

PUCRO

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.

CHAPTER XV

“THE BIGGEST HOUSE IN ALL THE WORLD”

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NEXT morning we had an opportunity to observe the surroundings of a Tule establishment. Besides the usual patches of plantains, bananas, yucca, etc., we found a grove of twenty-foot perennial cotton trees with exceptionally long-staple cotton. Some of it was naturally pink, and Chief Mata said they also raised a blue variety. There was also a cultivated grove of native rubber trees, showing many tapping scars. They were not the *Hevea Brasiliensis* but the variety known as *Castillao Elastica* which produces a rubber appreciably tougher but not as elastic as that of the *Hevea*. The *Castillao Elastica* is not as practical a plantation tree as the *Hevea Brasiliensis*, because its yield is lower per tree and per acre. Seeing my interest, Mata explained that the Tules made water-proof coverings out of home-spun cotton dipped in the sap and cured over a fire fed with palm nuts. I later had Mata's tribe make me a number of large rubberized sacks in which to carry many of our things, and found they gave perfect protection from water during the ensuing rainy season.

Then, leaving our heavier luggage at the chief's "private home," we took a land trail along the river to the "big house" about four miles up-stream. It *was* a big house—about 150 feet long by 75 feet wide. The end walls, instead of being straight,

"BIGGEST HOUSE IN ALL THE WORLD"

were three-sided like bay windows. The floor was of hard packed earth. In one end was a sort of platform like a stage about two feet high, supported by a retaining wall of logs. The high peaked roof was supported on very clever roof trusses upheld by four columns of posts. The house was in excellent repair. It was clearly intended not for domestic use but as a sort of convention hall and community center for the surrounding Tules.

We arrived about mid-morning. Already about one hundred Indians were there, and were starting individual fires for cooking outside the house. A beautiful clear little mountain stream ran fifty yards away. The Indians, who were all of Chief Mata's Pucro tribe, seemed to want to do what they could for us, but they had a markedly despondent air about them. The chief said he had wanted the neighboring Cuna tribes to join in our fiesta but owing to a great deal of sickness and death in his own tribe recently, his people were so poor they could not supply enough food for many visitors. So I told him to send out messengers to the surrounding tribes and tell them to come and bring their food with them. I would pay them whatever he said was right, either in Panamanian silver coins, or machetes and cloth.

This news brought the first sign of real joy I had yet seen among those people. I wanted, for once at least, to break that spell of sadness and bring some temporary happiness to them. Mata sent out his messengers. Other men went back to the "private house" to bring up our baggage, in which I had a considerable supply of cloth, machetes, trinkets, etc.

Then, with the chief's family, we appropriated the raised platform for our personal quarters. Our army cots were set up. The Indians slung their hammocks from the supporting columns, and the portable victrola was put in action. I showed the chief's "secretary" how to operate it and then went out to

WHITE INDIANS OF DARIEN

wander around the premises. I had given Chief Mata about twenty dollars in small denomination Panamanian silver coins and left him to do the marketing. I was tired and wanted to get away from all the hubbub.

On the opposite bank of the nearby stream, well up on the hillside, was a very neat little Indian house, commanding a beautiful view. I climbed up the trail, found the house unoccupied, with an inviting hammock slung between the poles. So I got into it for a nap. After perhaps an hour I awakened. A young Indian woman, about twenty, was busy-ing herself with the wheel-spoke fire in the far corner. She saw that I was awake and motioned with her hand for me to remain in the hammock. Then she poured out a steaming calabash of thick native chocolate and brought it to me with a most kindly hospitable smile, standing near and looking down at me while I drank it.

She was a very beautiful young woman, with a splendid figure and the very light olive skin typical of so many of the mountain Cunas. She had done me the honor of treating me as a familiar house guest, not as a stranger. That is, in accordance with Tule woman's custom within the confines of her own house, she had taken off her long skirt and appliquéd blouse and was dressed like the Chocoi women in merely a short loin cloth. I had decided to attempt no amorous adventures among the Indians as I knew the resentment such affairs can cause. But I could not help thinking that a thatched hut on a mountain side with such an Indian woman could be an earthly paradise for a while at least.

There were by now over two hundred Indians present around the "Big House" and more continually arriving. But since the great majority of them, including all the new-comers, were men, I concluded that the women and children present were all of Chief Mata's own small tribe. Mata was in front

“BIGGEST HOUSE IN ALL THE WORLD”

of the big house, bargaining with newcomers who brought fruit, vegetables, and meat—wild pig, agouti, tapir, and iguana. Some of the meat looked all right, some very doubtful. Mata bargained with authoritative decision and the food was sent to the cooking fires.

I decided to give a big splurge in the chief's honor and use up all the fireworks I had brought with me to the village. Posts were erected in front of the big house for pin wheels; chutes were prepared for the big military signal rockets; and the colored flares were arranged in a semicircle. By dark the big meal was ready. The only drinks were soft drinks—chocolate, a squashed banana mush, and a corn drink like unfermented chicha. There had been no time to prepare fermented concoctions. Our own stock of liquor served as cocktails for a select few.

The meal was served out of doors in front of the big house. Long wooden benches and numerous small artistically carved log stools were brought from inside. The food was served by the women on clean squares of banana leaf and the drinks in calabashes. At last there was a semblance of real gayety. The bright-eyed children scampered around in joyous anticipation. The men and particularly the women had happy smiles. About the end of the meal we whites showed off our fireworks against the dark jungle background to as appreciative an audience as at any county fair.

CHAPTER XVI

PAYA

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MATA had told me that the next group of Tules were the Paya Cunas in the first main valley to the south. Their chief village, Paya, was only three hours away by land. They were "bad Indians" so the chief said, but several of their men had come to our fiesta the night before, and I felt they were assured of our friendliness. Besides, Chief Mata thought some of the white Indians from the Paca River were staying at Paya. So I told him I wanted him to take us over to Paya where we could spend the night, visit these "bad Indians" and perhaps see some of the white ones.

Quite reluctantly the chief agreed. He said he did not know what kind of treatment we would get from the Paya people. They were "bad." They would steal and lie. They were not good friends of his. But with six Americans and a good following of the Pucro Indians, I did not fear trouble. I felt, however, that we had better go well armed. Each man carried a large belt pistol and either a rifle or a shotgun. Chief Mata took about a dozen of his young men to help carry our equipment.

It was to be our first real overland hike in the jungle and I wanted to see how we would stand up under it. All of our trips heretofore had been made in canoes. My companions all wore regulation army uniform—heavy high shoes, khaki

PAYA

breeches tight at the knees, khaki shirts, heavy leather puttees and felt hats. This is about the worst possible costume for the tropics, but I knew the others would cling to it until they learned better. My own clothes had long since been standardized. I wore a thin white shirt, light white cotton trousers without cuffs, low tennis shoes, and white socks pinned outside the trouser legs to keep out insects. Of course such garments wear out quickly, but they are so light that ample changes can be carried. Next to going practically naked, as the Indians do when exercising, this is the most sensible costume for comfort and health in hot climates.

Our party was on the trail by ten A.M. The Indian porters carried large wicker baskets on their backs, suspended by broad bands across their foreheads. Chief Mata sent a runner on ahead to inform the Paya Cunas we were on our way to visit them, and to arrange for the use of a house for the night. It was getting near to the rainy season, and the very heavy night dews made some night shelter advisable.

The trail crossed innumerable small hills and valleys and gradually gained elevation. My American companions soon swore it was the worst trail they had ever attempted, and from then on they continued swearing at it. The army men, in pretty good physical condition, struggled on in their ridiculous heavy costume because army regulations prescribe such attire for tropical use. But Charlton and Benton had no such respect for official regulations. First went their khaki shirts, then their absurd leather puttees. Only my suggestion that they pull off their heavy tight breeches also and be comfortable prevented their stubborn natures from complying. They were afraid I might take their pictures. Later, however, they overcame their reluctance.

That "three hours" distance by Indian reckoning took us a full seven hours, not including an hour off for lunch and

WHITE INDIANS OF DARIEN

rest. We arrived at the village of Paya at just about dusk. Chief Mata had shown considerable apprehension during the latter part of our trip, for the runner had returned and given him some unpleasant news. The Paya Indians, it appeared, did not want us to come to their village. There was no house and no food available for us. They urged Mata to take us back to Pucro. But neither my party nor I was in any mood to turn back then when the greater part of the trip was accomplished.

Mata's forebodings were justified. The village was considerably larger than Pucro, located on a beautiful clear stream, the Paya River, between high rugged hills, and housing perhaps three hundred Indians. As we marched into the center of the village and deposited our belongings in a heap on the ground, we were surrounded by about fifty surly, defiant Indians. I told Chief Mata to ask where their chief was. He spoke to them in the Indian tongue, and they replied that their chief did not want to see us. It was getting dark, and we were all impatient. I asked Mata if he knew where the chief lived and he pointed to a large house fifty yards away. I directed Pabon, the Puerto Rican orderly, and the Pucro Indians to stay with our luggage, and taking Chief Mata and the four Americans, started for the chief's house.

We had just reached it when a clamor of shouting and scuffling broke out behind us. The Paya Indians had closed in on Pabon and the Pucro Indians, rushed them, seized our luggage, and then scattered through the village, having stolen about half our stuff. Pabon was stabbing with his rifle, wisely not shooting, and the Pucro Indians were brandishing their machetes. But no blood had been shed. As we turned and ran back to our group, the remaining Paya Indians all fled.

Naturally that put "blood in our eyes." I left three of our Americans with the Pucro Indians, to guard the remnants of our luggage, and went back with Mata and the two remaining

PAYA

Americans to the Paya chief's house. We entered. In the center of the floor, sitting on a low stool with his back against a post, was an old Indian, of rather good features, but half drunk. Behind him, sprawled flat on the ground, was an almost naked woman, very voluptuous, light skinned and good looking, but completely drunk. Around the old chief were about a dozen men, some surly and insolent, some unmistakably apprehensive.

I went up to the chief, with my rifle pointing at him, Mata at my side and my two American companions covering the other Indians. Chief Mata was as angry as I. I told him to tell the Paya Chief that his Indians had stolen half our belongings. I would give them a very short time to return everything they had taken. If everything was not returned, I would shoot the chief and every man in his tribe and burn every house in the village. A comparatively young, very insolent and vicious looking man standing next to the chief started to talk in Spanish. I told him to "shut up." I was talking to the chief and not to him. He replied, in Spanish, "I am the secretary." I uttered the vilest cuss word I knew in Spanish, something to do with dogs, told him again to "shut up" and pointed my rifle at him. He shut up.

By this time the old Paya chief was sobering up, and assuming a very worried and helpless expression. The girl was also sitting up and showing fright. The old chief looked appealingly to the secretary. After a conversation in the Indian language Mata turned to me and said the Paya chief had directed that all our things be returned.

I told him to tell the Paya chief that we would stay and watch him until everything was returned. I then told the "secretary" to tell the other men in the house to go out and hurry the return of our property, as I was getting tired of waiting, but he must remain with the chief as I wanted to watch

WHITE INDIANS OF DARIEN

him too. By this time they were all decidedly cowed. The other men left and I directed Mata to tell the old chief that we wanted a house for the night. The chief said to take whatever house we wanted. Mata knew the village, so I left that to him.

Then Mata delivered a severe lecture to the aged chief, and we three Americans selected stools and sat down to a smoke. Soon my companions called out that practically all the luggage had been brought back. We escorted the old chief and his secretary outside. Chief Mata picked out a large house. Our Pucro Indians carried our stuff over to it. The old chief ordered the family occupying it to move out, and we took possession. A quick inventory showed that all our belongings had been returned except the tripod of Charlton's camera, which did not come back until the next morning. A frightened Indian had thrown it into the jungle and fled.

A fire was already burning. We and the Pucro Indians prepared a long delayed meal. That night Chief Mata and his followers occupied the ground floor, while we Americans appropriated the second story.

But our sleep was interrupted. The Paya Chief, now fully sobered, came over alone to talk to Chief Mata. And how they talked! It was my first experience of the "bardizing" of the Tules. To me, half asleep upstairs, it was fascinating. But to my tired companions it was intensely irritating.

The conversation, as I learned later, was a report by each chief to the other about the "news." The "news," of course, was about us. These formal reports are delivered with a rhythmic cadence. First one would recite what sounded like a long poem in a sort of blank verse. Then the other would reply in like manner. The words were chanted rather than spoken. It reminded me somewhat of the long formal conversations I have heard among the Chinese.

The chant went on for hours. My companions tossed and

PAYA

cursed and asked me to intervene and send the old chief home to bed, but I persuaded them to keep quiet and let the vocal ceremony proceed. Eventually the sheer melodious monotony of it put us all to sleep.

A plunge in the cool stream near by and a good breakfast put our party in a better mood next morning. Chief Mata said we would have no more trouble with the Paya Indians. Soon a messenger came from the Paya chief, bringing me a present of a beautiful cane of the mysterious *cacique carré* wood.

This wood is one of the greatest botanical mysteries of the world, found, as far as I have been able to learn, only among the Panamanian Indians from Darien to Chirique. The tree from which it comes has never been identified by botanists. The wood itself is a very dark maroon with patches almost black. It is very fine grained; contains a great deal of natural oil, and takes a beautiful smooth polish. Its origin is kept a profound secret among the Darien Indians. A prominent scientific institution is reported to have had a standing offer for many years of twenty-five thousand dollars to any one who could identify the living tree. I have known a canny Chinese trader in Panama to pay fifty dollars for a piece of *cacique carré* three feet long and three inches in diameter. Finished, polished canes of this wood bring twenty-five dollars from the Chinese merchants.

Chief Mata later secured me a small piece of this wood, twelve inches long by an inch wide and a quarter of an inch thick, but he got it only after a ten day trip "to the mountains." Friend as he was, he would give me no definite information as to its source, but hinted that it came from underground. My two guesses, which are only guesses, are: first, that *cacique carré* may be *cacique colorado*, another deep red wood, which has been buried underground in a bog and become what

WHITE INDIANS OF DARIEN

lumbermen call "water cured"; second, that it may come from some rare underground vine, such as occurs in the tropics.

Besides certain magic qualities which the Indians attach to it, and besides its beauty, durability and fine texture, the wood has remarkable therapeutic value. An open and freely bleeding wound, always hard to stanch in the tropics, stops bleeding when fine powdered scrapings of the *cacique carré* are applied to it. I have demonstrated this to the satisfaction of medical men. The Indians claim that if a woman swallows some of the powdered *cacique carré*, it will stop menstruation. This I have not been able to verify.

I fully appreciated the gift from the Paya chief. A Darien Indian can give you nothing which he considers of greater value. So I sent back by the messenger a machete, a short hunting knife, some cloth of gold, and numerous small trinkets. Then we returned to the chief's house for a more formal visit. Again the "secretary" insinuated himself into the conference, but this time with deference. The chief explained that his "secretary" was the only member of his tribe who could speak Spanish and so could talk to the Chinese traders.

He said that the Sinclair Oil Company explorers had passed up his river looking for gold, and his Indians had become aroused, as they wanted no more gold hunters in their country. That, he said, was what made them opposed to our coming. Now that he had learned from Chief Mata that we were not looking for gold or for land, and had been friendly and helpful to all the Indians we had visited, he wanted to be friends with us. He hoped we would have a big fiesta such as we had at Pucro. His people would bring in plenty of food to sell to us. Also that he would like to return with us and visit our big camp at Yavisa.

I told him I had used up all the material I had with me, but would give him a "fiesta" when he came to Yavisa. His

PAYA

disappointment was evident, but I still resented the reception his people had given us and I was determined to get full return for anything I gave him. He suggested I give him a shotgun. I replied that I had no extra shotgun with me, but I had heard that the white Indians of the Paca were staying with him and that if he would take me to them I would give him my own fine shotgun. He replied that the white Indians had all gone over to the other side of Mount Tacarcuna. He could not get them to come back. He had no control over them.

Then, with the "secretary" as a guide, we wandered around the village, but entered no houses. The men and boys of the tribe came out to watch us, some to follow us, but we saw no women. These Paya men when seen in the daytime again impressed me as being in appearance far different from any other of the Indians we had seen anywhere else in Darien. There was a very oriental look about them. This impressed me so forcibly at the time that a discovery made nearly a year later, in Washington, D. C., has fascinated me ever since.

A Dr. C. K. L. Anderson, now living in Washington, who was formerly an army surgeon and had traveled extensively in Panama and Central America, gave me a copy of a book he had published privately, entitled "Old Panama and Castillo del Oro." In this book was a copy of a map of Panama dated 1671, which shows the route to the ancient gold mines of Cana with reasonable accuracy. And on the very site of the present settlement of Paya is a village called "Japonaca!"

Of course, this may be merely a remarkable coincidence. But it is well known that in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the Spanish ships plying between Panama and the Philippines often touched at Pacific islands and carried off slaves to replace the fast-dying Indians of the American colonies. Perhaps some of them were blown northward off their usual course and did their raiding on one of the outlying

WHITE INDIANS OF DARIEN

islands of Japan. If Japanese were ever brought to the Cuna gold mines, it is quite likely that some of them escaped, intermarried with Cuna Indians, and established themselves on the Upper Paya, retaining some of their original physical characteristics and the knowledge of their origin.

But whether the Paya people were Japanese hybrids or not, they were certainly not white Indians. So there wasn't any reason for our staying at Paya any longer, particularly since our supplies were running low.

Some of my white companions dreaded the return journey overland to Pucro. So I made a bargain with the old chief. If he would take my men and my luggage down to Yavisa by canoe, I would hold a big fiesta on his arrival and give him a shotgun and other presents. I would return to Pucro alone and bring Mata and the rest of our possessions down to Yavisa for the fiesta. This was satisfactory to every one.

That night we had an undisturbed sleep. Next morning the Paya chief, a dozen followers and the Americans of my party set off down the river for Camp Townsend. I had no fear for them. They were well armed, and the tension with the Indians had been relieved. As for myself, with rifle, shotgun, automatic, and Chief Mata's party, I was perfectly at ease.

CHAPTER XVII

CARMELITA

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A LITTLE piqued at the way in which the Pucro Indians had good-naturedly derided our slow progress on the trip from Pucro to Paya, I played a rather strenuous trick on them. I was in pretty good physical condition and had been a fair long-distance runner in my school days. So I decided to demonstrate that all white men were not as slow on the trail as my companions.

I started with an advantage over all except Chief Mata. His followers still had light but appreciable loads to carry. The chief and I alone were unencumbered. I even placed my fire-arms, cartridge belt, camera and all accessories in the loads of the Indian porters, and started out with only my new cane of *cacique carré*.

That return trip, twelve miles by air line but considerably more by our route, became a cross country race with myself setting the pace. It was a run on the level and on descending grades, a walk only on the up grades, and no stops. I out-distanced the entire party, and reached the big house at Pucro in just three hours.

The story of that trip, with proper exaggerations, spread over all Darien. A year later, on the San Blas coast, I heard it repeated with satisfactory embellishments as evidence of my physical prowess.

WHITE INDIANS OF DARIEN

Naturally, on finding the big house at Pucro empty, I climbed to the little house on the hillside and had a rest in the hammock until Chief Mata and his followers straggled in below. There we all rested for about two hours, while the little lady of the hillside served us a light meal.

Chief Mata's wife and Carmelita soon appeared, and we decided to return to their "private home" farther down stream. The porters loaded up heavily with all our belongings, which had remained undisturbed in the big house. The chief's wife had a large basket on her back and Carmelita a small one. Then the chief did something that no Chocoi Indian, I feel sure, would have dreamed of doing. He took the big basket from off his wife's back and put it on his own, and the two proceeded side by side down the trail. As Dr. Fairchild later said, Chief Mata was a gentleman. What was I to do under the circumstances but transfer Carmelita's smaller load to my own back? So pleased was she that we also walked side by side down the trail, most of the distance, I believe, hand in hand.

That evening at Pucro has been a vivid and happy memory to me ever since. I was a welcome guest in that fine Indian family. I tried to teach Carmelita to dance to the white man's music from the portable victrola. Her brothers and the "secretary" improvised accompanying tunes on their flutes and Pan Pipes. Carmelita did her best, improving somewhat. The chief and his wife beamed approval, he smoking his new pipe filled with American Navy tobacco and she working on a new dress for Carmelita. It was as happy a family group as I have ever seen.

Then the chief looked at me seriously.

"Are you married?" he asked.

I told him that in my country we had a saying that no man is married when a thousand miles from home. He thought for a moment.

CARMELITA

"Are you that far away from home?"

"More than twice that," I replied.

"Then you are entitled to two wives," he said, with a twinkle in his eye.

There was a pause.

"You marry Carmelita," said he, "and you will be chief of all the Tacarcuna tribes, and we will be rich and powerful again as we used to be."

I hesitated.

"You can have the girl on the hillside too if you want her."

Chief Mata was serious, and so was I. I walked over to him, put my hand on his shoulder and said, perhaps almost sadly, "Friend, I can't do it. This is my last night in Pucro. I go back to Yavisa tomorrow and then up the Chucunaque. Afterwards I return to America. But I have been very happy here and will try to come back some time and help you."

Carmelita rushed into the main house. I could hear her crying. The chief gripped my hand. The eagerness disappeared from the faces of the rest of the family. I put "Madam Butterfly" on the victrola, smoked my pipe in silence and thought what an ass I was.

In half an hour, little Carmelita reappeared smiling and forgiving, took my hand, and sat down on a low stool at my feet.

The chief and his wife shook my hand, wished me "Buenas noches, amigo," and retired into the main house. The rest of us followed and climbed into our hammocks.

CHAPTER XVIII

CHIEF BIBIA

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NEXT morning early we started down the Pucro River in canoes, headed for Camp Townsend. The chief had decided that his wife and Carmelita should stay at home. His sons were to join us later by the overland trail. We made good time downstream. The trip which had taken three days ascending was completed by nine that night. The rest of our party had reached camp several hours ahead of us. Lieutenant Townsend had made arrangements for the housing, or rather tenting, of our Cuna guests.

I was ready to make final plans to break up Camp Townsend and start on the "great push" up the Chucunaque. Neither Mata nor the Paya chief would offer us canoemen for the trip. Both said that any of their people who went with us would be promptly killed by the upper Chucunaque Tules. I had already learned from Chief Avellino that we could not count on Chocois. I realized clearly that green negroes from Panama City and the Canal Zone would be hopeless. So it appeared that my only course was to recruit Darien negroes from Yavisa and the negro settlements along the Upper Tuyra.

Late that afternoon we were startled by the approach of a dignified self-assured stranger, clearly a Tacarcuna Cuna, from the overland trail back of camp previously used by Chief Mata and his followers. This lone Indian came forward fear-

CHIEF BIBIA

lessly, spoke in his native language to the two Cuna chiefs, and then offered his hand to me, saying in Spanish, "I am Chief Bibia of the Capeti Cunas." He was Chief Mata's brother-in-law, son of the former christianized Capeti chief who had forbidden his daughter to marry Chief Mata.

Chief Bibia stated that there was a great deal of sickness among the Capeti Cunas, and he wanted me to visit them and cure them. I told him I had no time at present, but would give him a supply of medicines to take back to his people. I suggested that he bring his family down to Camp Townsend. His village was much closer to us than Pucro.

That night I entertained all three Tacarcuna chiefs at our dinner table. The Paya chief turned out to be a persistent beggar, always asking for valuable presents. Chief Mata never importuned for gifts, and so got most of them. Chief Bibia, warmed by our hospitality, asked for a shotgun, dynamite, and numerous other gifts, but I told him when he brought his family and people to visit us, then I would give him the same things I had given the rest.

Deliberately I turned the conversation to our proposed trip up the Chucunaque. Bibia seemed to know most of that territory. He visited the Cunas Bravos on the Sucubti, an upper tributary of the Chucunaque, once a year and the Cunas Bravos often came to visit him on the Capeti. Whatever the truth of these personal visits, he did give us far more information about the upper Chucunaque than I had been able to get from any one else up to that time, and his information later proved to be fairly reliable.

Bibia said that from near Yavisa up to the Sucubti on the upper Chucunaque there were no permanent Indian settlements. On the Sucubti, one day's journey up from its junction with the Chucunaque, was the first village of Cunas Bravos who spoke the same language as his own Capeti Cunas. Two

WHITE INDIANS OF DARIEN

hours farther up the Sucubti was a second larger Cunas Bravos village. The Cunas Bravos people were not a bad people, but they had been so badly treated by the Spaniards in the early days that they had moved up to the Sucubti River and now did not allow any strangers to enter their territory. However, he said that while they would frighten away or kill small parties of intruders, he did not think they would attack our large party, particularly if they knew we were not looking for gold or land.

But, he said, we must not attempt to go farther up than the Sucubti; that in the next valley above, the Morti, were a very bad people. These Morti Indians were not true Cunas but were a tribe of San Blas Indians who had come over the high mountains from the Caribbean coast and settled in the high inland Morti Valley. They spoke a language something like that of the Cunas, but different, so it was hard to talk to them. The Cunas of the Sucubti were "Bravos," that is, fierce and brave. The Morti people were "Brujos," which in Spanish means "witches." He was sure we would never be able to pass beyond the "Morti Brujos," but if by any chance we did get by them, we would encounter the "Magic Wallas" of the upper Chucunaque.

These "Magic Wallas," said Chief Bibia, were a separate race entirely. They were very strong, powerful men, white with yellow hair. Their language was different from that of either the Cunas or the San Blas or the Chocoi. They possessed "magic powers." They could turn a rifle bullet away from a distance of ten feet. They could bring great floods and earthquakes. And they could see what people were doing and thinking from a long way off.

I asked him to describe the Magic Wallas and his description fitted exactly the three white girls I had seen at Yavisa. I said I wanted to find them. He said I would never see them



Group of White Indians at Aligandi, San Blas Coast

CHIEF BIBIA

again. They had all gone up to the very head of the Chucunaque. All the armies in the world could not go into the Walla country. The Wallas were not normal men, but were "Spirit Men" who knew all kinds of magic and could not be conquered or killed. I told him I had stronger magic than that of the "Magic Wallas." He only shook his head.

Chief Bibia said all this before Mata and the Paya chief, who sat silent. I asked Mata bluntly if what Bibia said was true. Mata said he believed so. I then asked Mata if Chief Bibia could go up to the Cunas Bravos at Sucubti. He said he thought he could. So I told Chief Bibia that if he would guide us to the Cunas Bravos at Sucubti and help us make friends with them, I would give him my own shotgun, a victrola, and many other valuable presents. Bibia said he would think about it, and if he decided that he could take us up to the Sucubti he would come back in about ten days. But in any case he could supply us no other Indians, as he alone could go into the Cunas Bravos' territory. This was the best I could make him promise, and it wasn't very good. But at any rate, my general plan was succeeding. The news of our harmlessness and good intentions was spreading from tribe to tribe. I felt there was a good chance that it had already spread up the Chucunaque to the mysterious tribes enumerated by Bibia.

Our fiesta that night was a rather solemn, joyless, womanless affair, but we went through with it as I had promised. The three Cuna chiefs sat with me and smoked. I tried to bring about a friendly feeling between them without much success. Their differences were too deep seated to be easily adjusted. We had a display of fireworks and played the victrola. But I could not break down the chiefs' formal reserve.

Early next morning Mata and the Paya chief departed down the Chucunaque by canoe. Chief Bibia left by the over-

WHITE INDIANS OF DARIEN

land trail. From then on my attention was directed primarily to making final preparation for the "great push."

Soon after the Cunas had left, Chief Avellino and his Chocois swarmed back to camp. I then heard in detail the reports of the scientists, Baer, Breder and Brin, who had stayed with him. First, Baer reported that he had made anthropological measurements of about a hundred Chocois. Their "cephalic index," or proportion of breadth to length of head, averaged about 0.75 which placed them just midway between "long-headed" and "round-headed" people.* Also Baer reported that a great many of the Chocoi children had decidedly light brown hair, some all over the head and some in patches, which became dark as the children grew older.

Breder, the very intellectual and orthodox scientist, had some even more unusual things to report. Besides finding a new species of small white frog, which he considered more important than my white Indians, he had had some very unscientific experiences with Avellino. Every day he went alone up small creeks towards the foothills, collecting specimens of frogs, lizards, small fish, snakes, etc. These creeks were narrow rock lined streams. The bordering jungle was very dense, and as it was near the end of the dry season, the ground was strewn with fallen leaves. He took special care to see if he was followed.

But each night Avellino, who remained at home with

*I refer any interested readers to the "American Journal of Physical Anthropology," vol. IX, no. 1, edited by Dr. Ales Hrdlicka, Curator of Anthropology of the Smithsonian Institution at Washington, D. C. In this publication, which also includes later anthropological measurements by Prof. Baer of the Cuna Indians, I quote Dr. Hrdlicka as follows: "Much to our surprise, the two tribes are shown to belong to two separate types of Indians. But even more interesting and important, are the facts that the type of . . . the Chocos (Chocois), nears that of the Nahua (of Mexico), while that of . . . the Cunas is evidently very close on one hand to that of the Mayas of Yucatan, and on the other to that of the Yungas who extended for a great distance along the western coast of South America, to below Nasca (Peru)."

CHIEF BIBIA

Baer, would laughingly relate to Breder almost every movement he had made during the day. How he had overturned a flat rock at the end of a log and under it found three golden frogs with black spots; where he had seen a snake of a certain type and color. Where he had netted some odd fish, etc., etc. This went on day after day. Breder would go alone for miles on these collecting trips. Avellino would stay at home and tell him every night what he had done during the day. Breder could only conclude "that the old boy has got the German secret-service beaten to death."

One midnight, to cap the climax, Avellino awakened all three scientists to tell them that a Chocoi woman, the wife of the hunter he had previously sent down to Camp Townsend, had just given birth to a baby boy. At Camp Townsend, seven hours distance for an Indian in the day time, that woman *had* delivered a baby boy at precisely the time stated by Avellino! These are facts. None of us have ever had a rational explanation for them.

While I was hearing these reports Avellino appeared suddenly with the startling news that a war-party of fourteen Cunas Bravos Indians was camped at the mouth of the Tuquesa River, a tributary of the Chucunaque about twenty miles above Yavisa. He said he could "see" them, as he had "seen" Breder looking for his frogs and fish. They were waiting to attack us at a point where the channel swung over to the bank and the high grass offered good cover.

So earnest and positive was Avellino that I immediately decided to investigate. The Tuquesa was considered Chocoi territory. The "dead line" of the Tules was at the Membrillo River, considerably farther upstream. Avellino was quite indignant about this invasion, saying that it was the first time in his memory that a war-party of the Cunas Bravos had come so far down into Chocoi territory. Later that afternoon the

WHITE INDIANS OF DARIEN

Chinese agent now at Yavisa reported that the night before a canoe load of Cunas Bravos had appeared at Yavisa. Two of them had come into his shop. They were evidently spying on our camp.

I needed trained canoemen to take my party up the Chucunaque. Who more suitable than these Cunas Bravos if I could only make friends with them? I suggested it to Avellino. He did not think they would become friends. They were a "war-party." But he said that, since they were in his territory, he would give me men to go up there, provided I would not go above the Membrillo, and provided I would take hard-wood shields to protect the men. The Cunas Bravos, he said, had two old shotguns secured from traders on the San Blas Coast but no rifles. So hard-wood shields would be protection enough. I told him to get his men, prepare some shields, and we would leave tomorrow.

Early the next morning our "flying squadron" started up the Chucunaque in two long dugout canoes with outboard motors and several Chocoi canoe-men supplied by Avellino. Both my motors had exhaust mufflers which made them almost noiseless at a distance of fifty yards.

By mid-afternoon our tense and excited Chocois said we were approaching the mouth of the Tuquesa. We rounded a bend, keeping close to the east bank, and there, sitting in front of a high stand of grass, were fourteen strange Cuna Indians, just as Avellino had "seen" them. They were evidently taken wholly by surprise. They jumped in their canoes, paddled across the river, here one hundred yards wide, and stopped to observe us.

I stood up in my canoe, waved to the Cunas and tried to indicate that we wanted to be friends. But when we started to approach them slowly, they dug their paddles furiously into the water and dashed up-stream. The water just above the

CHIEF BIBIA

Tuquesa became too shallow for our outboard motors. We took to our paddles but lost distance rapidly, and gave up the chase. Those Cunas Bravos were not yet ready to be friends. We could not capture them in their native element. I was to learn later that the only solution was to let them capture us first.

During the excitement of the chase, one of our shotguns went off accidentally, narrowly missing Benton and sending two buckshot through the calf of a Chocoi's leg. It was not a dangerous wound, but a bad, bungling piece of business. The Cunas Bravos must have thought the shot was intended for them, though they were far out of range.

I sent Benton and the wounded Chocoi back to Camp Townsend in one canoe. The rest of us camped for the night at the mouth of the Tuquesa, hoping the Cunas Bravos might come back, but they did not. Next day we returned to Camp Townsend, disgusted with our bungling failure. We had only made bad matters worse. The Cunas Bravos were definitely alarmed.

CHAPTER XIX

FINAL PREPARATIONS

*

MY job now was to get native Darien negroes to man the large cavalcade of canoes I would need when our whole party, with full equipment, would start up on the "great push." We whites alone, I knew, could not stand the physical work of forcing the heavy canoes up to the ultimate headwaters of the Chucunaque and still retain the vitality we would need for other matters.

Next day I sent Lieutenant Townsend back to Panama City in the *Marguerite* for supplies. Just before he left, Chief Avellino came to me with a very beautiful young Chocoi girl. It appeared that the Panamanian captain, whom I did not like and whose name I have never mentioned in this book, had told the Yavisa negroes he was not going up the Chucunaque only to be killed by several thousand war-like Indians. He was going back to Panama when we broke camp and had been trying to persuade the Indian girl to go with him. He had not yet harmed her, but Avellino was indignant. I satisfied myself that the story was true and told the captain to pack his personal belongings and return to Panama with Lieutenant Townsend.

Now, with our start on the "great push" definitely imminent, I set about furiously to find and recruit an efficient crew. For the next two weeks the "flying squadron" was in

FINAL PREPARATIONS

constant motion. I will not weary the reader with the details. They were important only in their conclusion.

We combined a search for competent negroes with a certain amount of exploration. We ascended the Pirri and Tucuti Rivers, both tributaries of the Lower Tuyra, both populated by negroes near their lower courses and by Chocoi Indians in their upper courses. We discovered a large, unknown branch of the Tucuti, known to the Indians as the "Sabalo." We chased phantom rumors of white Indians far to the south. We heard tales of strange tree-dwelling Indians over the border in the Atrato River valley, and encountered a fugitive American criminal living with the negroes at Tucuti. Finally we recruited the toughest bunch of negro renegades I have ever seen and brought them back to Camp Townsend under promise of high pay.

The leader of these outlaws was an old negro named Barbino who had murdered a gold prospector several years ago and was under sentence of death in Panama City. "Boca de Cupa" was another powerful, scarred ruffian. I herded them back to camp, gave them liberal advance payments, and proceeded to fatten them up for the slaughter before they knew what it was all about.

With my negro crew assured, my next consideration was about the white members of our party. It had long been decided that Dr. H. L. Fairchild, representing the University of Rochester, would not go with us on the "great push" on account of his advanced age. Major Malsbury had completed his geodetic observations and wanted to return to his family on the Canal Zone. I had already decided that Corporal Murphy of the U. S. Signal Corps, with his useless wireless equipment, should go back too. That "portable" wireless outfit, consisting of telescopic steel mast, instruments and twenty wet

WHITE INDIANS OF DARIEN

batteries weighed all told over a ton, and would have required twenty-five or thirty men to transport it overland.

The military men, and Breder and Brin among the scientists, were in fine physical shape. Charlton, the photographer, and Benton, the writer, were in fair condition. Major Johnson, the ex-army naturalist, seemed strong and healthy. Only Baer of the Smithsonian appeared unfit physically. Baer, as I have already stated, was a short man, under five feet six inches, who weighed at least two hundred and twenty-five pounds. When I asked the Smithsonian Institution in Washington to send an anthropologist with us, they selected Dr. Baer because he was the trained assistant to Dr. Hrdlicka. When I expressed doubt as to whether Baer could stand the physical hardships, I was told if I did not take Baer I would take no one. I particularly wanted the Smithsonian represented, so I acquiesced in the choice of Prof. Baer, though with my "tongue in my cheek." I thought that the preliminary preparation at the camp near Yavisa would put him in reasonable physical condition.

But Baer's type of work, consisting of anthropological measurements of Indians who readily came to him required no physical training or "reducing" whatever. I spoke very frankly to Baer, stating that I did not feel justified in taking him on the very difficult trip up the Chucunaque. Lieutenant Townsend agreed with me. But Baer was broken-hearted. He stated this was the greatest scientific opportunity of his life. If he was the first accredited anthropologist to study the white Indians, it would be the making of his career. But if I sent him back just on the eve of our departure into the unexplored area it would be a permanent blot on his record.

Finally I told him I would put him to a test. We still had a couple of weeks before the start of the "great push." I decided to send Baer, Brin and Major Johnson with some of

FINAL PREPARATIONS

our newly acquired negroes up to Chief Mata's home on the Pucro. They were then to make the overland trip to Paya and back. If Baer could stand that trip and still wanted to go up the Chucunaque I would take him. So, with a few more presents for Chief Mata and Carmelita, I sent them on their way.

Then, to break in my remaining negroes, I started a series of short explorations up the lower tributaries of the Chucunaque. We ascended successively the Rio Tupisa and the Rio Ucunati, both of which come down from the San Blas mountains to the east. At the head of canoe-navigation on the Tupisa we found a scattering settlement of friendly Chocoi Indians, and another beautiful big "round-house" such as we had seen at the mouth of the Yape River on the lower Tuyra. On the Ucunati River we found no inhabitants.

About half way up the Tupisa branch I noticed an oddly shaped hill on the south bank. It was perhaps seventy feet high with a nondescript shack on its summit. I climbed up a narrow trail through low underbrush to investigate. The shack was occupied by a powerful negro, well over six feet tall, who had a Chocoi Indian wife. Apparently they were ostracized by both the negroes and the Chocois. He was a fine, straightforward, courteous individual. His home was clean and his Indian wife apparently industrious and contented.

As soon as I reached the top of the hill, I saw that it was unquestionably artificial or artificially altered. The top was perfectly level. The edges were straight lines to uniform slopes. There were no large trees on the summit or slopes, but the thick underbrush prevented a good examination. I told the negro that if he would clear the whole hillside, top and slopes, so that I could examine it, I would pay him twenty dollars, half in advance, and would come back in a week or ten days

FINAL PREPARATIONS

ten days. Her food is brought to her, but she is not allowed contact with other people. Perhaps the Paca River white Indians whom Chief Mata said had gone to Paya, had had with them a young girl at this stage of physiological development and had left her with the Pucro Indians to pass the fixed ceremonial period which marks the transition from childhood to womanhood. Anyway, the sight of her had increased Baer's desire to continue with us. And as he had apparently passed the test I had set, I finally consented.

Lieutenant Townsend was due back any day from Panama City with new supplies, and we were separating the equipment and stores to be taken up the Chucunaque from those to be sent back to Panama. Chief Mata had come back with Baer's party and I gave him everything I did not want to save.

Early one of those last mornings, I took Breder and Brin and two negro canoemen and returned to the strange hill on the Tupisa River. The negro had done a good job of clearing the top and slopes. Immediately we realized we had found something important. That hill was probably originally natural, the terminus of a low ridge coming down from the southeast, but had been greatly modified by man. It had been kept cleared down to quite recent times, as there were no trees on it over a few inches in diameter, perhaps ten or fifteen years old.

The hill was somewhat in the shape of a flat horseshoe, with its concave side toward the northeast, facing a low plain of about twenty acres, along the river. This plain had also been recently cleared, as its low growing vegetation contrasted sharply with the surrounding high jungle growth. The top of the hill was perfectly level, about one hundred feet long, and seventy feet wide. The northeast side was concave and formed a large symmetrical amphitheater facing the plain, with five

WHITE INDIANS OF DARIEN

uniform terraces ten feet wide, separated by 45° slopes ten feet high. Every detail was mathematically exact and even.

The rear of the mound was also regular and artificial, but was built on a different plan. Cut into the exact center of the southwest side was a rectangular depression with 45° slopes meeting at the level of the bottom of the mound. The side toward the river was also uniform and even, but was not indented. The side away from the river was joined by a narrow ridge to the line of natural hills on the end of which the mound had been constructed.

The general effect of the hill was a truncated pyramid, a design common to most of the ancient cultures of Central and South America. The terraced amphitheater was unusual, but its purpose was apparent. The rectangular depression in the rear was a mystery. I have never seen or heard of such a feature anywhere else. We later found a large artificial pyramid with a concave face on the San Blas coast, but it did not have the rear depression.

Perhaps the most interesting thing about this Tupisa pyramid was its newness. The almost perfect condition of the surfaces and the smallness of the trees upon it, indicated clearly that it had not been abandoned many years. While I was exploring and drawing a rough map, Breder and Brin had been digging a trench. The soil was hard-packed clay with no trace of humus. They found several fragments of black pottery—enough to justify a thorough investigation by archeologists. The negro said he had lived there about a year, and had found a great deal more of the pottery while clearing a space for his house.

But we had no time for the tedious processes of careful archeology, so went back to camp, assured of one more proof that Darien had been the site of a high and unknown culture.

The next day Townsend arrived from Panama City in the

FINAL PREPARATIONS

Coco Solo, which this time came clear up to camp. He brought with him a new Panamanian captain, to replace the one I had sent home. Our final preparations for the "great push" up the Chucunaque were complete. The last night at dismantled Camp Townsend was a celebration and a farewell. Dr. Fairchild, Major Malsbury, Corporal Murphy and our Panamanian negroes except Arthur and Dirty Dick were all slated to go back on the *Coco Solo*. Much of our heavy equipment, and all of our ethnological collections from the Chocois and Tacarcuna Cunas were on the boat. They are now on exhibition in the National Museum in Washington.

Then, when I thought everything was ready for our start, Barbino and the other Darien negroes came in a delegation to announce that they had changed their minds and had decided not to go up the Chucunaque, where the Indians were very bad and "brujos." I had already paid them a month's wages in advance, which they had either spent at Yavisa or sent back to their jungle families. I tried to argue with them a while, then told them that I had the record of each of them. They were all eligible for jail in Panama, and their leader Barbino was wanted for murder. I had military powers granted especially by President Porras. They were all under arrest, and if any one of them attempted to escape he would be shot on the spot. But if they came with me, I would see that all legal charges against them were dropped. After this lecture I put them under armed guard for the rest of the night.

That evening I carefully repeated my charges to all the white men who were to accompany me. We were going up to the headwaters of the Chucunaque and either cut over and descend the Bayano or cross over to the San Blas coast on the Caribbean. But come what may, we would not return down the Chucunaque. If any man got sick, we would keep him with us and give him the best medical care possible, but we

WHITE INDIANS OF DARIEN

would not turn back for sickness, as otherwise there was no use starting. Some of us were sure to get sick. I would discuss all matters of policy with the other members of the party, but final decisions were to rest with me. If any man was not willing to go ahead under these conditions, he could return to Panama City on the *Coco Solo*.

All agreed to the terms enthusiastically. I particularly remember Brin's declaration that he would be the first man to enter every Indian stronghold and hoped that we Americans would follow him. The reader will later understand why I make these conditions so plain.

CHAPTER XX

OFF ON THE "GREAT PUSH"

*

ON March 29th, at 11 A.M. we finally got started on the "Great Push." There were twenty-four in the party, all told—eleven white men including the new Panamanian captain whom Townsend had brought back on the *Coco Solo*, eleven negro boatmen, and two negro cooks. We had six dug-out canoes of varying size. Two were enormous—fully sixty feet long with a four-foot beam. Two were somewhat smaller, and two were comparatively small. Each of the small canoes was equipped with an Elto outboard motor and towed two of the others on the open stretches. The negro boatmen helped with paddles.

I took command of the leading squadron of three canoes, and gave Townsend command of the second. The day's run was accomplished without a hitch. Brin complained of a slight fever, but would not let Baer, our doctor, examine him. We averaged about five miles an hour on the deep and smooth river. And at nightfall we made camp on a gravel bar at the mouth of the Canglon, a tributary entering from the west. The sky was clear, so we did not put up any tent-flys, but slept in the open air under mosquito-bars.

We all felt very well pleased with the way things were going. The white men were enthusiastic. Brin's fever had subsided, and he joined Benton, Townsend, and Rosebaum

WHITE INDIANS OF DARIEN

in a game of bridge until late that night. Even the renegade jungle negroes seemed pleased with the easy efficiency of that first day and with their excellent supper. They announced that they would follow me "into Hell."

We divided the night into three watches—9 to 12, 12 to 3, and 3 to 6. The party was divided into eleven pairs, consisting of a white man and a negro. The cooks were excused from this duty. So every one had two or three successive nights of uninterrupted sleep. There were no mosquitoes that first night, and only a few gnats. Nothing happened to disturb us, and by 7:30 the next morning we had breakfasted, broken camp, and were on our way again.

The second day we encountered numerous shallows and rapids which slowed us up considerably, but we ran ahead without stopping for lunch and covered twenty-five miles by water. During the day we saw many big howler monkeys and a great many crocodiles. I shot an iguana out of the top of a tall tree, providing fresh meat for supper. At 3:30 we camped on a shelving bank.

This night the sky was cloudy, so we put up three officers' tent-flies for the whites, a small fly for the cooks, and a large one for the negroes. While we were making camp, a band of howler monkeys let out an awful uproar from a big tree just above us. We shot two with our rifles, and Baer and Johnson skinned them well below camp.

One of Baer's most unpleasant jobs, required by Dr. Hrdlicka, was to prepare an anthropological chart of all the monkeys we could collect. He weighed their bodies, brains, and other organs, calculating their relation to the total weight. Such charts are supposed to have great scientific value.

Breder seined some interesting small fish. We all had a swim in the cool water of the river, and then a fine supper of fried iguana, rice, peas, canned "bully beef" and alligator pears.

OFF ON THE "GREAT PUSH"

We had passed a tree on the river bank loaded with the largest pears I have seen before or since.

The Panamanian captain had the first watch, Rosebaum the second, and I the third. As I came on duty at 3 A.M., Charlton, who had been awake, said that he heard Indian whistling signals some distance up river. I listened. Then I called Breder and Johnson.

After a few moments we heard a series of short, whistling notes which sounded as if some one were counting. First came eight quick, regular notes. Then a pause. Then nine and another pause. Then four and a pause. Then five, and so on. They might have come from some animal, but none of us had ever heard of any bird, frog, or insect which produced such notes. They sounded more like a flute or an Indian Pan Pipe. Their regularity and their oddly spaced pauses suggested some sort of telegraphic code. We knew, of course, that sooner or later we would be under constant observation from the up-river Indians. Perhaps this was the first sign of their presence.

But nothing else happened that night. The rest of the men went back to bed. I sat up with my negro partner until day-break, when a big howler monkey let out a tremendous roar across the river, awoke the entire camp, and sent numerous crocodiles scurrying into the water.

This day we made another thirty miles by water, but covered only twelve miles in a straight line because of the loops and curves of the river. During the afternoon we encountered many great logs and trees which had fallen clear across the stream. It was almost impossible to carry our heaviest canoes around such obstacles. In one place we dug a canal in the bank around a log end. Then we came to a huge hardwood log, half under water with both ends buried deep in the bank. There was nothing to do but chop a passage through it, which took us an hour and a half.

WHITE INDIANS OF DARIEN

At this obstruction Brin left us. He had complained of feeling sick all day. I had fixed him a comfortable bed in the bow of my lead canoe and did not think his condition very serious. He had no fever but was tired and nervous. When we encountered the big tree, Brin announced that he thought it very inadvisable for him to continue further and insisted on returning to Yavisa.

This was a quite disciplinary problem for me to solve. His leaving would be contrary to the agreement we had all made before we started. But Brin was the personal representative of President Porras, and I did not feel in a position to refuse him. I gave him my own lead canoe, loaded into it all his personal effects and food for three days, and sent him down river with two negro boatmen, whom I could ill spare. No one else wanted to return with him. It was months later that we learned that Brin had died of pernicious malaria just after reaching Panama.

During that day we passed a dead tapir in the water. Townsend got a shot at a live one on the bank and missed it. We saw many large black ducks (*Patos Reales*), monkeys, iguanas, and a whole colony of what looked like big black tom-cats in a tree near the river. This would have been wonderful hunting country if we had had time for such amusement. But we had to push on steadily, and the noise of our outboard motors, now unmuffled for increased power, prevented our approaching close to any game.

That night we camped on a gravel bar at the mouth of a stream which Barbino called the "Metati." This fugitive negro murderer had names for all the streams in the vicinity. Some time ago he had been hard pressed by the Panamanian Colonial Police who came to Yavisa in search of him and had taken refuge up the Chucunaque. He claimed to have been all the way up to the Sucubti and to have stolen food from the out-

OFF ON THE "GREAT PUSH"

lying Indian plantations there. In spite of Barbino's record and his attempted mutiny at Camp Townsend, I was beginning to have a good deal of regard for him. He was the best bad-water canoeman I have ever known, and in emergencies his brain worked like lightning. He later developed into my most loyal follower and was one of the four negroes to get back to the Canal Zone with me.

The next day, about 3 P.M., we reached the mouth of the Membrillo River, the famous deadline of the Tule tribes, which I had heard about as soon as I got to Yavisa, and beyond which no one was supposed to pass. There were no Indians in sight, and no signs of them on the banks. We camped peacefully on a bar below the mouth of the Membrillo. I intended to cross the dead-line in the morning.

After the tents were pitched, Breder and Rosebaum seined in the mouth of the Membrillo and caught what Breder described as a new species of fish, which he christened with two Latin words and a final "*Membrilliensis*." He was so pleased with this discovery that he made a short exploration trip up the near bank of the Membrillo.

In a few minutes he returned in a great hurry. About three hundred yards from the Chucunaque he had heard a peculiar chopping sound from around a bend ahead. Proceeding cautiously, he saw an Indian on the far bank near the water's edge hitting the trunk of a tree with a machete. Apparently he was not trying to cut down the tree. The machete strokes were arranged in regular series like the whistling notes we had heard a few nights before. Evidently the Indian was trying to send a code signal.

Breder listened. Presently he heard a similar, answering sound from far up the river. Like many scientists, Breder had absolutely no sense of personal fear. He called out to the Indian, who took one startled look at him and disappeared

WHITE INDIANS OF DARIEN

into the jungle. This left no doubt in our minds that we were under constant observation by the Indians. But there was no trouble at all that night.

The next morning at 7:20 we crossed the famous deadline. There was no opposition from the Indians. In fact, no Indians showed themselves. But we had plenty of other trouble. For several hours the going was terrific—more like chopping a road through the woods than canoeing up a river. Innumerable logs and whole trees blocked the stream, which was very shallow. We went over and under and through them. One blockade held us up for an hour and a half. We reached the mouth of the Chiati shortly after noon, having covered only a little more than five miles in five hours. Again we ran into log-jams which held us up for two hours. Then we entered the most beautiful stretch of the Chucunaque which we had yet seen.

The river widened. It was deep, free of logs, and still. The banks were grassy to the water's edge, and the trees in the background were enormous. At 3:15 I picked a beautiful little camp ground—a ledge of shale about forty feet wide, two hundred feet long, and two feet above the water level. Just in front was a short, swift rapid over smooth shale, with a miniature horseshoe falls ideal for bathing.

I have said that no Indians showed themselves on this first stretch across the deadline. But we saw many signs of them. Just before we left Yavisa, a Cuna sent by Chief Bibia had warned us that the Cunas Bravos had cut a trail from their villages to the mouth of the Chiati and were waiting for us there. We were prepared for an attack if it should come, but it did not.

Shortly after we crossed the deadline, however, we found fresh tracks on the bank. Then a little later on we came to a sand bar in which were stuck a number of turkey feathers in odd designs, which Barbino said were "magic signs." Later

OFF ON THE "GREAT PUSH"

we found a recent camp fire on the shore beside which lay two beautifully made five foot arrows with reed shafts and hardwood points. Perhaps the Indians had been surprised and dropped them there when they left in a hurry. But our large party, making no attempt at silence, could be heard a long way off. The arrows were probably intended as a warning.

Whatever the Indians might be planning to do, they were certainly watching us. So that evening on the Chiati we gave them an exhibition. Benton fired a volley from his Luger automatic, and I touched off an army signal rocket—the kind which goes up several hundred feet and explodes, leaving floating green lights which last for some time. That was to offset the Indians' magic.

Before we went to bed, Breder used his seine in the river and caught a new fish—certainly a new species and possibly a new genus, a distinction very important to him. He and Baer were much excited. They were covering ground which had never been penetrated by scientists. They were looking forward to crossing the Sucubti and entering absolutely unknown country.

Nothing unusual happened that night. We got going early and had a good run for two or three miles. Then we encountered a succession of log-jams, which we had to chop through with axes. Finally we ran against an enormous log too high to lift our canoes over and too low in the water to chop. It held us up for an hour and a half until I finally blew it up with two sticks of dynamite.

A little farther on we passed an Indian camp with a whole row of turkey feathers stuck upright in a straight line in the sand. There were twenty-one of them—one for each member of our party. Still we saw no Indians and made camp after covering only about eight miles. I got my rockets and flares ready to set off if we had visitors, but none appeared. We were

WHITE INDIANS OF DARIEN

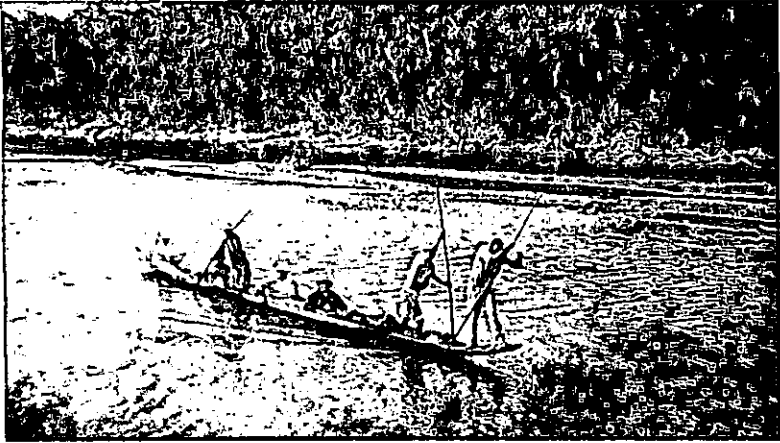
beginning to doubt the stories about the "thousands of hostile Indians" up the Chucunaque. There were certainly none below the Sucubti.

The next day was even worse. After we had gone two miles from camp, we hit the worst succession of jams we had yet encountered. One log took three sticks of dynamite before we could pass. Another held us up for an hour and a half. My dynamite was running low. What I should have brought was a lumberman's cross-cut saw. That day we made only four miles. We found turkey feathers stuck in the sand, but saw no Indians.

The next day was the same story. We covered only two and a half miles, hacking our way with axes and saving the dynamite for special occasions. I had only five sticks left. At 1:30 we made camp in front of a jam which looked as if it would take the rest of the day to deal with—two huge logs on top of one another clear across the river. I scouted ahead with Rosebaum in our smallest canoe, finding water conditions somewhat better for a mile and a half. We shot a "perdis" or wild chicken and four large curassows. We saw Indian tracks, but no Indians.

Day by day the river seemed to get worse. It was narrowing rapidly, so that more trees extended entirely across. We hacked our way two miles on the next day through minor jams and then were brought up short by a five-foot log of solid cocobolo, hard as iron and without a weak spot in it. It was imbedded deep in each bank. Two and a half feet of its thickness were above water-level, and one and one half feet below.

First we cut two deep "V"s five feet apart and down to six inches below the water. I laid a stick of dynamite in one of them, packing it tight with heavy clay, and hoping that it would shear off the chunk between the cuts. But it merely blew the clay out and didn't damage the log a particle. Next



Up the Chucunaque



Hard Going on the Chucunaque

OFF ON THE "GREAT PUSH"

I placed two sticks of dynamite under water, securing them by strings. This time part of the chunk blew off, and let us pass through after another hour's chopping. Later we encountered several smaller jams which would have looked very formidable a few days ago, but now they seemed like child's play.

At the last barricade I had the men push the smallest canoe over and with Pabon and the Panamanian captain scouted on for half a mile. We should have reached the mouth of the Sucubti according to all our calculations, but did not. The chart made by Captain Selfridge in 1871 proved utterly worthless. Our unofficial opinion was that the "Magic Wallas" were moving the river further upstream every day.

Finally we ran against a tremendous log-jam which looked as if it would take a full day to pass. So I returned, picked out the best available site, and pitched camp there. The big canoes arrived about 4 P.M.

When we had finished supper, I was debating the necessity of maintaining guards that night. The men were fearfully tired. I was practically certain that no Indians in force could approach us by water in the darkness through those logs and snags without making a terrible racket. As for the land side, we were safe there. No one, not even an Indian, could walk quietly through the dry leaves on the ground. A little opossum had come down to the bank a few minutes ago, and he sounded like an army. We all turned out in force, thinking it was at least a *tigre* or a *tapir*.

I had almost decided that a night guard was unnecessary when the Panamanian captain came to me with news which changed the situation. He had just overheard some of the negroes planning to steal a canoe and food and leave for Yavisa in the darkness. I called all hands and questioned the negroes. Three of the laziest and most stubborn admitted the story. They said they certainly did not intend to go beyond

WHITE INDIANS OF DARIEN

the mouth of the Sucubti. And besides they didn't like the way I swore at them!

I read them the riot act. I told them that they had contracted to go as far as the villages of the Cunas Bravos. If they didn't like being sworn at, they should do their share of the work. If any man quit or deserted, or attempted to steal a boat or food, I would shoot him on the spot. When it suited my convenience, I would send them back to Yavisa, but not before. They had realized that they would encounter Indians when they agreed to come. But the Indians were not nearly as dangerous as I was. If they were sensible and did what I told them, they'd be all right. But if they mutinied, I would shoot them all.

This sobered them down. They said they would go to the villages on the Sucubti, but on no account would they go on up into the Walla country. I told them I had no intention of taking them there. Only real men, not children, could go with me to the Walla country. This brought peals of laughter from the loyal negroes, who said they would go to hell with me.

That ended the mutiny, but it also demonstrated the necessity of maintaining a white night guard, not so much against the Indians as to prevent our own blacks from deserting in stolen canoes. So Rosebaum, Benton and I kept guard that night.

At 1:30 there was a short brisk shower. This was good news, for it showed that the rainy season was about to arrive. We wanted the river to swell and let us continue by the water route. During the night we heard again the strange counting whistles in the jungle, showing that the Indians were watching our progress closely.

Just before daybreak the leader of the rebellious negroes came up to me and said "Good morning, Mr. Marsh" in a very respectful tone. I accepted this conciliatory gesture with a grudging nod. After breakfast I loaded the seven strongest negroes into canoes and went at the log jam, telling them that

OFF ON THE "GREAT PUSH"

the first man to quit would be shot on the spot. The effect was magical. In exactly one hour they had torn, clawed, and hacked a good passage through it.

Then I sent Townsend, Rosebaum, the Panamanian captain, and two of the blacks ahead with instructions to find the Sucubti, drive a stake into it, tie it to a tree and prevent the "Magic Wallas" from moving it further upstream. While they were gone, we attacked the rest of the jams, and by 1:30 had covered three miles.

I was driving the negroes hard, and not one shirked. But about 1:30 my strongest man faltered and dropped his ax. I asked him what was the matter. He said he was faint from hunger. I thought he was shamming and drove them all back to work. Then Arthur, the Black Boss, told me that the men could work harder if they had some breakfast. To my amazement I learned that the cooks had fed them only three crackers apiece for the last three days. This would have been all right when we were traveling with motors, but the last three days had been very hard work, and the men could not be expected to keep at it all day on empty stomachs. We had a big meal at night, but never stopped for lunch.

So I told the negroes they could stop work for the day. And I would see that hereafter they got plenty of rice and meat for breakfast. But they preferred to keep working as long as they could by "spelling" each other.

At 3 o'clock Townsend's advance party returned. They had reached the Sucubti at last—just about two miles above my working gang. They had ascended it for two miles, finding it shallow in spots, but free from jams. At the end of the two miles they had found some outlying banana plantations, indicating that the Indians villages were near. Townsend estimated that it would take two days to clear a passage for our large canoes up to the Sucubti.

CHAPTER XXI

THE SUCUBTI AT LAST

*

THIS was encouraging news. I felt that once we reached the Sucubti, we could get to the villages without much trouble. On the return to "Camp Mutiny" we shot five wild turkeys and a partridge from the overhanging branches without having to leave the canoes. We saw numerous monkeys, and saw eight large black wildcats in one tree. They were about twice the size of an ordinary tom-cat. None of my zoölogical friends has yet been able to identify them.

Just above camp we heard Indians shouting in the jungle. But they did not show themselves, and we had lost practically all of our fear of them. We later learned that they did not believe we could make the passage, and indeed I don't think we could have without dynamite.

The next morning I sent Benton, Townsend, Rosebaum, and Barbino on a land hike to the northeast, leaving Charlton, Johnson, Baer, Pabon, Victor, the weakest negro, and the two cooks to hold down the camp. I wanted to give the white men something to do, as some of them had been getting morbid in the last few days of delay at Camp Mutiny.

Then I started out again with Breder, the Panamanian captain, and the working crew, after seeing that the negroes had an enormous breakfast. I let them have their own way until eleven A.M., but they took things so easily that I felt I'd

THE SUCUBTI AT LAST

better spruce them up. So I told them that I was going to keep them at work until we got to the Sucubti—even if it took all day and all night. The effect was marked. They went to work in earnest, and by three o'clock we were through.

We left one obstacle to be overcome by strategy. Just below the junction a seven-foot tree lay right across the river, its ends firmly embedded in the bank. The lower edge was about six inches above the water level. So I unloaded the light canoe, submerged it, and ran it under the log. The water here was four feet deep and the banks allowed cargo to be transported around the ends of the log. So I decided that the heavy canoes also could be passed under the log in the same way.

We ascended the Sucubti a little way in the light canoe and found a good camp site not far above the mouth. The river was very shallow and apparently falling rapidly. But it was free of logs and passable. The trip back to Camp Mutiny took two hours through the open passage which had taken so many days to clear.

When we got to camp, we found that the land scouting party had already returned, bringing a fine yearling deer which the cook was already preparing. They had found the forest fairly open and had discovered a large open space covered with tall grass which I could not account for and which they did not sufficiently investigate. But they saw no signs of Indians. Certainly the "seven thousand hostile savages" reported by Captain Selfridge did not exist.

Early the next morning we started on the final stretch of the Chucunaque. That last day was the hardest of all. In spite of the passage cleared by the working crew, there were many obstacles left in the path of the loaded canoes—submerged logs which could not be chopped and over which the heavy dugouts had to be hauled by main force. The whites had to join with the blacks or we would never have got through.

WHITE INDIANS OF DARIEN

By noon we reached the large log which we had left untouched the day before. We unloaded the big canoes, filled them with water and ran them under, after carrying the cargo around the ends of the log. This operation took two hours. By three o'clock we reached the junction of the Sucubti, and here another disappointment awaited us. The river had fallen considerably in the night, and was in many places no more than two or three inches deep. Even when we put all the men on a single canoe, we could hardly haul it over the shallows. It was terrific work, but at five o'clock we finally reached the camp site I had found the day before, a gravel bar beside the river. We had attained the ultimate limit of navigation for our big canoes—at least until the rainy season arrived. For further progress we would have to depend on light canoes secured from the local Indians.

It had been a tremendously laborious trip up from Yavisa, but we could congratulate ourselves on reaching our first objective with complete success. All of our party had arrived except Brin. We had lost none of our equipment. And we had come as far, probably farther, than any white man of record.

The history of exploration in this region is extremely vague. Possibly some of the early Spaniards and buccaneers got up as far as the Sucubti. But I have seen no definite proofs of this. Certainly they went no farther. Captain Selfridge in 1871 claimed to have reached the upper headwaters of the Sucubti from the Caribbean coast, when the "7,000 Indians" retreated before his force of 370 marines. But his map, supplied by the U. S. Military Intelligence, proved to be extremely inaccurate. It showed the lower Sucubti flowing northwest to join the Chucunaque, whereas we found its true course was southwest. I rather think the Captain, having decided that the route was utterly impracticable for a canal, had merely guessed at the river's course, put it on his sketch-map, and turned back.

THE SUCUBTI AT LAST

The other explorers were even less reliable. An employee of the United Fruit Company claimed to have reached the Sucubti from Yavisa a few years back, but the negroes who went with him said he got only as far as the Membrillo. The Sinclair Oil man, Terry, apparently thought he had reached the Sucubti, but his canoemen, who were with me, said he had turned back at the Chiati. Terry made his trip during high water at the end of the rainy season in the cruiser *Marguerite*, which I later chartered. And the *Marguerite* drew too much water to get by the high log jams we had encountered.

So I felt certain that we were the first on the ground. Up the shallow Sucubti lay absolutely unknown country. We no longer feared the "7,000 Indians" reported by Selfridge, but we did not know what we'd find on the following day.

At five o'clock the next morning, while we were getting ready for breakfast, we heard from up-stream two gun-shots in rapid succession. Evidently the original Cunas Bravos with their two old shot-guns were still near by. So after breakfast I took Townsend, the Panamanian captain, and two negroes in the smallest canoe and started up the Sucubti.

After we had been on our way for two hours, the Captain foolishly shot a big fish with his pistol and wasted several minutes trying to retrieve it. After this interval, we pushed on around the next bend. Ahead of us up the river was a small canoe with three Indians, poling like mad. We called to them, but they simply increased their speed. So we chased after them, pressing them pretty hard for half a mile, when they finally abandoned their canoe and took to the jungle. No doubt the Captain's shot had convinced them that we were hostile.

My one desire of course was to make friends with them, but evidently they were more afraid of us than our negroes were of them. So I put a dollar and a half in silver in the abandoned canoe where they could find it on their return and

WHITE INDIANS OF DARIEN

continued upstream. It looked as if the Cunas Bravos, besides being few in number, were not very "bravo" either.

At 12:30 we turned back in order to reach camp before dark. On the return trip we noticed many small plantations of bananas, coffee, and cacao, but no houses. We also stopped to examine the abandoned canoe, which was still untouched. It contained a wicker basket, several calabashes of *chicha*, some lumps of crude chocolate, and many of the oil-nuts which the Indians use for candles. We got back to camp about five o'clock.

The next morning I realized that our only hope of making further progress, before the rains raised the water level, was to get the aid of many Indians with small canoes. The scouting trip convinced me that the most practical course was to take a fairly strong party up to the villages in a lightly loaded canoe. Then, if I could get the help of the Indians, I would bring up the rest of the party and the equipment in relays.

So we started off in two canoes, with five whites, six blacks, food for seven days, ammunition, rockets, etc. It made a pretty big load after all, but we found that we made much better progress over the shallows than I had expected. We passed the abandoned canoe with the silver money still untouched, and got beyond the highest point I had reached the day before. Toward evening we made camp on a gravel bar. We were all very tired, for we had dragged the canoes over miles of shallow water, and had walked more than half of the way.

After supper Rosebaum and I rigged up a chute for an army parachute rocket in case any Indians should disturb us in the night. They are supposed to attack suddenly under cover of darkness, but the few we had seen looked much more afraid of us than we were of them. Then we drew lots to see who should stand watch. I drew the 9 to 12 period.

So I sat down in front of the tent-fly, with a lantern hung on the rocket chute, a candle perched on a tent stake, and



*Acla, San Blas Coast, Where Balboa Was Beheaded
and Where Dr. J. L. Baer, Our Scientist, Died*



*Mono, a San Blas Village Captured, Rebuilt and
Dominated by Panamanian Negro Soldiers. This
Village Was Recaptured by the Indians*

THE SUÇUBTI AT LAST

weapons enough to destroy the whole Cuna Bravo tribe close at hand. I was supposed to be watching for an attack, but I couldn't get much thrill out of the possibility. Our rockets, flares, and flashlights I was sure could "out Walla" the "Magic Wallas" themselves.

It was a beautiful night. All sorts of strange sounds came from the jungle. Across the narrow river was a spreading tree which was full of strange little nocturnal animals, seemingly half monkey and half cat. They made an awful rumpus, rustling the branches and throwing sticks into the water. Some large animal tramped heavily in the jungle, perhaps a tapir, "tiger" or deer. Once a pack of howler monkeys let out an angry roar upstream, as if disturbed by something passing under their tree. And once I heard three resounding whacks downstream. I thought it might be Indians, but the negro, "Dirty Dick," who was awake, said it was a crocodile lashing its tail. At midnight I turned in, leaving the Panamanian captain on guard.

The next day was uneventful. We passed many apparently abandoned plantations of bananas, coffee, and cacao. At noon we saw on the bank a very crude shelter with a palm-thatch roof. A few pieces of rude pottery and some calabashes were lying near it. But no canoes, and no people. The place had been wholly abandoned. We made camp after covering about twelve miles.

Nothing happened during the night. We got started again at 8:30. The river was much shallower now, and was obstructed by a succession of little rapids over gravel bars. At one o'clock we passed a branch, probably the Asnati, but continued on the main river. All along the banks were abandoned camps and plantations. Certainly there had been a large population here a few years back. It doesn't take long for the jungle to swallow all signs of cultivation. But there were certainly no villages

WHITE INDIANS OF DARIEN

now. At 4 o'clock we came to a fresh clearing, which showed that live Indians were near by. So we pitched camp, set up our rockets, posted guards, and waited for the dawn, convinced that we'd find these elusive people the next day.

CHAPTER XXII

THE "TERRIBLE" CUNAS BRAVOS

*

IN the morning the Captain, Rosebaum, and I took the small canoe with three negroes on a scouting party upstream, intending to return to camp before night. After an hour we saw three wild pigs on a bar. We went ashore to stalk them, but they saw us and escaped. The Captain went a hundred yards up the bank to reconnoiter.

Suddenly I saw a small canoe with three Indians in it put out from the farther bank and start upstream. I shouted, and the Captain ran out from the bank to cut them off. The rest of us hurried to the scene of the capture. The Indians stopped poling. The expression of terror on their faces changed to amazement. And they almost hugged us when they found we were friendly.

One of them could speak a few words of Spanish. He told us that his chief lived a little way upstream. We asked them to take us to him, and they agreed. So I sent the Captain and the three blacks back to Charlton and Benton at camp to tell them to follow us the next morning. I told one of the Indians to go ahead and tell his chief that we were good men, meant no harm, and would pay for everything we took.

We continued upstream for an hour when we came to an empty house. The Indians said this was the highest point which could be reached by canoe without very hard work, but

WHITE INDIANS OF DARIEN

that we could take the land trail. I thought it best to wait until the messenger had reached the chief's camp. Presently eight more Indians arrived and told us that we could proceed. I left a note for Benton in the house, telling him that we had taken the land trail. Then Rosebaum and I set out with the ten Indians.

After about an hour's walk we came to a cluster of inhabited houses fifty yards back from the bank. Our escort ordered us to lay our firearms on the ground before going ahead to see the chief. After a moment's hesitation I put down my rifle and shotgun, but retained my pistol and cartridge belt. Rosebaum did the same, and the guards led us around the houses at a distance, probably to keep us from seeing the women.

After a short additional walk we came to another cluster of houses, five or six of them, with roofs but no walls. In a hammock in one of them lay a rather small, oldish, sharp-featured Indian with a wounded and badly infected leg. He looked up at us when we entered and said—in *perfect English*—“How are you, Boys? Glad to see you.”

So this was the Chief of the ferocious and savage Cunas Bravos! We were thunderstruck. We asked him where he learned his English, and he answered, “New York.” He had worked for twenty years on sailing vessels, had been in New York, California, Hamburg, Paris, and Japan. Eight years before he had returned to his native land and had been Chief of the Sucubti Valley ever since. We learned later that his name was “Salisiman”—which is an “English name,” a corruption of “Charlie Seaman.”

I explained to him that we were a scientific expedition sponsored by the governments of the United States and Panama. And I showed him my letter from President Porras asking assistance and coöperation. He was not much impressed

THE "TERRIBLE" CUNAS BRAVOS

when I translated it to him. But he said he was glad we had arrived.

Then followed a long, involved and rather doubtful tale. He said the Walla and Morti Indians were preparing to attack us, and that he had sent three different parties to warn us. He was afraid for us and wanted us to pass out to the San Blas coast through his valley. But each time his men got close enough to see our party, they got frightened and ran away. The last time he sent four men in a canoe to tell us to come up to him quick. We surprised them, and they abandoned their canoe.

He was glad, he said, that we had captured his men this morning. They had instructions to say, "Come to Chief Salisiman quick. He is your friend and speaks good English." But they got scared when they saw us. He was disgusted with them. All his men were nothing but boys—afraid like women. All the grown men got sick and died.

This story sounded pretty fishy. I thought it more likely that Salisiman had tried to frighten us away from his valley. So I told him that we were not afraid of the Wallas or the Mortis. We did not want trouble, but if they started anything, we would finish it. I had two more parties down the river, one of them only an hour from his village. And I wanted him to send four men and a canoe down to help them join me. This he agreed to do.

That night Rosebaum and I slept in hammocks in the chief's house, in clean dry Indian clothes borrowed from the chief. I dressed his wounded leg, and told him I had plenty of medicine for all his people. I gave him a hunting knife, cloth, mirrors, beads, tobacco, and had him in a very friendly state of mind before we went to bed.

The next day I stayed alone with the chief while Rosebaum and three more Indians went down to help Benton and

WHITE INDIANS OF DARIEN

Charlton. He was very friendly, and we had a long conversation. He said that his people had once been numerous and powerful, but that a few years ago all but a pitiful remnant had died suddenly of a pestilence. Whole villages had been wiped out. The chief said it was smallpox, but to judge from his description, the final blow must have been struck by influenza. Many of the people were still sick. Only about one hundred and fifty remained of the seven thousand reported by Selfridge. Most of these were immature. Salisiman, his brother, the medicine man, and perhaps two or three others were the only older people in the tribe.

Probably this recent catastrophe accounted for the fact that this handful of Indians had been able to bluff the whole region around Yavisa. They must have been "bad" and numerous not many years ago, but now they were a broken race.

The chief also said he had sent a runner over to the Morti River to see what was going on around there. He expected him back by about three o'clock. Benton, Charlton, Rosebaum, and the Panamanian captain arrived during the afternoon with all our advance equipment and the six negroes.

Soon after, the runner from the Morti arrived. He had a terrible tale to tell, as translated by Salisiman. It seemed that all the Walla and Morti Indians were arming against us. Already a hundred men had started for the mouth of the Sucubti to attack Townsend's camp. The only thing for us to do, according to Salisiman, was to leave that night for the San Blas coast and not go back to Townsend's camp at all.

This sounded like so much nonsense, and I told Salisiman I thought so. I doubted if the Mortis and Wallas were much more ferocious than the Cunas Bravos. But still I had to plan for all eventualities. So I decided to send two Indian runners to the camp with a letter of warning for Townsend, promising them an extra reward if they started at daybreak and got there

THE "TERRIBLE" CUNAS BRAVOS

before dark. In the morning I would start myself with Rosebaum, the Captain, and five of the negroes. I told the chief that if the Wallas and Mortis attacked us, we would certainly take care of ourselves.

Our "relief expedition" started the next morning—in five canoes with five Cunas Bravos and five of my own negroes. We made good time, and at five P.M. we arrived at a small Cuna house only four or five hours from the base camp. Here we found the two Indian messengers, still with the undelivered letter for Townsend, who should have been at the camp by that time.

They had a wild tale to tell. They said they had been all the way down to the Chucunaque and had found no trace of the camp. They concluded that the Wallas and Mortis had killed or chased away all of our companions. The more I questioned them, the more elaborate and varied their tale became. Evidently they had gone part way to camp and lost their nerve. It was physically impossible for them to have got down the Chucunaque and back again in the time allowed.

I was convinced by that time that the whole story about the hostile attack was a lie, although Salisiman may have partly believed it. Rosebaum was all for going on by dark, but I overruled him. There was no sense tiring our men out after three weeks of continuous hard work. So as soon as all the Cunas were asleep as close to my cot as they could get, I went to sleep myself, confident that all these tales of impending danger were imagination or lies designed to scare us out of the country.

The next morning we got started early. I grouped the Cunas ahead of myself and Rosebaum. They made every pretense to lag behind and slip away, but we kept our eyes on them. At eleven we reached camp. All was peaceful. No Wallas or Mortis had shown up.

WHITE INDIANS OF DARIEN

There was one piece of bad news, however. Baer was sick in bed. He had a high fever, was partly delirious and very weak. It was not malaria, typhoid, or dysentery, so we decided it was merely complete exhaustion after the strain of the last three weeks. I gave him C. C. pills and an alcohol bath. His fever went down by night, but his general appearance was alarming.

The next day he was not much better, so I decided we had better get up river as soon as possible to where there was better air and water. We spent the day repairing our canoes and preparing to start in the morning. I rigged up a comfortable bed for Baer in one of the largest canoes, with a mosquito bar and an awning.

That night we heard sounds in the jungle which might have been Morti spies. But nothing happened. It was amusing to see how the "terrible" Cunas Bravos clung to me. They huddled under a tent-fly right beside my cot. They would have got into bed with me if I had let them. Apparently they regarded me as their protector against the "terrible" Americans on all sides. When Townsend tried to photograph them, five of the seven ran to me for protection. Only two held their ground.

Early in the morning we put Baer into his floating hospital and started up river. The water level was falling rapidly after a slight rise caused by two showers on the preceding days, but we made good time. I was somewhat worried when all the Indians slipped away upstream. I was afraid they would beat it right back to their village. So I sent the Captain and Pabon ahead to catch and hold them. But at four o'clock we found them waiting at a beautiful camping site, which they had cleared for us, and started a fire.

Baer had been quiet all day. He had slept a little and seemed much better. Rosebaum and I carried him to my tent.

THE "TERRIBLE" CUNAS BRAVOS

Then he got suddenly worse. His temperature went up to $104\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$. He moaned and cried continuously. We waited on him, made him gruel and turkey soup, bathed him in alcohol, and attended him constantly. His fever dropped almost to normal, but he did not seem any better in other respects. I stayed up with him until midnight. No one else could sleep either, which was very bad for us all. We were so hard-worked by day that we had to have sleep by night.

So at midnight, after having tried in all other ways to keep Baer quiet, I told him that I would have to give him morphine, of which he was very much afraid. That quieted him, and he seemed better the next morning.

We got off the next morning at 8 A.M., but did not make much progress. It was terrible work trying to drag the heavy canoes over the gravel bars. What we needed was a good rain to put some water in the river. Baer was quiet all day and slept after we made camp. I stood watch that night, most of the time tending Baer. The Indians still clung to me for protection, like adopted children. They were very amusing and interesting, as well as helpful. I doled them out tobacco, fixed their sores, and seemed to have gained their confidence completely.

CHAPTER XXIII
FLOOD ON THE SUCUBTI

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THAT night the rain we'd been praying for arrived—in greater quantity than we'd expected. It started at 1 A.M. and came down in sheets. None of us had ever seen such rain or imagined it. I got up and watched the river. There was no sign of a rise until nearly dawn, although the rain kept up steadily. Then the level began to rise slowly. At daybreak it was raining so hard we had a difficult time getting breakfast.

It was Easter Sunday. The men wanted to stay in camp and not work, but I knew this would be dangerous. We were camped on a low gravel bar with no high land near. When the inevitable flood finally came, we would be in a difficult situation. So at nine o'clock I ordered everything loaded into the canoes except the tent-fly over Baer. I watched the water carefully. When it had risen until it lapped the end of his cot, I rushed him to my hospital canoe and ordered the outfit to advance.

The Indians went first in their light canoes. Then followed the negroes and the whites. Townsend had the best canoe and the best men. I had the weakest canoemen in the party—old Barbino, who was wise but rather feeble, and little Victor, who was half sick. I told Townsend to stay near me, but he soon forged ahead. Only Breder, with a heavily laden canoe and two very poor canoemen stayed near by.

FLOOD ON THE SUÇUBTI

We took the water at eleven o'clock. The river was rising rapidly now, while the rain still fell in torrents. About an hour later the river rose with a roar and a bound. The "bore" of the flood from the cloudburst in the mountains came down on us in one terrible rush. In a few minutes the water rose twenty feet by actual measurement, with a current of at least fifteen miles an hour.

The "bore" caught me just as my hospital canoe was skirting a rapid. The bank behind it was an abandoned Indian banana plantation on low land. The low shrubs along the river quickly disappeared under the water. The opposite bank just above the rapids was high and sheer. Only by the hardest kind of work were we able to reach it. The shouting of the negroes and the roar of the water disturbed Baer, who tossed from side to side, almost capsizing the canoe. Barbino came to life as if with renewed youth and worked like mad.

Finally we reached the bank, but it was a sheer, vertical rise for fifteen feet. We could not land, but could hold the canoe close against the shore with poles. Enormous trees and tangles of logs came tearing by, scraping our sides. At any moment one of them was likely to crush the side of the canoe like an egg-shell. Just below us was a white and roaring rapid.

Breder's canoe had made the opposite bank, just across from us and seventy yards away. He was in slack water under the point of the curved bank. His situation was rather better than mine, but the land he was clinging to was rapidly disappearing under the water, which still rose rapidly. The rest of the canoes had disappeared around the bend.

We held our precarious positions for about an hour, when I saw Townsend shooting down toward us in a very light canoe with two Indians. I waved frantically to him to cross over to Breder's side. He could do me no good with his light canoe. I did not want to risk holding the additional strain of

WHITE INDIANS OF DARIEN

his canoe alongside mine. And if he missed me, he would be swept into the rapids below.

He got my signals just in time and pulled in beside Breder. I was barely able to hear him shouting across the roaring river. He said he had gotten all the other canoes to a safe camping site on high land about half a mile above. He had waited an hour for Breder and me and had then come back to see if he could help us. It was a pretty risky trip to undertake, and I forgave him for not keeping near the hospital canoe.

But his arrival did not improve our situation very much. I told him I could not risk going farther with Baer until the flood subsided. The high canopy over Baer's bed prevented me from keeping close to the bank under the low overhanging limbs. If I took the canopy down, Baer would get soaking wet, and if we went out into the stream, we could not reach bottom with our poles. So I told him to go back upstream and try to send me some food in his best canoe. I would hang on all night and hope that the flood would go down enough to let me get to some lower bank. He disappeared again up the stream, working his way near shore among the overhanging limbs where my big canoe could not travel.

Breder could have forced his way up to the camp in the same manner, but he refused to leave me, although his negroes wished to do so. Soon all the land on his side was under water, and he had to hold on to the trees. An hour later, with the river still rising, Townsend's canoe with two of our best negro boatmen came into sight above. It was empty except for a small amount of food, and it rode the water well. The men made a skillful landing beside me, and with their aid I was able to work my canoe a little way upstream to where I could land. I unloaded everything from both canoes except Baer, whom I could not possibly have gotten up the steep bank. He

FLOOD ON THE SUÇUBTI

was comfortable, however, and the canoe was free of its heavy load and securely moored.

When Breder's men across the river saw that the food canoe had made a safe landing, they took courage and agreed to try to cross over. They worked upstream on their own side for two hundred yards. Then they pushed out into the current to cross. But instead of keeping their bow pointing upstream, they left the shore at right angles. The current caught the bow and whirled it down. By the time they had got it pointing upstream again, they had been swept past my landing and toward the boiling rapids below.

Breder's negroes became completely panic-stricken. The bow-man abandoned his post and leaped for a long rope-like vine which trailed in the water. His leap swung the stern toward the shore, and the other negro got hold of a branch and swung himself into a tree. This left Breder alone in the middle of the canoe, drifting rapidly for the white water downstream.

Right at the head of the rapids was a nasty, upstanding snag, around which the water fairly boiled. The canoe smashed sideways against it. Breder jumped up, grabbed the snag, and wrapped his legs around a heavy steamer-trunk which contained his most precious possessions—specimens, apparatus, and scientific data. It was a hopeless effort. The canoe filled with water and began to slip from beneath him. I yelled to him to let go and save himself. With a reluctant, anguished look he abandoned the canoe and clung to the snag. The loss of that cargo was a terrible blow to him and to me, but I knew he could never ride safely through the rapids.

Then happened one of the most magnificent things I have ever seen. Old Barbino, the elderly negro criminal and outlaw, let out a series of staccato war-whoops and literally pushed the four other negroes into Townsend's empty canoe. Before they

WHITE INDIANS OF DARIEN

knew what was happening, he had taken the steersman's post and sent the canoe into the rapids. Never have I seen such quick action and fire—seldom such courage. The old man's youth was back again. His eyes flashed. He cursed wonderful Spanish curses, and by force of example compelled the other negroes to meet the test. It was glorious—if it did seem hopeless. In a moment canoes and men were out of sight. I doubted if I would see any of them again.

But I had no time to be idle myself. I was alone on the bank with Baer helpless and semi-conscious in the big empty canoe. Fifty feet below and thirty feet from shore Breder was clinging for dear life to the snag, half submerged in the mad current with a death-trap just below. His cowardly stern negro was perched on a limb. His bow-man had reached shore and been forced into the canoe by Barbino.

There was only one thing to do, and that was pretty risky. I did not dare try to get Baer ashore. So after a good deal of maneuvering, I managed to get the bow-rope of his canoe around the limb of a tree. Then I gradually payed it out and let the canoe, with Baer in it, down to where Breder could get hold of the stern. It was just in time. He was tiring rapidly. When he was safely in the stern, I hauled the canoe back to land. Breder was terribly upset by the loss of his scientific data and specimens, but I tried to cheer him up by saying I thought Barbino would rescue at least some of them. It was pretty much of a lie. I did not expect to see any of the stuff again.

By this time it was five o'clock. Breder and I were alone with Baer, but we had food, cots, a tent-fly, and all my guns and ammunition. We put up the fly, and tried to make the best of a very unpleasant situation. We were on a little isolated knoll ten feet above the water. The rising river had driven innumerable insects and snakes to the same spot. Ants swarmed all over us and bit us incessantly. We put on our heavy boots,

FLOOD ON THE SUCUBTI

for poisonous snakes were all around our feet. A big tarantula jumped on Breder's face, but luckily did not bite him. All our things were soaking wet. We had a terrible time starting a fire, but finally succeeded.

Just at dusk, when the crest of the flood had passed and the water was falling very rapidly, we heard a whoop downstream. It was Barbino with all his men in the Townsend canoe, fighting up the river on the farther shore around the edge of the rapids. They got above us, crossed safely, and landed. To my utter amazement they had with them almost the entire contents of Breder's canoe. The only things missing were a small dip-net and two jars of specimens collected the previous day, which could be replaced. Breder's most valuable things had been in watertight packages in the steamer trunk, and they were wholly unharmed. It was almost a miracle.

I shook hands with each negro of the rescue crew and promised them good presents. Then, and not until then, did Barbino go out and get the cowardly stern-man of Breder's canoe, who was still perched in the tree some distance from shore. I had made no attempt to rescue him. It would have meant risking Baer again, as I had risked him to save Breder.

With their machetes the men cleared a fair camp-site. We got rid of the snakes, if not the ants, built a great fire and had a fine supper. By this time it had stopped raining and the water level was falling so fast that we had to watch Baer's canoe constantly to see that it did not settle on a submerged snag and dump him out.

By nine P.M. the river was reasonably tame again, and the moon was shining in a clear sky. I sent all the negroes except Barbino and Victor up to Townsend's camp with the message that we were all right for the night. He was to send men down the next day for Breder's canoe, which was half a mile down-

WHITE INDIANS OF DARIEN

stream below the rapids. Barbino slept in the canoe with Baer, but Breder and I stayed awake all night.

The men from the upper camp arrived at daybreak. We packed hurriedly and joined the rest of the party in half an hour. By eight we were all on the way upstream together. I was determined to reach Salisiman's village that day, for I didn't want to have Baer spend another night in the open. We got there by six and put Baer in a clean, dry cot in the Chief's house. He seemed a little better, but was still semi-delirious, moaning continually.