headwaters high in the San Blas Mountain Range.

As soon as we entered the Rio Chico, we began to encounter swift rapids, alternating with deep quiet water. The Indian-manned canoes ahead soon passed out of sight beyond the numerous bends, the Indians handling their canoes with smooth, graceful rhythm, while our powerful negroes labored without skill or efficiency. It was immediately apparent that my high-priced imported "palanque men" were the crudest amateurs at that game, and I did not spare them for their deception. The alternating stretches of still, deep water per-

mitted the intermittent use of our outboard motor which the rocks in the swifter stretches rendered useless, and gave the negroes some respite. But before we had been on our way about an hour, both Arthur and Dirty Dick were so completely exhausted that several times they actually fell overboard. There was no particular danger, as the swift stretches were seldom over waist deep, while the deep water was quiet. But so slow was our progress that eventually Benton and I had to go overboard in the swift water and help the exhausted negroes pull and push our heavily laden dugout to the quieter stretches above.

It was nightfall before we reached Avellino's house, a distance by airline from Yavisa of only about seven miles, and perhaps twice that amount by the river's course. The rest of the party, with their expert Indian canoe men, had arrived in complete comfort hours ahead of us. Benton and I got there with tempers and bodies both about exhausted, while our negroes were in a complete state of mental and physical collapse.

Avellino's house was an ideal tropical habitation. From a white man's point of view, the Chocoi houses are the most sensible for the tropics which I have ever seen. They are built on posts with floors elevated six to ten feet above the ground. They have open sides with long overhanging eaves and high thatched roofs. Many Chocoi houses are round in plan. Avellino's was rectangular, about eighty by fifty feet and situated in a clearing on a small knoll thirty feet above and one hundred feet back from the water. The jungle had been cleared back for a space of about fifty yards and planted to bananas and plantains. A nice gravelly beach in front gave a good berth for the canoes and a good place for a bath. All the Darien Indians are amphibious, spending much of their time in the water, and next to the Japanese they are the most cleanly people, in their bodies and homes, that I know of.

The main or living floor of the house was reached by a notched log with two guard rails. These Chocoi houses show real architectural skill. They are constructed somewhat on the principle of a modern sky-scraper. The framework is first erected of strong heavy poles of a native species of lignum vitæ, an everlasting wood even in the tropics, enormously strong and proof against termites or "white ants." Much ingenuity is displayed in the design of the high roof trusses. The ends of the poles are recessed at the joints and bound firmly in place by strands of the native "bejuca" vines which are as strong and supple as hemp ropes.

The main floor juts out several feet beyond the supporting columns, forming an overhanging balcony around the entire house, and preventing access to the interior to any one climbing up the foundation columns. The overhanging eaves extend beyond and protect the projecting balcony. In interior Darien there are seldom strong winds, and the rain generally falls straight down.

The roofs are thatched with palm leaves or long heavy grasses, and require replacement every couple of years, but the rest of the house is long-lived. The main or living floor is of black palm slabs, three inches wide and an inch thick, with narrow open spaces between, which permit dust and débris to fall through to the ground below and be readily swept away with brush brooms. The floor is covered with mats or rugs plaited from grasses or long palm slivers, which are readily rolled up for house-cleaning.

In one corner of the floor space is the kitchen, consisting of a hearth formed by a square of logs six or eight inches in diameter, and six or eight feet long, enclosing a foundation of hard packed clay six inches thick. On this hearth the family fire is kept burning practically continuously.

An Indian fireplace is a scientific achievement. Four or

five short logs of about uniform diameter are placed on the clay hearth with ends radiating from a central joint like spokes from the hub of a wheel. The fire is built at the hub, only the ends of the logs burning. When the log spokes are drawn in close, the effect is like an old-fashioned blacksmith's forge, and a hot blazing flame is produced. When not being used for cooking, the logs are pulled back a foot or so from the center, and the fire is banked with ashes. In this condition it will "hold" all night. The first thing in the morning the Indian housewife pushes the logs closer together, rakes away the banking ashes, and fans the coals with a palm fan. A flame springs up promptly. Such a fire can be regulated to give a hot roaring fire or a more moderate baking heat. As the logs are consumed from the inner ends, new logs are shoved in place. There is no cutting of sized firewood, no unruly fire continually needing replacement and varying from too hot to not hot enough, but a steady heat which can be controlled as desired.

The Chocoi still use crude, hand-made clay pots and bowls for cooking purposes, though iron pots and kettles secured from coastal traders are highly prized. All eating or serving dishes are of carved wood, or of gourds or calabashes. Wooden or gourd spoons are used, but no knives or forks. The invariable stone *"metate"* or shallow concave stone for grinding corn and the accessory roller stone or *"mano,"* which are used by all maize producing Indians, are in every house, varying in design and workmanship and often dating back to a considerable antiquity.

The staple foods of the Chocoi are maize, plantains or coarse "cooking bananas," and a dry-land rice, together with vegetables such as yucca, sweet potatoes, taro, tomatoes, peppers, and breadfruit. Their fruits comprise oranges, bananas, alligator pears, pineapples and numerous others. Cacao is secured from the indigenous tree, and sugar cane is abundant.

For meat the Chocoi depend principally upon fish, crawfish, iguana, and occasional game. They have their native intoxicant drinks ranging from pure fermented maize "chicha" to various concoctions of fermented sugar cane.

Our party of whites was assigned a section of the main floor for quarters. Our negro laborers were compelled to remain in the canoes on the river bank and were not allowed to approach the house or mingle with the Indians.

With the evening meal over, and our mosquito bars suspended from the rafters over our sleeping quarters, the curiosity of our hosts demanded entertainment. Darkness had come suddenly. So we started our program with a military sky-rocket. Then the portable victrola was produced. After my experiences in Darien I would never think of going into a "wild" Indian territory without a phonograph. Time and again we were to encounter surly, unfriendly and even menacing Indians. We would appear to ignore them entirely. We would bring out and start a record while proceeding with our regular task of camp pitching or what-not. The attention of the Indians would soon be diverted from us to the "music-box." Their hostility would cease and be replaced by curiosity. Gradually they would draw closer to the instrument, discussing it among themselves and finally would end up by crowding around it as closely as possible, touching and feeling it. From then on they would often keep us playing it until midnight, and were no longer our enemies though perhaps not yet our friends. That victrola, our fireworks, outboard motors and dynamite were four essentials without which we could never have traversed interior Darien.

Avellino, with the superior mentality and sophistication of the natural leader, readily comprehended that the phonograph was only a clever mechanical device, but his more superstitious followers preferred to attribute mysterious qualities to

it. Smilingly and confidentially Avellino would tell us that the other Indians were saying that there was some little "magic animal" in the box which produced the marvelous music and human voices. We had a great assortment of records, in English, Spanish and Italian, ranging from Grand Opera to the latest jazz. It interested us to observe, both among the Chocoi and later among the Tule, that the Indians' preference was for Grand Opera and Sousa marches, while the jazz rather mystified them.

After an hour or more of such entertainment I indicated to Avellino that we were ready for sleep. At his quiet command each Indian produced from under the overhanging eaves a rolled up bundle containing a thick bark-mat and a strip of hand woven cotton cloth a little longer than the individual and about three feet wide. The mats were laid out like rugs around the outer edge of the house. The Indians lay down on them, covered their entire bodies including their heads with the cotton sheets, and apparently went promptly to sleep.

We whites spread our army blankets in similar fashion, made pillows of our outer clothing, pulled our sheets over us, let down the mosquito bars, and thought we would soon be asleep too. But in spite of our good intentions, we were not Indians. Their tough wiry muscles can stand those hard corrugated floor slats with the meager protection of the bark mats, but not we tender whites. We had left our army cots in the canoes on the river bank, thinking we could emulate the Indians.

My companions stuck it out for a while, squirming and cursing. Then finally they gave it up, folded their bedding and mosquito bars, and went down to the river bank to sleep in the canoes. Only Breder and I stuck it out. But not to sleep. We were wide awake now. So we sat on the floor in the middle of the big house, with our backs propped against a central

upright post, produced a shaded electric laboratory lamp and started writing up our diaries. It was one of those beautiful tropical nights which always cause me to wonder why man can waste them in sleep. The moon was shining. All around us we heard the night jungle sounds; the twittering and squawking of birds, the distant roar of howler monkeys, the whistling notes of cicadas and the occasional loud flop of a crocodile's tail in the river. Our shaded lamp cast a bright light on our diaries, surrounded by dark shadows throughout the house. The Indians were very quiet. We were soon engrossed in our writing.

And then on looking up, I received a shock. From all around the house, small white ghost-like shapes were converging slowly and silently toward the two of us—little bundles of white that crept forward imperceptibly. A distinct chill ran down my back. And then stifled chuckles from the Indians broke the tension. I seized an electric flashlight and "shot" one of the white shapes. With a shriek of laughter a child leaped up and scurried back to the outer circle of the grown Indians.

It was an Indian child's game. Again the creeping forms came toward us. Breder and I would wait, pretending not to see them, until the converging circle almost reached us. Then we would flash our lights in their faces, and drive them back to their protecting parents, when a renewed courage would bring them out to the attack again. Occasionally an insuppressible explosion of mirth would come from some adult in the distant circle.

This game of attack and retreat continued for half an hour, until at last all of us declared an armistice and went to sleep.

That first night in the big house of Avellino will always be one of my pleasantest memories.

CHAPTER XII

CHIEF MATA

*

WE were all up at dawn the next morning. Avellino had reported that the white Indians were at the head of his river, the Rio Chico, and we hoped we might find them there. Leaving our scientists behind, Townsend, Charlton, Benton and myself took two small dugout canoes from Avellino's collection, each manned by two splendid young Indians, and started up-stream eastward to the distant San Blas mountain range. Our canoemen were skilled and tireless. They used long bamboo poles instead of paddles in these shallow waters. We gained elevation on an average of at least a 1 per cent grade. The river still alternated between quiet stretches several hundred yards long and short swift rapids. For several miles we passed Chocoi houses and plantations usually about a quarter of a mile apart. In spite of our up-stream course we made good progress. By early afternoon we had passed the limit of the Chocoi houses and came to a tributary entering from the south, almost as large as the main stream, but uncharted on our Military Intelligence Map or any Panamanian or early Spanish map we had ever seen. We later named this tributary the Rio Tigre from Indian reports of the numerous jaguars frequenting its banks.

Soon we began to approach the foot-hills of the San Blas range. Our aneroid barometer, never very dependable under

such conditions, showed we had risen perhaps 350 feet. The rapids ran no longer over smooth worn cobble-stones, but over sharp rock outcrops. Between them were deep pools of cool clear water with sheer rock walls.

At one of them we stopped for lunch. Deep down in the water we could see a school of fish about the size of large black bass. Our leading canoeman, noting our interest in the fish, dived overboard. We watched his light bronze body fifteen feet below us in the clear water. He swam along the rock ledge among some sunken logs. Presently he shot to the surface, and in his mouth was a wriggling fish held firmly by the head between his teeth.

The other three Indians saw that we were impressed by this novel exhibition, so they too dived into the pool, each to return with a fish in his mouth. In a very minutes they had a dozen—all we could eat at one meal. This is the only kind of fishing I know of where the angler does the biting.

Breder later identified the species as something or other with two long Latin names, which in English might be described as something between a sturgeon and a catfish. It frequents rocky waters, and when disturbed hides in the crevices of rocks.

After lunch we went on up-stream into beautiful broken country. But the rapids were so numerous and so close to

gether that our progress became very slow. At last on a wet sand-bank we found two sets of human foot-prints. Both had the broad spreading toes and narrow heels of the typical

It was a platform of poles about six by eight with a roof of large banana-like leaves. Among the rocks on the bank were the charred remains of a recent fire. Evidently the white Indians had passed the previous night there.

We had shot a big "Pato Real" or black "Spanish" duck some time earlier in the afternoon, and the sound of the shot might have carried as far as the hut. But from the beginning I realized we would not find the white Indians anywhere in that country if they did not care to be found, and so I had deliberately avoided any attempt to approach silently. They must have ascended the river by canoe, but there were a thousand places where they could have hidden their canoe in the dense jungle.

It was late afternoon, so we decided to camp for the night at the Indians' temporary stopping place. The hut itself was too small and frail for our large party. So we chose an elevated rock and gravel bar well out in the river channel and well away from the thick vegetation. Here Lieutenant Townsend, the orthodox militarist, wanted to pitch a formal camp with tent flies erected over our army cots, which would have necessitated considerable work cutting poles and guy pegs on the banks and bringing them out on the bar. I preferred to sleep in dry weather on an army cot under the open sky with the unobstructed moon and stars above. Charlton and Benton being mere laymen like myself, helped me overrule Townsend. The Indians, of course, were content to sleep on the sand. It was the middle of the dry season, when rains are infrequent and mosquitoes almost non-existent.

Next morning after an early breakfast, I decided to take Benton and two of the Chocois and proceed up-stream on foot. The river had become entirely too small and too swift for canoes. I left Townsend and Charlton and the two remaining Indians to guard the camp, prepare a noon meal and have

everything ready for the return trip down-stream early in the afternoon.

We ascended five or six miles, getting well up into the western foothills of the San Blas range. The jungle-lined banks were so dense we were compelled to stick to the river bed, fording it many times. These higher valleys in Darien are paradises in the dry season, with clear fresh air, cool sparkling water, indescribably beautiful vegetation and teeming bird and animal life. Several times we came upon the same fresh tracks which we had seen the evening before. But tracks were all we found. Apparently the white Indians did not want to be seen.

At 10 A.M. we turned back and reached camp by 1 P.M. We had lunch and then launched our canoes for the down-stream coast. And *coast* it was!

Our long, narrow log canoes went down those rapids and over the wet rocks like toboggans down a slide. The alert Indians guided them skillfully among the rocks, with no danger of even a ducking in the shallow water. Coasting down-stream on a rapid tropical river is one of the pleasantest travel methods in the world.

In the midst of our rapid descent we stopped to take a closer look at a curious feature of the landscape which had aroused my curiosity on the up journey. On the left bank, two or three hundred yards back from the river, stood a group of small hills perhaps a hundred feet high. They were so regularly spaced and so uniform in size that they had caught my eye at once. A second examination left no doubt in my mind. They were certainly not natural, but man-made—small primitive earth pyramids, perhaps the prototypes of the great pyramids which are scattered over much of Central America. We had no time then for further investigation, but I marked this spot as one which would repay an archeological expedition in the future. I was to find similar earth-works later on to confirm

my belief that Darien was once the site of an ancient pyramid-building civilization which was destroyed long before the Spaniards arrived in the New World.

We reached Avellino's village at sunset. I had intended to take the whole party back to the base camp that evening. But Avellino greeted me with a broad smile and announced that he would not permit us to leave. In three days would come the Chocoi harvest festival, and he wanted us all to attend as his guests. This was too good to miss. No outsiders had ever seen this ceremony before. So I left the three scientists, Brin, Breder, and Baer with Avellino and departed down the Rio Chico in the moonlight, promising to return in three days.

We reached Camp Townsend about midnight. All was well. The men we had left behind had made good progress with their geological, meteorological, and geodetic surveys. But the most interesting news was that a strange type of Indian had appeared at the base of the hills a hundred yards back from the camp. They had arrived about dusk on the last two evenings, but had not come closer. Apparently they were not Chocois, but a mountain tribe which came overland to inspect our camp. They wore white cotton shirts and dark blue trousers which extended half way to the ankle. There were about a dozen of them, all men, and their appearance had caused some apprehension in the camp.

This was good news for me. My whole plan was to make friends with successive groups of Indians. I hoped that knowledge of our good intentions would spread from group to group, and would finally penetrate up the Chucunaque past the deadline of the Rio Membrillo. So the next morning I looked forward eagerly for the appearance of the strange Indians on the edge of the forest.

I waited in vain all the morning, writing up my diary and making an inventory of stores and food supplies. Early in the

afternoon a group of Avellino's Chocois came down the river. Among them were a man and wife who were to remain with us, the man as a hunter to provide fresh meat and the woman as a laundress. All the Darien Indians are very scrupulous in keeping what little clothes they wear fresh and clean, seldom wearing any garment two days in succession, and Avellino had apparently noted our lack of observance of this very essential habit to health and cleanliness.

At last, just before dusk, the strange Indians appeared on the edge of the forest. The Chocois in camp showed some alarm and repeated the words "Cuna" and "Mata." The new visitors were a silent, dignified group, very different from the joyous, child-like Chocois, but they did not look unfriendly. I went forward to speak with their leader, who stood a few feet ahead of his men.

To my surprise the leader addressed me in Spanish with the words *"Buenos Dias, Señor."* I answered *"Buenos Dias, Capitan,"* and we shook hands in the white-man style. Then he explained that he had heard of my arrival at Yavisa, and had come down from the Pucro Valley near Mt. Tacarcuna to visit me. He learned on his arrival that I was absent and so had waited for me to return before visiting camp. He hoped to be my friend, and he wanted me to visit him at his home where he had "the biggest house in all the world."

From the first moment I had an instinctive liking for this upright, straightforward, ceremonial and dignified Chief, José Mata, as he proved to be. The "José" was undoubtedly Spanish, but the "Mata" was truly Indian. For some strange reason, Darien Indians who have had contact with the outside world love to assume foreign names in addition to their own more picturesque and resounding Indian names.

Chief Mata said that he was the "Jefe" or head of the Cuna Cuna people (Tule tribe), who lived in the vicinity of

Mt. Tacarcuna, partly in the upper Tuyra drainage area west of the main "Serrania del Darien" and partly in the practically unknown Atrato River valley in Colombia. Formerly, he said, his people were a numerous tribe, but in recent years they had died off rapidly. The surviving few were drifting apart and breaking up their tribal organization. He hoped I would help his people overcome their misfortunes. When I asked him where he had learned his Spanish, he said he had lived for two years in Panama City. I was later to learn how he had "lived" in Panama. The chief then presented an attractive, intelligent young Indian whom he described as his "secretary," who also spoke and wrote a little Spanish. The rest of his party he did not introduce. They were evidently less important.

I brought the whole party into camp, introduced the chief and his "secretary" to the white members of our expedition, and invited them to dinner with us in the mess tent as honored guests. The other Cuna Cunas were invited to eat with the Chocoi Indians, but this they refused to do. They remained by themselves and were finally served from the mess tent as a separate group. The disdain which the Cunas felt for the Chocois was very evident. They apparently considered themselves far superior, a superiority borne out by their manner if not by their physique. The Chocois were taller, and decidedly more muscular. But mentally, there was no question as to the superiority of the Cunas. José Mata never relaxed, but maintained a ceremonious, almost austere, dignity which contrasted sharply with the irresponsible spontaneity of the Chocois.

After dinner the chief asked me again to visit his "biggest house in all the world" on the Pucro. I told him I had promised to visit Chief Avellino first. I would come to visit him later. After that I planned to go up the Chucunaque River. He looked very serious. I must not go up the Chucunaque, he said. The Indians there were very bad, and would kill me and

all my party. But, I asked him, weren't the Indians up the Chucunaque a Tule race related to the Cunas? We wanted to be friends with all the Tules and we hoped he would go with us and introduce us to the Chucunaque Indians.

Mata shook his head. It was true, he said, that his people were of the same race and spoke the same language as the Sucubti Cunas of the upper Chucunaque. Long ago they all lived together as one tribe near the gold fields of Cana. When the Spaniards first came to Cana, the Indians tried to be friends with them, but the Spaniards killed so many of the Indians and treated the rest so badly that all the Cunas moved away to Mount Tacarcuna. The climate there was so bad that most of them moved again and joined other Tule tribes up the Chucunaque. A few of them, still hoping to get back their old home at Cana, had remained at Tacarcuna and tried again to be friendly with the Spaniards. For this reason the other Tules had turned against them and now would not permit any of the Tacarcuna Cunas to join them up the Chucunaque. They would kill him and his people even quicker than they would kill me.

I asked if he knew of any white Indians. He said that formerly there were many on the upper Tuyra and even around Yavisa. But now most of them were far up the Chucunaque, beyond the Sucubti Cunas, the Mortis and the Wallas. There were still a few near his people, some on the Rio Paca and some on the Rio Paya. When I came to visit him, he would take me to see them.

After a leisurely dinner and long talk, I presented Chief Mata with a new pipe and some black navy plug tobacco, and then led him to the tent where I kept my more valuable presents. I gave him a single barreled shotgun with brass shells, cups, powder, shot, and reloading apparatus. The "secretary" got an Ingersoll watch, a fountain pen and a tablet of paper.

All the other Cunas received machetes, but no baubles or beads, such as pleased the Chocois. Then I asked Mata how many wives he had. He replied disdainfully, "The Tule men are not Chocois. They have only one wife." I cut off three yards of my cloth of gold, telling him to give it to his wife. His face lit up with appreciation. "I have also a young grown daughter," he said, "the most beautiful in Darien." So I cut off another three yards of the gold cloth for "the most beautiful daughter in Darien."

I told him I would leave with most of my party for Avellino's place the next morning, to be gone for three days, but that he and his party were welcome to stay at our camp until my return, when I would go with him up the Pucro. He said he would leave early in the morning and be back in three days with his wife and daughter, who would like to see our camp. Then we would all return together. His Indians could make the round trip overland in three days, but that we had better go up by canoe, which would take much longer.

That night I put Chief Mata and his "secretary" in a vacant tent and had a large fly put up in front for his followers. Early next morning they filed away into the jungle behind our camp saying they would be back in three days, and we prepared, with our somewhat neglected Chocois, for the return trip up the Rio Chico to Avellino's village.

CHAPTER XIII

HARVEST FESTIVAL

*

THIS time, with plenty of expert Chocoi canoemen, we arrived at Avellino's house early in the afternoon. The festivities were scheduled for that night, the time of the full moon. Already preparations were under way. But first, we were told, it was necessary for all of us to be formally adopted into the tribe. This ceremony consisted of decorating the entire body from the face to the knees with painted designs in a vegetable pigment which darkened quickly to a deep blue. The design was generally painted on with a small brush, but in my case I was to be honored by having the chief's eldest wife decorate me by means of a carved wooden block which was first covered with the pigment and then pressed against the bare skin.

The scientists who had stayed with Avellino were already stripped to make-shift gee-strings and painted in various designs. Brin, the botanist, was covered with circles and triangles. Baer, the Smithsonian anthropologist, had curved designs like feathers. Breder, the ichthyologist from the American Museum of Natural History, was decorated with snakes and frogs in dark blue.

The new arrivals were soon stripped to gee-strings and seated on carved log stools in front of Avellino's house, while the women of the tribe proceeded with the decorations, study-

ing the effect produced on their living canvases with much artistic attention. Between the criticism of the already decorated scientists and the comments of each of us as he observed the growing patterns on his companions, it was difficult to observe that degree of decorum and gravity which the Indians attached to the ceremony.

Finally our mirth became so uncontrollable that Avellino stationed a stalwart guard with a shotgun in front of us. I think it was only a good-natured hint that we were supposed to be serious, for the female artists who were operating upon us made matters all the more difficult by jabbing us with their sharp brushes when they wished us to expose another portion of our anatomy for treatment, and by giggling uncontrollably. Some of these decorations were quite effective. I have seen marvelously painted young Indian girls who would create a furore in any Broadway musical show. This operation over, we had time to inspect the other preparations inside and outside of the big house.

Great quantities of flowers, yellow, red, and blue, were being brought in by the children and turned over to the older women who were supervising the decoration, just as they do in our village church entertainments. Long palm slivers cut in strips an inch or two wide were arched like doorways between the upright posts of the house, and festooned with wreaths of flowers.

In the center of the main floor stood a small structure about ten feet square and six feet high. The sides were of loose palm strips, and the thatched roof was decorated with many dangling tassels of decorative grass and flowers. From an overhanging roof extension at each corner were suspended small bits of silver, iron, stone, and glass, which were spaced close enough to jingle when the flexible floor was shaken. This house was the "pièce de résistance" of the whole scheme, a

Holy of Holies. It gave the effect of a beautiful little playhouse in the center of the big room.

Inside were two carved wooden alligators five feet long with scales represented by painted blue dots, and on them stood a much smaller toy house, like a large bird cage, three feet high. Its sides were formed of small wooden statues, rather like the painted designs on my own body, which represented "Sua-mi-mis" or the messengers of the "Great Spirit." More of these figures hung from the overhanging eaves of the house so that nothing, not even the air, could enter without passing close to them.

While this apparatus was being erected, the women were preparing large amounts of corn meal, "chicha," fermented sugar cane drinks in hollow logs like small dugout canoes several feet long, and a really nice confection made from shredded coconut meat, native chocolate and coarse brown sugar. Great pots of plantains, rice, vegetables, fish and meat were cooking on the fireplace. In general, the whole proceeding gave the effect of a community festival in one of our agricultural districts.

I had been watching a group of a dozen young girls being prepared for the ceremony. Their bodies were elaborately painted, their long black hair was decorated with bright flowers, and around their necks hung brilliant necklaces of flowers, beads, carved wooden figures, shells, bright red seeds, and silver. The four leading girls wore crowns made of short upright wooden spear-heads, painted and decorated. They were very brilliantly and freshly attired except for their rather shabby cotton loin cloths. Presently they came over to me to exhibit their dilapidated skirts just like a young American daughter when she wants a new dress. The appeal was unmistakable. They were evidently to be the leading ladies of the performance, and they wanted to look their best. So I pro-

lighted with native torches, which are worth describing. They consist of about twenty nuts of the *almendra* tree, rather like nutmegs in size and shape. They are strung tight against each other on a long sliver of black palm and give a light about as bright as a common kerosene lantern. As one nut is consumed, it lights the next one. We timed these torches and found each nut burned for about five minutes. A string of twenty nuts would therefore burn with a fair light for about an hour and forty minutes. This torch is universal among both the Chocois and the Tules of Darien. I have never seen it elsewhere.

The ceremony was about to begin. Avellino told us he was going to call the Tribal Spirit and talk to him. We must keep very quiet and under no circumstances were we to use our electric flash lights, as they would frighten the Spirit away. The girl priestesses brought two elaborately carved wooden stools and placed them inside the "summer-house," facing the alligator heads and the "bird-cage." Next they brought a small baby, which Avellino told us was sick, and laid it on its back inside the "bird-cage." Then Avellino produced a great bundle of wooden canes, all with carved figures, animal and human, at their upper ends. Some represented twining snakes, some had turtle heads, fish heads, bird heads, jaguar heads, etc.... He entered the "play-house," seated himself on one of the stools, facing the "bird-cage," and laid the canes on the floor between him and the adjacent empty stool. The almendra-nut torches were extinguished, and Avellino began a long sing-song rhythmical chant, picking up cane after cane and waving it before the sick baby. He was calling the "Sua-mi-mis" or "Little Spirits" to come and help it get well.

As all Darien Indians know, healing is one of the chief functions of "Sua-mi-mis." When they appear, you can also send messages by them to the Great Spirit, which they must

deliver. Avellino's message was to ask the Great Spirit to send the Tribal Spirit to come and sit on the reserved stool beside him and give him a forecast of the future. Apparently the Tribal Spirit is not the Great Spirit but a powerful subordinate.

Avellino's rhythmic chant went on, as cane after cane was waved slowly before the sick baby. Then the four priestesses, leading the other girls, formed a circle around the "summer-house" and danced with a swaying prancing gait, slowly around it. Avellino's chant became louder and faster. The girls' pace quickened. One of our white party made an audible remark. Immediately an Indian came to him, and firmly but not unpleasantly, indicated that he was not to talk. The chant continued. The dance kept on. Various men from the audience joined the dancers until the ring would hold no more.

The effect of the monotonous song and the slow dance was powerfully hypnotic. The Indians seemed rigid and expectant, but the white men, who did not understand their language or share their religious emotions, began to get very sleepy. At last Breder's head dropped on his chest. At once an Indian came forward and shook him forcibly. The dancers stood still. The audience murmured indignantly.

Avellino stopped his chanting and came over to where we sat. He explained reproachfully that he was having a hard time bringing the Sua-mi-mis. If they did not come, his people would blame it on us and cease to be our friends. He would try again, but we mustn't move, or make any noise, or go to sleep. We must try to "think" the Sua-mi-mis into the house.

We promised, and he went back to his stool. The chanting, dancing, and wand-waving went on. We whites concentrated honestly on calling the Sua-mi-mis. Again the chant and dancing rose in tempo. The Indians were hypnotized completely now, and we were partly so. At last Avellino's voice stopped. The dancers stood still. Avellino mumbled an almost inaudible

prayer, which continued for some time. We could see nothing beyond the silent circle of dancers, but we shared the feeling of superstitious tension which filled the room.

Then suddenly the tension relaxed. A woman ran in with a hysterical cry and picked up the sick baby. The dancers scattered to the outer benches. And Avellino came over to us with an expression of satisfied relief on his face and asked for a drink of rum. He said the Sua-mi-mis had come and promised that the baby would get well. They had brought the Tribal Spirit, who had sat on the stool and promised that the next year would be a prosperous one. He had also stated that we were good friends of the tribe. We hadn't seen any spirits, but perhaps they came nevertheless. The baby did get well promptly, and the Chocois remained our good friends for the rest of our stay.

The performance was over. The torches were re-lighted, and we all had a midnight feast on the remains of the big dinner. Most of the Indians drank until they were in a drunken stupor and behaved much like our own civilized drunks, except there was no fighting and no sensuousness—just maudling friendly intoxication. At last we all went to sleep.

Next morning we got up rather late. Torpid Indians were still sleeping all over the place. It was noon before we could round up enough Indian boys to take our canoes downstream to Camp Townsend for a night of much needed sleep.

CHAPTER XIV

PUCRO

*

NEXT day, an hour before dusk, Chief José Mata and his retinue appeared at the base of the hills in the rear of Camp Townsend, and I went out to welcome and escort them to camp. I was later to learn that all the Tule tribes make their formal calls just before sunset. During the daytime the men are generally away, only the women and children remaining in the villages, and it is not good Tule form to make visits when the men-folk are not at home.

This time Chief Mata was accompanied by his wife, his daughter—"the most beautiful in Darien," his two grown sons, his "secretary," and several men attendants. The men wore their regular costumes—hand-woven straw hats, cotton shirts, and short dark-blue trousers. Each carried a machete, and the chief a carved walking stick, which is the insignia of authority among all the Darien Indians.

The costumes of the women showed most clearly the great difference between the Tules and the Chocois. Instead of the short loin cloths, the Tule women wore long skirts of brightly appliquéd cotton quilting, and short sleeved, high necked blouses of the same material. Over the head and shoulders they wore red shawls. From their ears hung circular disks of pure gold as thick as a dime and three inches in diameter. In addition, each woman wore through the septum of her nose a solid

gold ring hanging down level with the upper lip. No Tule woman, in her native environment, is ever without such a nose ring. The girls' noses are pierced when they are a day or so old. The rings get larger and heavier as the girls grow up.

We were presented by Chief Mata to his wife and daughter and shook hands with them in formal manner. I had a large tent with three army cots ready for the chief and the women, and a fly for his male attendants. Soon we were all seated in our folding chairs in front of my headquarters tent. The chief was supplied with fresh tobacco for his pipe, and at his suggestion another pipe and tobacco were provided for his wife. Neither his daughter nor his sons smoked—perhaps because they were as yet unmarried. The portable victrola was put to work, and I had an opportunity to observe our new guests.

The chief's wife was a dignified, slender, handsome woman of about forty. I paid her all the customary formal attentions, but my interest centered naturally in "the most beautiful daughter in Darien." Carmelita, for that was her "Spanish" name, was about sixteen years old, and was by any standards a very attractive and pretty girl. After one got used to it the nose ring didn't seem to hurt her looks. Her complexion was light olive—as light as a southern Italian. Her hair was straight glossy black, combed back from the face and ears. Her face was oval with regular, well-proportioned features. Carmelita was very well mannered, completely self-possessed, demure without being shy or hesitant, and she showed a frank girlish interest in what was going on. Unfortunately, unlike her father and mother, she spoke almost no Spanish.

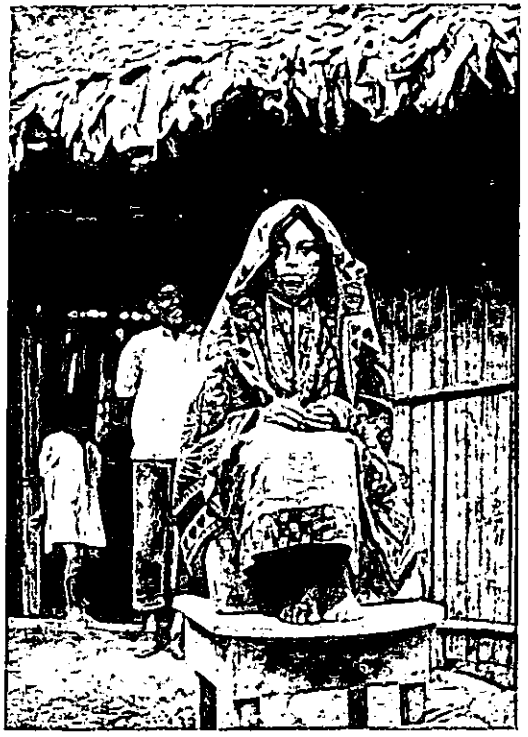
One feature of her attire was truly striking. Her head shawl, about five by three feet, was of thin red cotton with a large figure of a jaguar or *tigre* worked in the center in yellow surrounded by a border of red hearts on a yellow backing. I

do not know where the inspiration for that design came from, but it was very artistically executed. At my suggestion she proudly spread it out on the ground, thereby uncovering her own pretty head, with the large gold earrings enhanced by the background of dark hair. Even the nose ring began to be attractive.

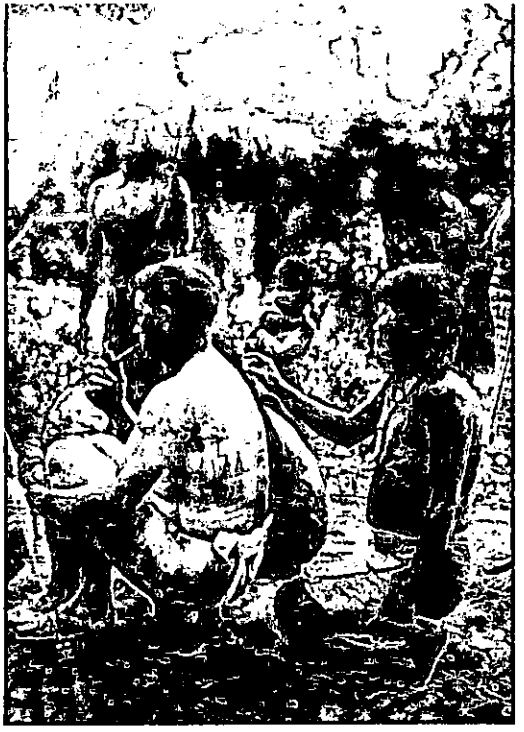
Chaperoned by the chief, I led Carmelita and her mother into my office tent and presented them with samples of about everything I had—cloth of gold, red and blue cotton cloth, scissors, mirrors, combs, needles, thread, etc. Finally a jar of English candies capped the climax. Chief Mata, on seeing the gorgeous presents given his women folk, glanced rather ruefully at his own clean but somewhat worn clothing. The chief was about my size, so I took him back into my sleeping tent and presented him with a pair of white duck trousers, a pair of white tennis shoes, white cotton socks and garters, and a gray felt hat. He made a quick change under my supervision and emerged proudly in his new clothes to receive the admiration of his family and followers.

From then on, as I had hoped, Carmelita devoted all her attention to me. I stated to the rest of my party, in English, that it was evidently due to my own superior good looks. But the others insisted it was because I gave out all the presents. There may have been some truth in their charge, but the chief of the party among more primitive peoples is entitled to certain prerogatives, and I was becoming very fond of Carmelita, the "Tiger Princess of the Pucro," as we called her from then on.

The chief, his two sons, and his "secretary," joined us at our dinner table. The women were served separately in their chairs. For dessert, we had canned cherries, a fruit unknown to the tropics. Chief Mata, on tasting his cherries, was so pleased with them that he carried his portion over and presented it to his wife and daughter, who had not yet been



Princess Carmeleta of Pucro



R. O. Marsh Being Decorated by Chocoi

served. It was the first real sign which I had seen of the regard and affection the Tule men always show their women. Much as I liked Avellino, I could not imagine him giving anything he liked very much himself to either of his wives.

I had promised Chief Mata to visit him at his "biggest house in all the world" on the Pucro, an easterly tributary of the Upper Tuyra. So he said he would return there overland the next day to prepare for our arrival, but would leave his "secretary," eldest son, and several of his men to take us to Pucro in canoes by the water route. Whether there was any mystery about that land route from Yavisa to Pucro, or whether it was just so difficult they did not want us to use it, I never was quite certain. Even later, when I had demonstrated my ability to "hit the trail" practically as well as the Cunas, they would never let me take the land route.

Chief Mata, his wife, Carmelita, and most of his followers departed in the morning. The following day our "Flying Squadron," with six Cunas, left in two canoes with outboard motors for the long trip down the Chucunaque and thence up the Upper Tuyra to the mouth of the Pucro, which we ascended about twenty miles to Chief Mata's village.

The route up the Upper Tuyra to the mouth of the Pucro follows along the old route to the Cana gold mines. Above the negro village of Real de Santa Maria we encountered much shallow, rapid water, which made our motors useless and progress slow. On the right bank we passed the dilapidated negro villages of Pinogana and Boca de Cupe. All along this river route, at least as far up as the Paya River, there is an understanding that the right bank belongs to the negroes and the left to the Indians.

On the left bank we passed the mouths of two considerable rivers, the Yape and the Capeti, before reaching the Pucro. The Yape River valley is occupied by Chocoi Indians, and

near its junction with the Upper Tuyra is one of the largest and most beautiful circular Chocoi houses in Darien—one hundred feet in diameter, at least, with a high conical roof. We landed to inspect it, but as all the men were away we left some trinkets for the frightened women and children and proceeded on our course.

The Capeti River valley is occupied by Tules, but owing to some jealousy between Chief Mata and the chief of the Capetis we did not then know any of this particular branch of the Cuna Cunas.

At noon on the third day out from Camp Townsend we reached the mouth of the Pucro and turned eastward toward the high distant peak of Mount Tacarcuna. This stretch up the Pucro was very hard going, with numerous log jams clear across the narrow stream and swift rocky stretches of rapids. At just about the practical head of canoe navigation, we came at dusk to Chief Mata's "private home"—a cluster of medium sized Tule type houses on a bench about fifty yards back from the river. Our aneroid barometer showed an elevation of 280 feet above sea level. We had risen most of that height in the fifteen miles' ascent up the Pucro. Ten miles beyond stood Mount Tacarcuna, 7,400 feet high.

The chief, his wife, Carmelita, and about thirty other Indians welcomed us. A large open sided structure was turned over for our use. The chief explained that his "big house" was still some distance farther up-stream, but as it was late and the water low, we would continue there by land the next day.

It was our first experience in a Tule house, which we found to be vastly different from a Chocoi house. All Tule houses are built rectangular on the level of the ground with strong black palm sides and high thatched roofs. The better Tule houses are two stories high with an upper floor reached by notched log stairs. The lower floor of hard, clean earth, is

used for general day-time purposes, and the upper floor for sleeping and storage. In the rear of each main house is a smaller one for cooking. Their fires are built on the same principle as those of the Chocoi. Each Tule establishment, consisting of a main two story house, an open-sided summer-house, and a small kitchen, is generally surrounded by a stout six foot fence of black-palm pickets, presumably to protect the numerous chickens from jaguars and other animals.

Here also we saw the first real weapons. The Chocois had nothing but fish spears, but hung along the walls of every Tule house were long black-palm bows, very long arrows, and blowguns with their small but vicious darts. It is these blow-guns which put fear into the hearts of the Chocoi, for the Tules are experts with poison, which they invariably use on their blow-gun darts and occasionally on their arrows.

As we learned later, the Tule employ two kinds of poison, the constituents of both of which were kept a profound secret from us. One poison is painfully deadly. The other produces immediate temporary paralysis which disappears in about half an hour. With this paralysis poison the Tule capture alive many wild animals and birds, which at first are stricken helpless and later generally recover.

There is a definitely grim, sinister, and serious side to the Tule nature which is never found among the simple peace-loving childlike Chocoi. All in all, I believe these Cuna Cuna or Tacarcuna Tules to be the saddest people I have ever encountered. When I came to know them better I could understand and sympathize with them.

Soon after our arrival we had a splendid supper of native vegetables and roast wild peccary. Chief Mata said there was to be a great "fiesta" in our honor in the "big house" the following night, so we restricted our evening entertainment this night to playing our victrola records.

I reminded the chief that he had promised to take me to the white Indians whom I understood lived in the headwaters of the Paca, a river coming into the Upper Tuyra from the west a few miles above the mouth of the Pucro. He replied that there was a small group of "Chepu Tules" there, but it was a hard three-day trip from his place, and they had heard that we were hunting white Indians and had all moved over toward the Atrato River in Colombia. He thought, however, that some of them were stopping with the Paya Tules, only about three hours by land trail to the southeast of his village. The Paya Tules, he said, were very bad Indians, but he would send a messenger to their chief and see if he could take me to visit them. I told him to do the best he could. What I wanted most was to find some of the white Indians.

Then I asked him to tell me about his stay in Panama City. He hesitated. Finally with a most appealing and despondent gesture he told me the following tale. About twenty-five years earlier, when he was young and unmarried, he fell in love with the daughter of the chief of the Capeti Tules, now his wife. At that time the gold mines at Cana were being worked. Many Spaniards and negroes were passing up and down the Tuyra, and the "Spanish" Church had established a mission with a priest at Real. This priest converted many of the near-by Indians, including the chief of the Capetis, but Mata did not like the "Spanish" religion and would not be converted. The Capeti chief would not let him marry his daughter, so he ran away with her and married her according to the Indian custom.

Later he took her to Real for a visit. There he was seized and arrested by "Spanish" soldiers and taken to Panama City and put in prison. His wife followed him, and did hard work in the "Spanish" houses as a laundress and servant, but always came to see him at the prison fence every afternoon. Finally

he got away from the jail after two years, secured a small canoe, and he and his wife returned all the way down the Pacific coast and up the Tuyra to his old home on the Pucro after "a hard time." The "Spanish" soldiers came after him again and he and his wife had to go high up on Mt. Tacarcuna, where it was very cold and there were "bad spirits," until the Cana mines shut down and the "Spanish" soldiers and the priest went back to Panama City. Even now he did not know when the soldiers would come for him again.

At first he had thought my large party at Yavisa was after him because I had a "Spanish" captain with me. So he had spied on me, and when he found out how nice I was to the Chocois and how I did not like the Spanish captain (he guessed it), and because I was one of the "great Americans" who built the big canal, he decided to try to make friends with me and get my help.

All during this very painful statement, the chief's wife sat beside him holding his hand with as simple and noble a sympathy as I have seen anywhere. I told the chief that no harm would come to him if I could help it. President Porras was my friend, and I was sure he would not send any more soldiers. As for the Panamanian captain, it was true I did not like him and would soon send him back to Panama City.

That night we rigged up our army cots under the roof of the open-sided house. The chief slung his hammock from poles near us. All the Tules are hammock-sleeping people. I went to sleep still in a rage over Chief Mata's experience in Panama and determined to do what I could for him.