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## CHAPTER XXIV

### DOWN TO THE SAN BLAS COAST

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THE next day we all rested after our strenuous exertions, and I took stock of the situation. We had only five days' supply of our own food left. The Indians were very friendly and supplied us with all sorts of native produce, but I felt it was risky to depend on this source. So I decided to send Benton and Rosebaum with six Indian carriers across the divide to Caledonia Bay on the Caribbean coast. At Pinos Island thirty miles away by water, there was a trading schooner fitted up as a store-ship, and I hoped they could get a ten days' supply of staples there. I did not go myself because I did not want to leave Baer in his present condition.

After they left, I had very little to do except attend to Baer. So I had leisure to observe the Cunas Bravos, who had never been studied before.

The village we were staying in was nothing but a cluster of six houses. There were no women or children in evidence, only the chief and eight or ten men remaining with us. Half a mile below, however, was a fair-sized village about a hundred yards back from the river. But we were never allowed to enter it. The chief explained that we would scare the women. He even objected to the little trips which Breder and Johnson made into the forest after specimens.

In those days of waiting I discovered one very interesting

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thing. While cleaning up around camp we found a carved wooden comb with several strands of light brown hair on it. Naturally this was exciting to us. So far the white Indians had eluded us completely, but now it looked as if we were getting warm. I finally pinned the chief down and got him to admit that there were three white Indians in the vicinity—a man and two girls. The man, he said, was a "Great King." He could predict the future, could foretell storms and sicknesses. He had told Salisiman about our coming long before we arrived.

When I asked to see the "Great White King," the chief replied after a moment's hesitation, that he had gone down to Caledonia Bay. The girls had gone too. I would undoubtedly see them when I reached the coast.

This, of course, was a lie, like much of Salisiman's information. He probably hoped it would cause me to leave his valley more quickly. I saw that it was useless to question him further. I would merely get more lies.

Rosebaum returned from the coast after an absence of four days. He had Dirty Dick, six Cunas Bravos, and a Colombian negro whom he'd picked up on the coast. He had made the trip to the coast in one day—23 miles, with 58 fords, and a pass more than six hundred feet high. He had hired an Indian sailing canoe at the small San Blas village of Caledonia and gone twenty miles to Pinos Island to buy supplies from the trading ship. At Caledonia on the way back Benton had quit, complaining of feeling sick. He had gone back to Pinos Island, intending to get to Colon as soon as possible. Rosebaum had gone on alone, bringing us as many supplies as he and his men could carry.

This solved our food problem for the present, but did not solve the problem of Baer, who was failing rapidly. He was all in, could not walk a hundred yards, but he still weighed at least two hundred pounds. It would take eight Indians to

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carry him to the coast over the rough and precipitous trail.

Finally I decided that the best thing to do was to send Rosebaum to the coast again and have him go to Colon with Benton. When he got there, he could send a boat for Baer, in case we got him down alive. He could also get more supplies for the trip I still hoped to make into the Walla country around the headwaters of the Bayano.

Rosebaum left the next morning with only a single Indian guide. I planned to follow him in twenty-four hours with the whole party and twenty-five of Salisiman's Indians, but it rained hard all day, turning the streams into raging torrents. For two days we sat in camp hoping that Rosebaum had gotten through safely. The negroes wanted to take to the canoes and return to Yavisa. I was desperate. I told them that if I heard any more talk along those lines, I would smash all the canoes.

On the third day the river went down. Twenty-five Indians appeared. I left Johnson, the Panamanian captain, and a black cook with Baer. I loaded the rest of the negroes and the Indians with all the equipment they could carry and set out for the Caribbean coast. It was a terrible trip—impossible to describe. We camped that night near the head of the river, in palm "lean-tos" put up by the Indians.

At daybreak the next day we started on again. At eleven we crossed the divide. Below us lay the sea—deep blue, with a chain of small islands fringing the coast. With a feeling of indescribable relief we entered the San Blas village of Caledonia. We were still far from civilization, but any part of the sea was friendly ground compared to the interior of Darien.

It was a peculiar situation in which we found ourselves at Caledonia (which got its name from a Scotch colony abandoned several hundred years ago). This is a good time to tell something about the semi-independent nation of the San Blas

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Indians, for the rest of this book will be largely about them and their problems.

They number about fifty thousand and live chiefly on the small islands scattered along the Atlantic coast of Darien from the Gulf of San Blas to the Colombian frontier. In the sixteenth century they were conquered by gold-hunting Spaniards, but they revolted and expelled their conquerors with great slaughter. From that time on they have maintained their independence, both from Colombia and Panama.

Racially and linguistically they are "Tules," related to the Cunas of the interior. But they gain their livelihood chiefly from the sea. They are very skillful fishermen, and many of them go to Colon to get jobs on sailing vessels. They have extensive plantations along the coast near their islands. They raise only enough produce for their own use, but they have enough coconuts to supply them with plenty of money if they chose to gather them and sell them to the outside world.

In general it is safe to say that the San Blas Indians know a great deal more about the outside world than the outside world knows about them. One of the reasons for this is the inflexible rule that no white man or negro could spend a single night in any of the independent villages. The Indians would trade; they would allow "storeships" like the one off Pinos Island to anchor near their settlements. But when night was about to fall, they would force every stranger to leave.

Our situation, when we arrived at Caledonia, was peculiar because we were the only party of whites who had ever approached the San Blas Coast from the interior. The "overnight rule" could not be applied to us because we had no ships to spend the night on. So the Indians took us in hospitably for the present, debating, no doubt, as to what they would do with us finally.

Caledonia was a small settlement containing about two

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hundred and fifty Indians. It was built around a beautiful sheltered harbor fringed with cocoanut palms, with coral islands between it and the open sea. The Indians received us kindly, but that night there was a most exhaustive conference between the mountain Cunas whom we had brought with us and the local San Blas.

We sat in one of their huge rectangular houses, something like Chief Mata's "Big House" on the Pucro, but larger. The Cuna leader, a small wizened man, brother of Salisiman, chanted the story from a hammock. Beside him sat the San Blas chief, a tall dark man. Behind them sat about fifty men, Cunas and San Blas. Behind them in turn sat all the women in the village, sewing and embroidering by the light of small metal lamps with unprotected flames. They wore gayly decorated dresses, gold ear-rings and nose-rings, and red shawls. The men were smoking silently, listening to the sing-song chant about the coming of the strange Americans.

I would have given a great deal to understand the chant. The Colombian hired by Rosebaum, said he knew their language, and said the Cunas were telling the San Blas that they didn't want white men or black men in their country. But they seemed peaceably inclined, and to judge from appearances they did not seem likely to make any trouble. I learned later that Caledonia was not one of the places which they insisted on keeping free from all outside penetration. Which was the reason Rosebaum had found his Colombian negro there.

We spent the night in the village, and early the next morning I chartered an Indian sailing dugout to take Townsend, Pabon, and me to the "storeship" at Pinos Island, a big schooner anchored well off the Indian village. She belonged to the Colon Import and Export Company, a Canadian firm, and her manager was a Mr. Bird, who made us very welcome and offered to help in every way he could.

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On the storeship I found Benton and Rosebaum, both sick and anxious to get back to Colon. Rosebaum had a bad case of malaria, and Benton complained of indigestion and general depression. It turned out later that he had appendicitis. The terrible trip up the Chucunaque had affected all of us, although we did not realize how much until the crisis was over and we were in sight of civilization again. Townsend also wanted to go back, but his departure would have left me short-handed, and I persuaded him to stay a little longer at least.

The supply ship of the trading company was about to return to Colon, and with her went Rosebaum and Benton. They were to arrange, as soon as they got to Colon, for a boat to bring us supplies and take Baer back to the Canal Zone. We saw them off, spent the night on the storeship and returned to Caledonia the next day with a seaworthy skiff hired from the manager.

We found Charlton and Breder holding down the camp in good shape, and very friendly with the Indians. And that afternoon we heard some interesting news. It seemed that Ina Pagina, the head chief of all the San Blas Indians, had heard of our expedition and had gone to Panama some time ago to protest to President Porras against our invasion of Indian territory. He had just returned to his village, Nuevo Sasardi, about an hour's run from Caledonia. So I decided to go over to see him and find out what his attitude was. If Porras had been able to assure him that we intended no harm to the Indians, he could make things very easy for us and perhaps help us find the white Indians which so far had eluded us.

We arrived at Nuevo Sasardi about noon. The village, which contained perhaps fifteen hundred Indians, was built on a low coral key, no part of which was more than three feet above the level of high water. It contained about fifty tremendous houses, palm thatched, and arranged in pairs, en-

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closing a fenced courtyard. One house of each pair was usually two-storied and faced the sea. The upper floor was either of split palm or imported boards. The ground floor was sand, and was furnished with carved stools and benches. Here the Indians gathered for talking, smoking, and visiting. In the upper story they slept, in hammocks slung from the heavy roof beams. The rear house was for cooking, storage, and eating.

When we landed, we were taken to one of the houses, and seated in a sort of council chamber. Soon Ina Pagina appeared. He was a short, stocky man of about forty with a light olive complexion. He wore a white shirt and trousers, but was bare-footed. He spoke fair Spanish, but no English. We greeted each other formally and sat down for a solemn conference, hundreds of Indian men crowding the great room and the space outside.

Slowly, with great dignity, Ina Pagina told me his troubles. He had, he said, a great deal to worry about. The enemies of the San Blas Indians were encroaching upon them from all sides. The ship of the Colon Importing and Exporting Company had recently arrived at Pinos Island. The United Fruit Company had started a plantation at Puerto Obaldia twenty-five miles down the coast. The New Orleans-Italian Company had got a concession right in the Gulf of San Blas. And now we had taken the Indians in the rear, by the Chucunaque route which had never been traversed by white men before.

For three hundred years, he said, the San Blas Indians had retained their independence. They had been able to deal with Colombia and with Panama. But he knew the power of the great nation which had built the Canal. And he wanted to know what we were going to do next. What did it all mean?

If I had been an employee of a fruit company, or a trader, or a gold hunter, I should probably have tried to restore his feeling of security by telling him all these new developments meant nothing but good for the Indian. That is the usual

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method of the white exploiter. But I liked these Indians too much. They had treated me well; they were attractive, hospitable, and intelligent. After a moment of hesitation I decided to tell them the truth—unpleasant though it might be.

The San Blas Indians, I said very seriously to Ina Pagina, were in a perilous situation. Their country lay only a few miles from one of the most important trade routes in the world. They had good land which they did not use. And they had no actual legal title to it. The only way they could preserve themselves from being crushed by the onward march of white civilization and its negro allies was to learn themselves the secrets of that civilization. They would have to adopt modern sanitary and medical methods to keep themselves from dying of smallpox. They would have to send their children to school. In short they would have to learn the white man's tricks, or these tricks would be too much for them. They couldn't preserve their present isolation much longer. The world had moved too near them since the canal was built.

This information was probably very distasteful to the Chief, but he took it rather well. Apparently he believed in my good intentions, for he asked me what I thought he should do.

I told him that he should call a meeting of all the chiefs of the San Blas nation. They should act together and send a delegation to Panama City to lay the matter before the Governments of both Panama and the United States. Unless they could show that they were united, they would get no recognition of their status.

The Chief said he would think it over. Then he asked what my own plans were. I told him that I would stay at Caledonia until I got my sick man, Professor Baer, down to the coast from Sucubti and shipped to Colon. After that I intended to return to the region of the upper Chucunaque and look for the white Indians which my expedition had come to find.



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Ina Pagina shook his head. The tribes of the interior were not under his control, he said definitely. They were fierce and warlike, and he thought they would kill any white man who entered their territory. Not even the coast Indians could go into the territory of the Wallas and Mortis. As for white Indians, he thought there were some living on the upper reaches of the Rio Diablo, but most of them lived in Colombia.

That was the end of the conference, which took a great deal more time than it takes to describe it. I urged the Chief again to call the "congress." He said he would think it over and let me know in a few days. I gave him some presents, and we all set off for camp. Chief Ubiquina of Caledonia stayed behind, no doubt to compare notes with Ina Pagina.

The whites who had come with me to Sasardi, Charlton, Breder, and Townsend, thought I had been too blunt with Ina Pagina. They were afraid he would turn the other Indians against us and make it difficult for us to accomplish anything more in the region. But I was sure I had done the right thing. I had told him some unpleasant truths which he would have to face sooner or later. I knew he was amply intelligent enough to realize that only a friend would have told them to him.

The next morning Chief Ubiquina returned to Caledonia, all smiles and friendliness. Apparently Ina Pagina had passed out the word that we were to be treated well, for as soon as Ubiquina arrived, his people began to bring us all sorts of presents and produce. News travels fast among the Indians, and along mysterious routes. My original plan had worked excellently. First I had convinced the Chocois of my sincerity and good intentions. The news had spread to the Cunas and thence to the San Blas at Caledonia. Finally it reached Sasardi itself. I was the first white man to gain the confidence of these bitterly independent Indians who had repelled for so long all attempts to conciliate or exploit them.

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## CHAPTER XXV

### THE DEATH OF BAER

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THAT ended the problem of the Indians' attitude toward us. But I still had the pressing problem of what to do with Baer. I could not leave him much longer at Sucubti. It was manifestly impossible to send him back down the Chucunaque. Even if he had reached Yavisa alive, which was doubtful, he would have had to wait there for a long time before I could get a boat sent down for him from Panama. The only thing to do was to risk the hard but comparatively short trip over the divide to Caledonia.

So the morning after leaving Ina Pagina I sent Townsend to Sucubti with four of Ubiquina's Indians. He was to bring back some of our possessions, take messages to Johnson, and report on Baer's condition. When the trading ship arrived from Colon, I would go in myself and bring Baer down to the coast.

Townsend left during the morning. In the afternoon an Indian runner arrived from Sucubti with an alarming note from Johnson. Baer was very much worse. And the Panamanian captain had deserted, leaving for Yavisa with the cook and the other two negroes. It is interesting to note that neither the captain or the negroes had been heard from since. No one knows whether they died of starvation, drowned in a flood, or were killed by Indians. But die they certainly did.

Townsend had met the runner on the trail, read his note,

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and added a postscript to the effect that I was to let him know by return messenger my decision on the changed situation. It was evident that I could not leave Baer at Sucubti with only Johnson to look after him. So I wrote Townsend to recruit enough Cunas Bravos to carry Baer, and bring him over the mountains as quickly as possible. I would take all the responsibility, but if he did not want to do it, he was to let me know at once, and I would go in with some San Blas Indians and bring Baer out myself. He would be better off on the coast, although there was little chance of getting a ship for him for some time. .

After sending off the messenger, there was little to do but wait for a reply. The issue was up to Townsend, and I would not hear from him for at least two days. So the next morning, with Breder and Charlton, I went over to Sasardi for another talk with Ina Pagina. I found the Chief sick with a bad cold. He said he was constipated and ached all over. I told him that I would go back to Caledonia and get him some medicine, but he would have to give us a house at Sasardi for the night.

His face became very serious. I knew he was thinking of the "over-night rule." Never before had a stranger spent a night at Sasardi. He said we could sleep on a boat off-shore, but not in the village.

This was an excellent opportunity, I felt, to break down further the Indians' reserve. I told the Chief that I would not bring the medicine if I could not stay on land. He relented finally, and said we might have a house. I left Breder and Charlton on the island and ran back to Caledonia for supplies, getting back about 3 P.M. I gave Ina Pagina some cathartic pills, head-ache medicine, and liniment. I also treated the local Indian judge for a badly infected leg.

Apparently my efforts as a doctor were much appreciated, for when I returned from treating the judge, I found that Ina

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Pagina had moved all our effects into his own big house, and we were settled for the night on the same floor as himself and his family.

That evening the chief and I had another long talk about the future of the Tule People. I repeated what I had told him on my first visit—that they would have to do what Japan did, catch up with the white man's civilization or be trampled underfoot by white exploiters and the negroes they would bring into the country to work for them. He listened very seriously. And finally he agreed to follow my suggestion and call a "congress" of chiefs. It was a solemn decision for him—more solemn than I knew at the time. Later in this book the reader will learn the extraordinary consequences of this action.

The next morning we had the run of Sasardi and collected for the Smithsonian a vast amount of ethnological material of great interest and rarity. We were allowed to photograph the houses and the Indian men, but not the women this time. We returned to Caledonia that afternoon, feeling that we had accomplished something which other white men had tried vainly to do for several hundred years.

As soon as we arrived at Caledonia, a Cuna messenger ran into camp with a message from Townsend. He had recruited twenty-four Cunas Bravos and started down to the coast with Baer in a hammock slung on a pole. He intended to camp for the night just over the divide and arrive on the coast in the morning. Baer had stood the trip well so far, but his general condition was alarming. He would have to be sent to Colon at once if he reached the coast alive.

In the middle of the next morning the caravan arrived. We put Baer in a cot beside mine. Morally and physically he was in the last stages of collapse. The strain of the long illness had destroyed all his hope and courage. I tried again to diagnose his trouble, but without success. He was covered with

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insect bites which refused to heal. And apparently he had internal disorders beyond my medical knowledge.

It was plain that Baer's condition was critical. We thought desperately of some way to get him back to civilization. The trading boat which I had told Rosebaum to send out with a doctor and supplies had not appeared. We had no way to communicate with Colon. None of our simple drugs or treatments seemed to do Baer a particle of good.

Finally I decided that the least I could do was to go down to the "secret" Naval wireless station at Puerto Obaldia. From there I could communicate with Colon and perhaps hurry up the relief boat and the doctor. It was the middle of the afternoon when I came to this decision, and I could not get a sailing canoe before the next day. So in the meantime I took Townsend over to Pinos Island. He too was sick by this time, and wanted to stay on the storeship in hopes of getting back to Colon sooner.

We had hardly returned to Caledonia when the Indians reported that the United Fruit Company's auxiliary sloop *El Norte* was coming down the coast. This was a good opportunity to get to Puerto Obaldia faster than an Indian canoe could take me. So I packed a few belongings, jumped into the skiff, and ran out to intercept her. The Captain said he could not stop for long, but he would take me to Puerto Obaldia. He also had some bad news for me. The vessel which had taken Benton and Rosebaum to Colon from Pinos Island had broken her fly-wheel and had had to continue under sail. This meant delay, so I was even more anxious to get to the wireless.

We reached Puerto Obaldia that night at ten o'clock—too late for communication with Colon. But the next morning I sent a message asking that a doctor be sent out on the fastest boat available. I also asked President Porras to send vaccine to

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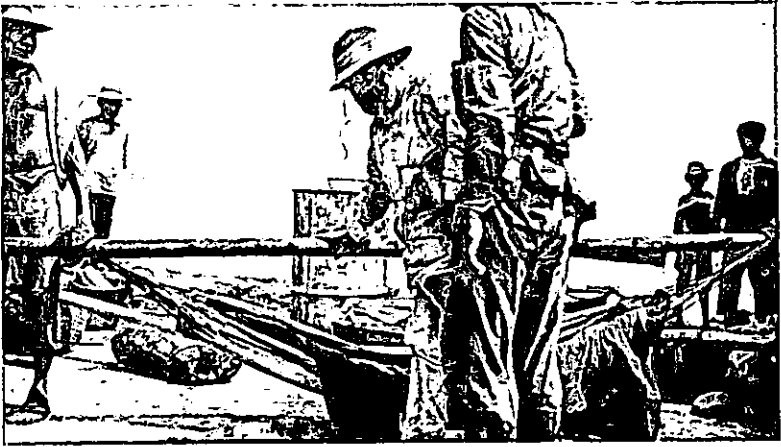
treat the Indians at Sasardi, where a smallpox epidemic was impending.

Rosebaum answered that evening. Benton, he said, was in the hospital after an operation for appendicitis. His own malaria was better, and he would get in touch with General Sturgis at once and see what could be done. That was all for the present. I waited impatiently at Puerto Obaldia for another night, enjoying somewhat guiltily the comforts there and hoping that aid for Baer would not start too late.

The next day I got my answer from President Porras. He was sending a launch with two doctors and the vaccine. And a United Fruit boat was coming down the coast to bring Baer to Colon. That was the best I could do, so I hired a small motor-boat from the United Fruit plantation three miles from Obaldia and went back on her to Caledonia.

We got there at seven P.M. More bad news. Baer was weakening fast, and now Breder too was sick and determined to get back to Colon as quickly as possible. At last I despaired of continuing my explorations into the country of the Wallas and the Mortis. I had only Charlton and Johnson left. Disease and desertion had taken the rest. Brin was dead. Benton, Rosebaum, Townsend, and Breder were sick. Baer was dying. The Panamanian captain had deserted. The splendid expedition which had left Yavisa so hopefully was shot to pieces. And we had not seen a single white Indian, although hearing about them on all sides before we arrived at the coast.

But there was nothing to do but wait until Baer was on his way to Colon. After I had done what I could for him, I might manage to pull the remains of my expedition together. I had great hopes for the results of vaccinating the Indians at Sasardi. They feared smallpox more than anything else in the world, and I knew that to free them from this danger would gain me their confidence completely. With their aid I felt sure



*Last View of Professor Baer  
After Being Carried Across Mountains in Hammock*



*Professor J. L. Baer's Grave*

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I could penetrate into the interior with much less difficulty.

After three days of painful waiting, the boat arrived with Porras's doctors and the vaccine. It was followed shortly after by the Fruit Company's vessel, which brought also Lieutenant Birnn, the army aviator who had piloted my plane over the interior several months before. The doctors took one look at Baer and shook their heads. He was suffering, they said, from a rare infection caused by the bite of a certain fly, which affects severely only fat people. He also had a bad case of chronic Bright's disease. Only quick work in getting him to the hospital would save him. The fastest boat would take two days. That was not fast enough.

Luckily Lieutenant Birnn had a suggestion. Two large flying boats had just arrived in the Canal Zone, equipped specially for carrying sick or wounded. We could run over to Obaldia and wireless for one of them. It could make the trip out in five hours. With desperate haste we wrote a message and sent it by the Panamanian launch to Obaldia. Then we waited, watching Baer sink fast in spite of everything the doctors could do.

We were too late. Baer died at 4:55 P.M. I was with him at the end. Just after his death I went out in front of the house, and there in the sky was the airplane sent to take him to the hospital. On it was an American navy doctor. But he could do nothing.

This blow left me utterly discouraged, although I knew I had done everything I could. The commander of the airplane said he would have to return to Colon at once, and he could not take the body with him for fear of infection. A naval vessel was following down the coast, but if it did not arrive by the next afternoon, he advised me to bury Baer. It is not possible to leave bodies unburied for long in the tropics. The Fruit



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Company boat also refused to take the body. We waited as long as we could after the departure of the plane. Then Charlton, Johnson, and I dug a grave in the coral sand under a clump of coconut trees commanding a beautiful view. We had to use our tin dinner plates, for we had no tools. The body was wrapped in an army blanket. A "good-by" and a salute was all the ceremony we felt appropriate.

The next afternoon the Naval mine sweeper *Vulcan* arrived off the reef. The Captain, officers, chaplain, and doctor came ashore. The doctor was unwilling to exhume the body for fear of infection. So the chaplain held an official service. The ship's carpenter made a wooden cross with Baer's name in brass studs. Then the *Vulcan* went back up the coast toward Colon.

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CHAPTER XXVI  
THE TULE CONGRESS

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BAER'S death was a dramatic turning point in my career in Darien. It was the lowest ebb of my hopes. The expedition had been successful in many ways. It had crossed the Isthmus by a route untraveled before. It had penetrated unknown territory and made contact with at least one unknown tribe—the remnants of the Cunas Bravos. We had collected numerous zoological specimens and a great amount of anthropological material. We had drawn the first accurate map of the Chucunaque above Yavisa.

But nevertheless we had not found any white Indians—the primary object of the expedition. We had heard of them on all sides. Baer had possibly seen one at Paya. But actually we had made no contact with them since I saw the three white girls at Yavisa a year ago.

And now with the death of Baer it looked as if we would be able to search no longer. Of the ten white men who had started with me only two remained—Charlton and Johnson. The rest were sick, dead, or had disappeared. I had malaria myself, and now that the necessity of planning to save Baer was no longer before my eyes, the disease hit me hard and “broke” only after a bad three days. One important favorable factor remained—the trust and friendship which had developed between me and the San Blas Indians.

On reading over the detailed diary which I kept of the

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expedition, I am still interested to see how my attitude toward the Indians gradually changed. I was delighted from the start with the Chocois, but I considered them merely charming children. I respected the mountain Cunas more, especially José Mata, his people and family. But not until I had been for some time on the San Blas coast did I realize how infinitely superior were the independent Indians to the mongrel negroes who were pressing in upon them from all sides.

The more I saw of them the better I liked them. They were dignified, friendly, hospitable and cheerful. They were intelligent and quick-witted. They were valiant, or they would not have kept their independence so long. They were skillful seamen and artistic hand-workers. Their social organization was highly developed and stable. I had not been long at Caledonia before I came to the conclusion that this little "Tule Nation" with its culture kept unchanged from time immemorial was too precious a thing to abandon to exploitation by commercial Americans and the negroes of Panama.

I think my mind was finally made up in favor of the Indians by the conditions which I saw and the tales which I heard at Puerto Obaldia before Baer's death. There I had my first realistic view of what happens when a white company develops Indian territory with negro labor. It is not a nice tale, or very important in itself. But it was important to me as a typical example of what I was shortly to learn was happening all along the San Blas coast.

A little while ago an American Fruit Company had secured a concession for a banana plantation three miles from Puerto Obaldia. It was a ten mile tract on the ocean, running back several miles into the interior. Along the shore were several small Indian villages with their little coconut plantations, which the fruit company did not disturb. They had plenty of land elsewhere.

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Of course the Indians did not want to work for the company. Why should they? They had independence and plenty to eat. They saw no necessity for becoming agricultural slaves. So the company followed its usual course and imported black labor. Its method of doing this was effective—if rather unusual according to civilized standards.

The blacks of the vicinity of Colon and Panama City did not want to come to Puerto Obaldia. The word had probably got around that life there would not be particularly pleasant. So the fruit company used its influence with the Panama Government. In a series of quick raids all the negro criminals, vagabonds, dope-sellers, etc., in Colon were rounded up and shipped to Puerto Obaldia in care of the local Corregidor, who was unofficially an employee of the company. Once there they would have to starve or work on the plantation.

This arrangement worked fairly well for a while, but the company's transportation proved inadequate, and the plantation ran short of food. The hungry negro criminals, left to their own resources, raided the plantations of the Indians for bananas, coconuts, and plantains. The Indians complained to the Corregidor, but he did nothing. The raids and the stealing continued.

One morning a mule belonging to the company was found with its throat cut—evidently an act of retaliation by the Indians. At once the Corregidor leaped into action, seized the six leading citizens of the nearest little village, and fined them four hundred dollars for the mule. There was no legal proof that they were implicated in the crime. It might have been any other Indian or a negro, plenty of whom had grievances against the company. The six men refused to pay and were thrown in prison for thirty days. Finally the other Indians clubbed together, raised the four hundred dollars—a large sum for them, and got the prisoners out.

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This procedure of punishing the Indians and letting the negroes do as they liked led inevitably to other outrages by the negroes. A little after the episode of the mule, two negroes surprised an Indian woman and a girl of ten in the jungle and assaulted them after threatening them with machetes.

The Indians held a meeting and reported the matter to the Corregidor. This time he appeared to take a little more interest. He held an impromptu court. The American doctor at the wireless station testified that the little girl at least had been assaulted. He could not be as sure in the case of the woman. The only evidence to the contrary was that of a negro woman, who testified that there had been no crime committed.

The two victims identified their assailants, who were arrested and sent with the sworn testimony to a Panamanian judge in Colon. The judge dismissed the case quickly, and the two negroes returned to Puerto Obaldia all dressed up in new clothes and became the heroes of the town. Of course the local interpretation of the case was that negroes could assault Indian women with impunity whenever they felt like it.

When I heard about this case, I went to see the Indian who was the husband of the woman and the uncle of the child. He was a good-looking young fellow, stolid as a grave-stone. I asked him where his wife and niece were. He said he did not know. The child had been sent away, and he had not seen his wife since the assault. Later I learned what this meant. It is the custom of the San Blas Indians to kill the victims of an assault by a negro lest the purity of their race be contaminated by negro blood. Which is probably the reason why, in spite of many similar outrages over the course of several hundred years, there are no negro half-breeds along the San Blas coast.

This was an example of the "white man's civilization" as seen in practical action by the Indians. At my conference with Ina Pagina some time before, I had told him bluntly that

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similar exploitation would spread all along the coast if he and his people did not do something about it. I knew that their traditional policy of fierce isolation could be pursued no longer, and I told them so frankly. But after leaving Puerto Obaldia, I felt a strong desire growing within me to do something about it myself.

The problem was complicated, to say the least, for Panama cannot be considered an entirely independent country. Under its treaty with Panama the United States is obligated "to intervene at any time, in any place in the Republic of Panama to uphold the constitutional order, law, and peace of the land." I knew that if the aggressions continued, the Indians would fight. They had done so many times in the past with success. But now the situation was changed. They would be revolting not against feeble Panama alone, but against Panama backed up, most likely, by the power of the United States.

I decided that what the Indians needed most was a spokesman to place their case before the American government. I felt that the only solution for their problem was to persuade Washington to have the San Blas coast set aside as a sort of reservation under an American of high character. Only such an American could introduce schools and sanitation. The Indians would fight rather than accept the priest-ridden school system of Panama or the corrupt government officials who were sure to work for their own pockets while pretending to help the Indians.

Such were the thoughts running through my mind when Ina Pagina announced that his "Congress" of chiefs was about to convene at Sasardi. I was having my worst bout with malaria, so Chief Ubiquina brought the early arrivals over to Caledonia to call. They all wore big straw hats, carried canes of authority, and looked very dignified and of strong character. I was too sick to give them proper attention, but the fever "broke" that

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night, and the next morning I went over to Sasardi to attend the "Congress."

By that time I had my plan pretty well perfected. From the friendly attitude of the chiefs, I felt sure I would get a fair hearing. They knew that I was disgusted with the treatment their countrymen had received at Puerto Obaldia. They were grateful for the medical aid I had given them, and they had allowed themselves to be vaccinated without protest by the doctors sent by Porras. This was very significant in view of the fact that four years ago they had driven out another group of Panamanian doctors who had tried to do the same thing.

The "Congress" was ready for me in Ina Pagina's big house. More chiefs were expected later from the more distant regions, but already some had arrived from as far as eighty miles up the coast. It was a very impressive gathering. The solemnity, tragedy and dignity of the old chiefs was very appealing. They all knew very well that their "nation" had come to a crisis, and they listened intently while I told them through an interpreter my view of their perilous situation.

First I told them what had brought me to Darien—my meeting with the white Indians at Yavisa and the eagerness of the scientists of America to know more about them. I still hoped to find them, although so many of my companions were sick that I could not go into the interior valleys where they were supposed to live. I explained that nothing would arouse more sympathy among the powerful Americans than the knowledge that some of the Darien Indians had white skins like their own.

The chiefs said nothing, but I felt my words had made an impression on them. Then I went on to tell them frankly what I had told Ina Pagina—that the Tule race was doomed to extinction, mongrelization with the negroes, or practical slavery if they did not train themselves to meet the white man's civili-

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zation on its own ground. They must learn the white man's cures for smallpox and malaria. They must learn to read, so that they would know what was going on in the world outside. They must learn about money and trade so that they could sell the coconuts and the other products of their land to advantage.

And finally I made my proposition. I offered to take a delegation of Indians with me when I returned. I would take them first to Panama City and later to Washington. I would present their case to President Porras and to Secretary Hughes. And I would ask that their territory be set aside forever, as an inviolate reservation where no Panamanian negroes or American corporations should penetrate to exploit them.

But, I warned, these benefits would not come by themselves. They must be paid for. The San Blas coast was rich in coconuts, of which the Indians did not use or even gather a twentieth part. They were esteemed the best coconuts in the world and commanded the highest price. I explained that if I were able to get an American commissioner to watch over them, they must gather all the coconuts and allow the commissioner to supervise their sale to the best advantage. This would pay for the medical attention and the schools they needed.

It was quite a speech and it took a long time to translate piecemeal into the Indian language. The chiefs nodded gravely and reserved their decision. Finally Ina Pagina thanked me and said they would talk my proposition over among themselves and let me know soon. I left and returned to Caledonia.

The next day Ina Pagina arrived in a sailing canoe with a new group of chiefs whom I had not seen before. I ushered them into my house and they sat down with an air of great seriousness. Ina Pagina was the spokesman as usual.

"Do you still want to take some of us to Panama and to Washington?" he asked.



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"Yes," I said. "I am still willing."

"What will we have to pay you?" asked Ina Pagina.

"Nothing," I said.

"How soon can you start?"

"As soon as I can get a boat."

"There is a big trader's yawl at Pinos Island," said Ina Pagina. "Can you return on that?"

"Yes," I said.

Ina Pagina hesitated a moment. Then he looked at me very intently. "Do you still want to take with you some *Chepu Tules*—white Indians?"

"Yes," I said eagerly, hardly able to believe my ears.

"The people along the coast all want to see you," said Ina Pagina. "There will be many *Chepu Tules* among them. You can take all you want."

They rose, shook hands gravely, and went back to their boat, leaving me in a state of bewildered exaltation. I had crossed the Isthmus with tremendous difficulty. I had searched numerous little known valleys. I had exhausted myself and my companions without finding a single white Indian. I had seen none on the coast, or met any one else who had seen one. And now, as soon as I gained the confidence of the Indians and convinced them that I was going to try to get them a square deal at Panama and Washington, the *Chepu Tules* were offered to me freely, as if they were the most ordinary things in the world.

I did not know what the white Indians would be like when I saw them, but I trusted these dignified chiefs. I knew they would do what they promised. The mystery would finally be solved, and I could take actual, living white Indians to the United States where the scientists could squabble over them to their hearts' content.

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## CHAPTER XXVII

### WHITE INDIANS AT LAST

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THE next morning we went to Sasardi for another conference. Ina Pagina said he would be ready to leave with me for Panama and Washington in five days. He had two interpreters, one who knew Spanish and one who knew English. The first he planned to send back from Panama; the second was going with us to Washington. The yawl would arrive presently from Pinos Island. We could sail back on her to Caledonia, pick up the rest of our belongings, and work our way up the coast, stopping at the various villages.

After these matters had been arranged, I made a final round of the sick people in Sasardi. Some were in the last stages of tuberculosis. I could do nothing for these, of course. But others had malaria, constipation, or badly infected wounds. I treated them as best I could with my standard medicines.

When I was through, I found that the promised yawl had anchored in the bay off the village. It was too late for a large ship to pass through the reefs to Caledonia, so I told the captain to meet me there tomorrow. Then I set out myself in the small boat. The yawl arrived in the morning as arranged. We got aboard and started for home—on what proved to be a triumphal progress up the coast to Colon.

We arrived at Sasardi late in the afternoon and anchored off the village for the night. The next morning Ina Pagina

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told me that he would not be ready to start at once, but he had arranged for another boat to take him to Colon where he would join me. He had sent word along the coast that I was coming. I could cruise slowly toward Colon, stopping at the various villages, and picking up the white Indians which he had promised us.

The next considerable village up the coast was Navagandi—which had the reputation of being one of the most anti-foreign communities on the coast, with the most warlike Indians. But I had met the chief of the village at Sasardi, so I knew it would be all right to go ashore there. We found the town a very pretty place, somewhat smaller than Sasardi, with a population of about a thousand.

The chief greeted us in a very friendly manner, but we did not stay long. The harbor was none too good, and the run between Navagandi and the next village, Portogandi, was very nasty when the wind blew from the sea, as it usually did. Soon after we arrived, a fine land breeze sprang up, and we decided to take advantage of it.

We reached a beautiful safe anchorage at Portogandi at two o'clock in the afternoon. At once we realized that it was the most interesting Indian town we had yet seen. Its population was perhaps 1,650 all told. There were at least three hundred large houses on a small island half a mile from the mainland. The general appearance was very picturesque. Great numbers of canoes with both men and women in them flocked around us.

And here we saw our first white Indians—one of whom, a boy of fourteen, was brought out to our boat immediately, as Ina Pagina had promised.

He certainly made a strange appearance among his dark-skinned countrymen. His hair was light golden yellow. His skin was as white as a Swedē's. His eyes were brown, not blue

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or gray. His features were decidedly different from the rest of the Indians—rather more like a Nordic white man. And his whole body was covered with fine downy white hair, three quarters of an inch long.

I looked at him with amazement. Here was my white Indian at last. But I didn't know what to make of him. He wasn't the usual type of albino by any means, for albinos have pink eyes and white hair. But whatever he was, the scientists would have a grand time explaining him. At least they couldn't fall back on the old theory that white Indians existed only in the imaginations of wild-eyed explorers. We had not only seen them, but were bringing them back to America to be studied at leisure.

After examining our first "Chepu Tule," we went ashore and visited the Chief and headmen of Portogandi, the most anti-foreign of all the San Blas villages. Our reputation had gone before us. We were enthusiastically greeted as the friends of the Indians. Everywhere we went hundreds of little children followed us and fought to hold our hands. The women were no longer afraid, but brought us presents. We were given full permission to wander about the village, taking pictures and examining the houses, boats and other possessions of the people. It was rather exciting to realize that no white man had ever had such privileges at Portogandi before.

That night we slept on board the yawl, and at the crack of dawn were awakened by swarms of visitors. I spent the morning, which was rainy, writing up my diary and trying to make the remnants of my clothes a little more presentable. At noon a messenger from Chief Nellé arrived, asking me to come ashore for a formal reception.

The chief received us in his enormous house, one of the biggest we had seen yet, 120 feet long by 80 feet wide. He lay in a hammock, Indian style. Beside him was a large carved-

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chair for me. The Indian interpreter sat on a stool in front of us.

We were hardly seated when a young woman was brought in with a bad case of malaria. I gave her a couple of cathartic pills for luck, and then a supply of quinine with instructions for how to take it. When the Indians saw I had medicine with me, they took me next door to see a man in the last stages of tuberculosis. I gave him a mild cathartic, but attempted nothing else. Then I explained to the chief and his people that some diseases could be cured easily if taken in time, that others required long treatment, and that some could not be cured at all.

This led to a long discussion of sickness and medicine. The Indians listened eagerly to such scraps of medical knowledge as I could give them. I explained that diseases were chiefly caused by germs, not by evil spirits as they thought. I told them about vaccination and how it had freed America and England from the plague of smallpox which was such a terror in Darien.

From smallpox I turned to malaria and yellow fever, and explained how they were caused by mosquitoes. Then to typhoid and dysentery, usually caused by bad water. The chief and his head-men listened gravely, and nodded when I insisted that only by proper education and attention to sanitation could they learn to curb and cure these diseases.

Chief Nellé said he knew what I said was true. That was the kind of education the Indians wanted, but it was not what the Panamanian government was accustomed to offer them. The government schools never taught them the good parts of education, but only the bad habits and traits of the white man. It taught the Indian men to use bad language, to lie and to steal. It taught the women to be immoral. He wanted Americans to teach his people, not Panamanians.



*San Blas Girls*



*Chief "Nelle," Chief of Portogandi,  
Great San Blas "Medicine Man"*

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Then the Chief asked about the world, how large it was, how big the United States was, and how far away. So I explained that the earth was round and drew maps on the sandy floor. The Indians listened eagerly while I explained how the earth was formed, how life appeared upon it, how man first appeared, and how the Indian was descended from the same ancestors as the white man. I told them how the races differentiated from each other. Some progressed. Some stood still. Some went backward. The Indian, I said, was standing still, while the white man and even the black man were progressing. Only by acquiring education could the Indian progress also.

Finally I told him how much I wanted to take some white Indians back to the United States with me. They might help prove closer relations between the Indian and the white man. He said it was good. He would see that I got all the white Indians I wanted.

This lecture took three hours to deliver and translate. After it was over, I was asked to look at more sick people. How they came! Men, women, and children! Some had malaria, some rheumatism, infected sores, skin diseases. Fortunately I had plenty of quinine and other standard remedies. Many of their ailments required only the simplest treatment.

This took the rest of the afternoon, and we returned to the yawl for the night. Early the next morning the negro captain of the yawl told me that the Panamanian Government, under the influence of the Catholic Church, was trying to prevent the Indians from wearing their gay native costumes, and wanted to reduce them to the hideous single-piece "mother-hubbards" worn by the negroes near the Canal Zone. My reaction to this was to buy from the captain all the bright cloth and trinkets he had on the yawl. The San Blas costume is extremely picturesque and very modest. The women wear

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a blouse gayly decorated in many colors, a long, appliquéd skirt, and plenty of golden ear-rings, nose-rings, beads, etc.

I took the gifts ashore and began distributing them to the women. When I was finished, I went into the Chief's house again to talk to the head-men who had gathered there. I urged them to be proud of their race, to adopt modern education and sanitation. I had completely gained their confidence by this time, and they told me much more about their recent history.

In particular they were very bitter against the Panamanian Government for trying to force upon them negro teachers and policemen whose chief interest was to treat the men as animals and degrade the women. The government had secured a foothold on the Gulf of San Blas a hundred miles to the north, and there the conditions were worse. The negroes were acting as if all the Indian women were their personal slaves.

When I went back to the yawl, a party of Indians came out and got aboard. Chief Nellé had kept his word very promptly. With them was a little naked white boy about eight years old. He had golden hair and eyes which varied from blue-green to brown. The Indians who brought him said they were going to take him back on shore for the night, but that the next day the chief would make me a formal present of him.

That afternoon we went back to the village. I told the chief casually that I would like to buy some pottery, arrows, spears, wooden images, baskets, etc. In no time I was mobbed by hundreds of men, women, and children bringing me all sorts of things. I got barrels full—elaborate, artistic pottery, gayly decorated grass baskets, weapons, carved canes, alligators in clay and wood.

The price didn't seem to matter. I paid a few cents each. In a few minutes I had all my canoe would carry, but still



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the people came. I think every family in the village brought something to sell me or give me. I retreated to the yawl, but the deluge continued, and I had to take them all, including song birds, fruit, and beautiful gay dresses with strange hieroglyphic embroideries. In two hours I collected more San Blas works of art than all the museums in the world possessed. By evening the hold of the yawl was full of ethnological specimens of every conceivable kind.

The next morning I went ashore for a farewell talk with the chief. When he appeared, he was wearing a magnificent gold and feather crown, with three long, upright plumes of bright scarlet. He said it was a relic of ancient times when the chiefs wore such crowns on special occasions. When I admired it and asked to take a picture of him wearing it, he took it off and gave it to me with a smile. I decided that the Smithsonian would have to be very nice to get it from me.

After a brief talk I left the chief and went to visit some of the sick Indians I had treated the day before. While I was doing this, I got word that the parents of the little white boy wanted to see me. Their house was a large and prosperous-looking one. When I entered, I got a surprise. The mother and father of the boy were not white. They were ordinary Indians without anything unusual about them except that the father was rather tall. They had three other children. The second boy was also white, but the two girls were olive brown like their parents.

I didn't know what to make of it, but I had no time to think, for I had other surprises in store for me. Chief Nellé's message had gone out to the surrounding country, and more white Indians were coming into town from the mountains, the jungle rivers, and the smaller islands along the coast. Some were pure white. Others were midway between white and brown. We took pictures of them and questioned them with-

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out reserve. The negro captain of the yawl was perhaps the most astonished man in the party. He had traded along that coast for ten years and had seen in the distance only one or two white Indians. He had no idea there were half so many in the whole country.

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## CHAPTER XXVIII

### CHIEF GOLMAN

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EARLY the following morning we set sail for the next village, Alligandi. We took with us the little white boy, whose name was simply "Chepu," which means "white." With us was the son of Chief Nellé, a good-looking young brown Indian, who was to act as interpreter. The father of the little boy left us at daybreak, and a light breeze bore us slowly through the narrow passage of the harbor and into the open water beyond.

Alligandi lay about eight miles up the coast. Its Chief was reported to be a very old and very cantankerous person who had opposed bitterly and successfully all attempts of the Panamanian Government to place schools or police officials on his island. His name was Golman, and his reputation among the traders along the coast was very strongly established.

We passed enroute two small villages on the mainland, but did not stop. Many canoes put out from shore, headed by one with two white Indian boys in the bow. They motioned to us to stop. I was hesitating when a large sailing canoe came alongside. In it were eight Indians—one of them a white youth of about eighteen. He handed me a piece of paper, on which was written in English the following message:

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To Mr. Marsh. San Blas Coast. Alligandi.

DEAR SIR:

If you please can come to my island quickly. I am waiting for you. I want to talk to you too. These Indian men is coming for you. I want you to come with these Indian men: because this ship is coming too slow for you, and because has no breeze. So I want you to come with these men.

I Remain,

Yours truly,

MR. GOLMAN.

Chief of the San Blas Coast.

The breeze got stronger just then, so we did not have to transfer to the canoe, but ran alongside it to Alligandi, reaching the village about 2 P.M. It was on an island about half a mile from shore and was approximately the size of Portugandi. As we dropped anchor half a dozen canoes with white Indians in them came out to meet us. Among the crowds on shore were many more, women and girls as well as men and boys.

When we landed, we were greeted by polite, smiling Indian policemen with their carved canes of authority and escorted to the house of Chief Golman. In the big council chamber were gathered two hundred men, seated on benches around a hammock in the center. We were led to a bench facing the hammock. Soon our old friend Chief Nellé of Portugandi appeared and introduced us to many fine-looking old Indians in the gathering.

Finally entered a very old Indian, shaking with palsy and wearing a black derby hat. He was Chief Golman. He said, "Sit down," in English. Then he lay down in the hammock, held out one shaking hand, and asked if I could do anything

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for it. I said I could relieve him a little, but only a long treatment in a hospital would do him any good.

"I am an old man," he said in English. "I die soon."

Then, through his nephew the acting chief, who spoke and wrote English, he asked all about us. I told him my story and what I planned to do to help the Indians. Then he brought out a parcel of letters which he had written to the Panama government, protesting against outrages perpetrated by the Panamanian police—wanton killings, threats, attempts to force negro school-teachers upon his villages, attempts to make the women give up their native costume. He said President Porras had told him that Panama was his father and the United States his grandfather. But, he said, Panama was a bad father. Only the grandfather could help the Indians now.

These letters were marvels of Indian expression. We read them all, and I asked for copies, which he said he would provide the next day. Then I repeated my talk at Portogandi, telling how I hoped to persuade the American government to provide schools for the Indians. He said schools were good, but they must be American schools. Panamanian schools were not good for the Indians. The talk lasted two hours. All the Indians smiled and nodded approval. Finally the old Chief told me to come back the next day and we would talk some more.

When we left the house, we saw many more white Indians in the street—whole families of them. The word had passed up the coast, and they were flocking in from the mainland. There were even more than in Portogandi. I was amazed and bewildered. Dim reports of such people had drifted up to Colon before, but no reputable person had seen them, and no one dreamed that scores of them lived within a day's march of the main villages. At the time I had no theory to account for their origin or the fact that the outside world had been

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kept so completely in ignorance of their existence. But at Alligandi I was to learn the amazing story—an explanation which a part of the scientific world has doubted, but which I have every reason to believe is strictly true.

From the lips of the Indians themselves I heard the following story. Before the coming of the Spaniards there were many white Indians in the region (as the Spaniards noted in their reports). But the white Spaniards treated the Indians so badly that after they were driven out of the country, the Indians turned against those of their own people who also had white skins. They killed many and drove the rest into the mountains and the jungles. They were determined not to have a hated white face in their country.

But white Indian children continued to be born among the brown Indians. The white strain or the white-producing principle was deeply imbedded in the Indian blood. These white babies were not all killed. Fond parents hid them in the mountains and jungles. Finally the Indians passed a law forbidding them to marry. But marriage or no marriage, white babies continued to be born, both to white mothers and brown mothers. The laws of nature were stronger than the laws of man.

This was the situation when I arrived on the San Blas coast. The white type was despised and ostracized. They were forced to live in out of the way places, where no traders or other outsiders could see them. But my arrival, and my conviction that if I could take white Indians to Washington, they would arouse sympathy for the San Blas people, had changed all that.

With joy I learned that Chief Nellé, supreme power in his own tribe, had announced before all his people that as the result of what I had told him, the segregation of the white Indians was terminated. They were no longer forbidden to

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marry. They were restored to all the privileges of citizenship.

This was why they were flocking into the villages to see me. From being the objects of pity and disgrace, they suddenly found themselves vindicated and exalted. They were to be the means of interesting the great nation to the north in the troubles of their people.

These revelations cast more light on the origin of the white Indians. Now I knew where they came from and why they had remained unknown for so long. And gradually I came to realize that I had hit upon one of the most extraordinary ethnological discoveries of all time. The magnitude of it appalled me at first. But here was no escaping the conclusion. Here in this obscure corner of the world I had found a race undergoing a "mutation" into something new—a phenomenon never observed before.

The white Indians were born of ordinary brown parents. But they were not albinos in the ordinary sense of the word. A true albino is merely an individual who lacks pigment. The white Indians had less pigment than their dark relatives, but their hair was always golden, not white. And their eyes were green to brown. Furthermore, there were various degrees of whiteness. I saw individuals who were midway between white and brown.

It might be said that they were "partial albinos," but so, for that matter, are all members of the white races. One of the definitions of the white races, according to very orthodox scientists is as follows—"partial albinism, fixed and reproducing its own kind." The "mutation" or change from one type to the other occurred in the case of the Nordic races ages ago. The new type had time to become standardized and uniform. But in Darien I was witnessing the first crude beginnings of the process.

No wonder I was anxious to get out to civilization, where

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I could offer my discovery to the scientific world for study. I knew it would cause an acrimonious controversy, but I was ready for the battle. If the interest I aroused should result in the preservation of the San Blas Indians from negro mongrelization at the hands of the Panamanians and the fruit companies, my efforts would not be in vain.

At a conference with Chief Golman the next day I made the final arrangements for taking the delegation to Panama and Washington. In the process I learned something more about the recent history of the San Blas Coast. Chief Golman told me that he was not on the best of terms with Ina Pagina. It seemed that before Panama seceded from Colombia, there were three chiefs who claimed to be supreme over the whole coast. These were Golman of Alligandi, "Charlie Robinson" of Rio Diablo, and Ina Pagina of Sasardi. For a long time old Golman had been dominant. Chief "Charlie Robinson" was nearest to Colon, and two years ago his village had been attacked and captured by Panamanian police. After a bloody battle Chief Robinson was deposed, and a Lieutenant of Police put in charge of his village.

During this affair Golman had been so violent against Panamanian encroachment that the government had threatened to send a force against Alligandi too. To fend off this danger, Golman had been forced to abdicate in favor of his nephew, although the Indians still considered him the chief.

This technicality, however, eliminated Golman as recognized head chief and left Ina Pagina with the clearest claim to the title. He was so considered by the Panamanian government, which had bestowed upon him the rank of "General." Golman was without question the stronger character, but I saw that in the negotiations which I intended to initiate between the Indians and the governments of Panama and the United States I would have to consider Ina Pagina the leader.



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So with all the persuasion I could bring to bear I urged Golman to make an agreement with Ina Pagina so that the Indians could present a united front toward the outside world. It was an unpleasant decision for the old chief. He did not like Ina Pagina, nor did he think he was a good leader. But finally he agreed to call a conference of all the sub-chiefs under his influence, invite Ina Pagina, and grant him the undisputed primacy for the time being.

I do not know all the details of this conference, but it was attended by representatives of all the San Blas Indians and by many Tule chieftains of the interior valleys. Ina Pagina attended and was recognized for the time being as the supreme head of the whole "Tule Nation." He was to go with me to Washington and plead the case of the Indians before the governments of Panama and the United States.

A party of nine Indians was finally chosen to make the trip. They were selected for both political and scientific purposes. The leader was Ina Pagina, who brought as his interpreter a young man named "Philip Robinson" who had had four years' schooling in New York under the protection of an American army officer. Chief Golman sent his nephew and successor, Iqua-neg-di-pi-pi, with "Alfred Robinson" the English speaking son of Chief Nellé of Portogandi for interpreter. There was also "Jim Barre," relative of the chief of Nargana who had been deposed by the negro "Colonial Police" of Panama. With him went his wife "Alice Barre."

The above was the "political division." The scientific division consisted of three white Indians—Marguerite (or Mimi) a girl of sixteen, Olo-ni-pi-guina, a boy of fourteen, and Chepu, a boy of ten. If I had not had to consider the cost I could have taken many more. Almost the whole tribe, white and brown, wanted to go with me to Washington.

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## CHAPTER XXIX

### THE BATTLE OF THE SCIENTISTS

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IN due course we all boarded the yawl and sailed slowly up the coast toward the Canal Zone. On the way we passed the ten San Blas villages which had been captured and occupied by the negro soldiers of Panama, but we gave them a wide berth. They are sufficiently described later on.

Late one afternoon we arrived at Cristobal, the American city at the Atlantic terminal of the Canal Zone. I took the entire party to the Government hotel, the Washington, and had the Indians outfitted with palm beach suits, modern dresses, and all the accessories for both men and women.

Naturally our arrival created quite a stir in the Zone. Governor General Morrow, who had been so skeptical about the very existence of white Indians, gave us a splendid reception in the Administration Building, and President Porras invited us to his Palace at Panama City.

And almost as soon as we landed, there started that long battle with the newspaper men which I learned to my sorrow was to continue until well after I reached Washington. In Cristobal I was besieged by reporters demanding all the details of our expedition. Particularly they wanted to know about the white Indians, weird rumors of whom had preceded us up the coast.

But before leaving the United States I had sold the ex-

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clusive "rights" to the expedition to the North American Newspaper Alliance and the Gannett papers, which had sent Benton as their representative. Although Benton had left the party some time before and was already on his way to New York, I was still bound by the contract. I explained this fact to the local reporters and told them that I could not give them any part of our "story."

This didn't discourage them, of course. When they found they couldn't get anything from us, they invented "news" of their own and gathered the opinions of various people who knew absolutely nothing about the expedition or about the white Indians. I had promptly cabled a long account of our discoveries to the United States, and this was published in full. But only brief and fantastic summaries came back to the Canal Zone.

Among the people interviewed by the local reporters was a traveling collector for certain American museums who claimed falsely to be on the staff of the Museum of the American Indian in New York. He burst into print with a statement that the whole thing was a fake and the white Indians mere albinos. Other critics maintained that I had smuggled ordinary white people into the San Blas country and was passing them off as white Indians.

One enterprising reporter even cabled to the Smithsonian that I claimed to have found forty thousand white Indians in Darien. What I really said was that there were about that number of Tule Indians in Darien, including two thousand of the blond type. We had actually seen perhaps four hundred of the latter.

When this cable reached the Smithsonian, one of the most prominent scientists in the institution immediately broadcast to the public that there couldn't be forty thousand white Indians in Darien. There could only be a few scattered cases of albi-

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nism. And that it was imposing upon the public to give out such statements.

Breder, the accredited representative of the American Museum of Natural History, was now sufficiently recovered from his combined attack of malaria and typhoid to join us at Colon. He examined the white Indians and cabled to his own institution that they were not albinos in the ordinary sense and that they differed in other respects from the standard brown Indians.

Thus began the "Battle of the Scientists," which raged fiercely in the learned journals and the popular press. An immense amount of misinformation was passed about freely and a great deal of sensationalism based on no statements of mine. I shall tell more about this unsavory controversy later on, but at this point I shall record only the facts about the white Indians which are generally accepted by most recognized authorities.

The controversy narrows down essentially to the definition of albinism. The ordinary medical albinos, which occur very sparingly in many races, are totally devoid of pigment. They have white hair, pink eyes, and wholly white skin. My white Indians were not ordinary albinos in this sense. They had yellow hair, blue or hazel eyes, and were normally healthy, both mentally and physically.

They can be called "partial albinos," but this proves very little, for on the authority of the leading biologists and geneticists, the term includes all of the white races, which are composed of "partial albinos" when compared to the darker races. It is generally accepted that the Nordic race originated in some form of "partial albinism" in a small group. Its coloration is not the result of climatic conditions, for dark races live in other parts of the world quite as northerly and sunless as northern Europe.

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It is agreed that the white Indians are not strictly a race. They appear as the descendants of ordinary brown parents, and the law which until recently prohibited their marriage had made it impossible to determine conclusively whether or not they breed true to type. There are two theories to account for their appearance among the brown Indians. The first, which is most widely accepted, is that they are "Mendelian recessives" of blond pigmentation, originating from a biological mutation. The second theory is that they descend from some blond race which mingled with the Tule in ancient times.

I will leave the controversy at this point. As Dr. Herman L. Fairchild has pointed out in his articles in *Science*, the dispute has narrowed down to one of *naming* and not *explaining* the phenomenon. It has not been observed elsewhere in the world, and simple albinism is not a sufficient explanation.

To return to my party of Indians at Colon. My first practical difficulty was with the Government of Panama. Theoretically my Indians were Panamanian subjects. Actually they were representatives of a tribe in a state of defensive opposition. But still it was necessary to get Panamanian passports for them before they could leave the country. And this was not easy to do. A wave of opposition—perhaps premonition—spread through Panama against my taking the Indians to Washington.

Finally President Porras intervened with the local authorities and ordered passports for all the Indians except Ina Pagina. He was practically the chief of a tribe at war with Panama, and public opinion would not sanction granting him a passport. The local police at Colon even arrested Ina Pagina and threatened to throw him in prison. I managed to persuade President Porras to give him his freedom and permission to return to his own country, but I could not get him a passport. Ina Pagina never forgave me that dénouement, for it hurt his prestige among his own people, who assumed that I had turned toward

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Chief Golman's faction and therefore did not want Ina Pagina on the trip.

Next I had trouble with the steamship line of the United Fruit Company. My three white Indians were all minors, and I was not their parent or guardian. This conflicted with the rules of the steamship company. Finally I had them booked as the children of Chief "Jim" Barre and his wife "Alice."

When we arrived at New York, the immigration authorities raised another set of objections. My white Indians were really scientific specimens, but their status as such was obscure. Apparently you can import various things for scientific purposes, but not human beings. Finally I arranged to deposit a bond of five hundred dollars for each Indian as a guarantee that they would leave the country in three months.

As soon as I got my charges safely within the borders of the United States, I took them to the Waldorf Astoria, where a reception and banquet had been arranged for them. It was attended by the leading scientists of the vicinity. There were representatives of the American Museum of Natural History, of Columbia, Harvard, Johns Hopkins, the Carnegie Institution, and New Jersey State College. But there was no one from the Smithsonian. I turned the white Indians over to the scientists for examination, while the newspaper reporters awaited the verdict.

At last the scientists issued a statement for the press. There were many conflicting opinions. Wooten of Harvard inclined to my own theories. Others thought the white Indians were "a non-morbid pathological phenomenon"—whatever that may be. A Dr. Christi of London, a famous specialist on tropical African diseases, recalled that certain Negroes showed a condition caused by syphilis which produced patches of white skin. He thought my Indians might be suffering from a similar ailment and proposed to honor me by naming it "Marsh's Disease."

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I declined the honor. I did not consider the condition a disease, and I did not want to run the risk of reports in the papers insinuating that I had given that hypothetical disease to the Indians! One point, however, was agreed upon by all the scientists present—that the white Indians were *not* ordinary albinos.

The next day I sent all my Indians up to the American Museum of Natural History for further examination and left them there for several hours while I attended to other matters. I was astonished the next morning to read in the papers that the white Indians were undoubtedly “partial albinos” and that the marked difference in head-shape between the white and brown Indians was caused by “artificial deformation of the skull.” The anthropologists of the American Museum advanced the theory that the normal brown Indians were more highly esteemed by their parents and had been subjected to artificial deformation of their skulls to “enhance their beauty.”

This was news to me, so I investigated. I found that the scientists had questioned the interpreter, Chief Barre, as to artificial deformation. Naturally he did not know what they were talking about. So the scientists asked if the Indian mothers did not “pat” the heads of their babies. The chief said they did.

When I explained the matter to Chief Barre, he almost fell over laughing. Of course, he said, the mothers patted their babies. They were as affectionate as any other mothers. But the Tule Indians never practiced artificial deformation of their children’s heads, which grew as nature intended.

Not a word came from the Smithsonian since that first blast of denunciation while I was still in Panama. I had promised all my ethnological collections to the Smithsonian, but my annoyance over that gratuitous attack was so great that I had them stored at the American Museum and refused to go to Washington as I originally intended.

At that time I had at my disposal a large and isolated

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summer place in Canada, just below the Thousand Islands on the St. Lawrence. So I took my entire party of Indians there, still accompanied by Major Johnson who stood by me with utmost loyalty. We had no difficulty whatever with the Canadian immigration officials, and my Indians, a very sensitive and proud people, were spared the constant exposure to the uncouth manners of my fellow Americans, who treated them like wild animals whenever they appeared in public.

There, with complete privacy from public intrusion, my Indians regained their self-composure. The British Association for the Advancement of Science was holding its annual meeting at Toronto. I kept open-house to all accredited British scientists, who could observe and study the Indians without making them feel like animals in a zoo. Famous British scientists, Balfour, Huxley, Cunningham, Shrubshall, and many others visited us, amid surroundings permitting sensible study and investigation, staying several days at a time. We were invited to attend the meetings at Toronto. The Indians for the first time received proper scientific consideration.

Huxley, Balfour and Cunningham agreed with me that the phenomenon of the white Indians originated either as a biological mutation or through the interbreeding of blond and dark races. Huxley inclined to mutation, and wrote several articles upholding his belief in the British scientific publications. Balfour and Cunningham kept open minds between the two theories. Shrubshall inclined to "partial albinism," as did some others. But all approached the subject in a reasonable and scientific manner.

The British Association for the Advancement of Science passed a formal resolution thanking me for my contribution to science in bringing the white Indians to them. The Toronto Exposition offered me a large fee if I would exhibit the Indians publicly at the Exposition grounds and give a lecture each



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afternoon and evening. I declined. My Indians dreaded and resented such public exposure, but welcomed serious visiting scientists to our isolated home. Finally some of the better mannered American scientists visited us. Watson Davis, on the staff of Science Service at Washington, spent several days. He became one of the best friends my Indians or I have ever had. Letters began coming from the Smithsonian, which I threw in the waste-paper basket.

At last a leading official of the Smithsonian visited me with an expression of regret at the unjustified attack of their prominent representative and requested that I bring my party to Washington. The very courteous and fair consideration I had received in Canada, together with the passage of time, had mollified me considerably. I replied that I would come to Washington and turn over my Indians and collections to the Smithsonian provided I first received in writing a full apology and retraction from the representative who had so condemned me in my absence. I wanted the right to make that apology and retraction as public as the attack on me had been. I also demanded assurance that my Indians would be treated with full courtesy. The Smithsonian official agreed that my conditions were justified. I received a three page complete retraction and apology from the offending scientist, which I still retain. I have never made it public, but have shown it to some of my scientific friends.

In Washington we received a grand reception. Scientists and representatives attended from all the governmental departments and museums, from the Carnegie Institution, the National Geographic Society, etc. A committee was appointed by the American Association for the Advancement of Science to make a study and report on the scientific aspects of the white Indians. It was composed of Dr. Stiles, pathologist, Chief of the U. S. Public Health Service, Dr. C. M. Davenport, geneticist

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of the Carnegie Institution, and Dr. Ales Hrdlicka, anthropologist of the Smithsonian. I secured a large suburban house in Chevy Chase, on the outskirts of Washington, and again held open house to all accredited scientists.

On the day we moved from our quarters in the Willard Hotel to the rented house in Chevy Chase, I came down with a sudden attack of long delayed malaria. For three weeks I was about as sick as any one ever gets and still recovers. Only the constant personal attendance of Dr. Stiles and his staff of medical assistants and nurses pulled me through.

Meanwhile, my Indians were enjoying Washington. With their innate culture and dignity and their quick perception, they readily became acquainted with "civilized" ways. They were now getting the friendly and courteous reception they so lacked on their arrival. They attended luncheons, afternoon teas and social functions with propriety and self-possession which surprised and perhaps disappointed their hosts and hostesses.

Three leading scientists and linguists, Dr. Harrington, ethnologist of the Smithsonian, Vogenitz, the linguistic expert of the Post Office Department, and Dr. Gates, of Tulane University, a recognized authority on Mayan culture, lived at our house with the Indians and made detailed studies of their ethnology and language. A vocabulary of six thousand Tule words was developed. Their language was recorded on dictaphone records. A system of phonetic writing was devised, and a thorough analysis made of it. Finally the linguists came to me and reported, "The anthropologists can tell you what they please, Marsh, but some ancient Norse people certainly taught the Tule People their language." They found that the Tule language had a Sanskrit or Aryan structure, not *mongoloid*, and they discovered over sixty words identical with early Norse. For details of the Tule language I refer the reader to the appendix of this book.

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## CHAPTER XXX

### "THE TULE PEOPLE MUST FIGHT!"

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IT was December before I recovered sufficiently to get back to the main purpose of my mission. The scientific committee issued a guarded and non-committal report that the "white Indians" presented a very interesting and important scientific problem. Too little was known about them as yet to draw definite conclusions. They recommended that another scientific expedition be taken to Darien to make a detailed study of the white Indians in their home environment. I offered to lead and finance this proposed new expedition, to be sponsored by the American Association for the Advancement of Science and its affiliated organizations.

However, in spite of their hesitancy to pronounce a final word on the "scientific composition" of the white Indians, the scientists' committee did formally announce, through Dr. Ales Hrdlicka, that the Tule People apparently were a practically pure-blooded remnant of the ancient first dynasty Mayans and also related anthropologically to the early coastal cultures of Peru, the Yuncas and the Chimu. This alone was of great scientific importance, for the original first-dynasty Mayans and the pre-Inca coastal Peruvians are now vanished races, overwhelmed and amalgamated by later conquering peoples.

I announced that I first wanted to save these Tule People from threatened destruction and Negro mongrelization by the

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encroaching Panamanians who were already entrenched on the San Blas Coast and planning a complete conquest of Darien. Finally an unofficial organization was formed in Washington to take measures "to preserve and protect the Tule People." It included representatives, in their individual capacities, of all the governmental departments in Washington, of leading scientific institutions both in Washington and other parts of the country.

Resolutions were passed by scientific organizations throughout the east and south and as far west as Kansas City and Denver, requesting the U. S. State Department to make proper representations to the Panamanian Government. They called attention to the great scientific importance of the Tule People and requested that the Panamanian Government take suitable steps to preserve and protect them, for scientific as well as humanitarian reasons.

But I did not hope for much from the Panamanian Government. My friend, President Porras, had been succeeded in office by President Chiari, uncle of the Dr. Raoul Brin who had started with our expedition and died on his return to Panama City. Chiari was notoriously a "creditor's candidate." He owed the local banks and financial interests so much money that their only hope of collecting their debts was to elect him president, so that he could use the advantages of his position to repay his creditors. Chiari planned a campaign of "Christianization and Civilization of Darien." There was more quick wealth to be looted there than in any other portion of the Republic of Panama.

The representations of the American scientific bodies were forwarded through our State Department to the Panamanian Government. And the answer told us more or less politely to mind our own business. We had not treated our own Indians



*A Mountain Walla Indian Girl  
from the Interior*



*Niece of the Great Chief Golman,  
Aligandi, San Blas*

## “THE TULE PEOPLE MUST FIGHT”

any too well and need not intervene in the treatment of theirs. Which was a rather difficult thing to answer!

Our last meeting of scientists “to devise ways and means to preserve and protect the Tule People” was held in the Cosmos Club at Washington. The scientists felt we had done all that was possible. But I said I wanted to *save* the Tule People—not merely talk about it. Then the eminent scientist from the Smithsonian, now my friend and ally, took the floor. We might differ bitterly about scientific interpretations but not on social and humanitarian grounds.

“The Tule People must fight,” he said. “Where in all the world did any people ever get justice without fighting for their rights?”

It was a packed meeting. Representatives were present from the State, War, Commerce, Agriculture, and Interior Departments, and from all the scientific centers from New York to Washington.

“I know it,” I answered. “I want you to understand it, so that when the Tule People *do* fight for their very existence, and the United States Government intervenes as required under the Hay-Banan-Varilla Treaty, that intervention will be on the side of the Indians and not against them.”

After that meeting at the Cosmos Club I knew that my purpose in Washington had been accomplished. I had brought the Tule People to the notice of many influential men in the United States Government, and I had aroused much sympathy for them. If it came to an open war, as I was almost sure it would now that Chiari was President of Panama, I felt I could count on friendly, not hostile intervention by the United States.

The recently planned scientific expedition to study the white Indians in their native country was abandoned. Quicker and more direct action was needed. Little Chepu, the youngest of the white Indians, I left in the United States to be reared and

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educated as my ward. The rest of the Indians I took back at once to Panama. Major Johnson went with us, and we were joined by Dr. Reginald G. Harris, a competent geneticist who was the Director of the Biological Laboratories at Cold Springs Harbor, Long Island, and who represented the Carnegie Institution. Dr. Harris was accompanied by his wife, daughter of Dr. Charles M. Davenport, the famous geneticist of the Carnegie Institution.

Our departure from Washington via New York was kept as quiet as possible. When we got to Cristobal, on the Canal Zone, we put up again at the Government Hotel, the Washington. Presently I received two callers. One brought a confidential message from Ex-President Porras, telling me that Chiari intended to prevent my return to Darien. And later arrived a delegation of San Blas Indians, who came by night in their own canoes to the Washington, which fronts on the Caribbean.

We held a council of war in the hotel, and late that night all my Indians departed in the canoes of their countrymen for their homes a hundred and fifty miles down the coast.

Next day President Chiari sent a personal messenger to me, requesting my presence in the Presidential Palace at Panama City on the following morning. I acknowledged the summons. But that night I chartered a local auxiliary trading schooner and departed at midnight for the San Blas coast, accompanied by Dr. and Mrs. Harris and the ever faithful Major Johnson.

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## CHAPTER XXXI

### PREPARING FOR WAR

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THE first night out from Colon was a rough one. Our little motor schooner, the *Impco*, tossed and plunged on the roughest seas the Captain had ever experienced in those waters. Johnson and Harris were sea-sick, but Mrs. Harris and I came through without trouble. Our cots on deck had to be lashed. Twice Johnson was tossed out on the planking, and in the middle of the night the ship hit something hard which shivered her from stem to stern. It must have been a coral reef, for she sprang such a leak that the crew had to man both pumps to keep her afloat.

At 9 A.M. we reached San Blas Point, which marks the beginning of the Indian country, and we ran through a narrow channel into quiet water behind the coral reefs. Inside the point lies Parvenir, headquarters of the Panamanian police and the residence of Mojica, the so-called "Governor of San Blas." We did not go ashore. No one came aboard, and soon we were off for Cardi, a large stronghold of free Indians on a cluster of islands at the southern end of the Gulf of San Blas.

The chief of Cardi was one of the Indians who had come to the council of war in the Washington at Cristobal. But although Cardi was still free of Panamanian police, I did not want to stop to see him there. The village was watched too carefully by Indian spies in the Bay of Panama. So I did not



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land at Cardi, but sent word to the chief to come and meet us at Alligandi, where all the Indians were known to be loyal.

From Cardi we continued straight down the coast to Nargana, the home of "Jim Barre" and his family. There we remained overnight, but although Nargana is under control of the Panamanian police, not one of them came near us. At Nargana Dr. Harris had the opportunity of examining eight white Indians and got complete data concerning their genealogy, which was very important to him and pleased him very much.

All that night our ship leaked so badly that extra Indians had to be hired to man the pumps. If it had not been for me and my party, the captain would have returned to Colon to put her in drydock. We left Nargana early in the morning and ran straight through to Alligandi, stopping a moment for clearance papers at the island of Mono, the last outpost of Panamanian authority. Not until then did I breathe easily. I had been afraid that the Panamanians would try to stop me. But Mono was their last chance. I learned later that Governor Mojica and his leading assistants were away on an inspection trip.

In Alligandi we were safe from all interference. It was the first of the entirely free villages, and it was the home of Golman, the fine old chief who was the real leader of the Tule People. We were given a royal reception, and a large house was set aside for our use. The Indians crowded around me, the little children following me in droves and struggling to hold my hand.

That afternoon we had a preliminary conference with Chief Golman in his audience hall. Many of the coastal chiefs were there, and several from the tribes of the interior. But Ina Pagina was absent. He had sent word that he would come if I stated in writing that I wanted him. Apparently he was still

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resentful over not being taken to Washington. I sent him a message promptly, urging him to come by all means. What the Indians needed most was unity.

During my consultation with the chiefs, Dr. Harris and his wife were examining the numerous white Indians who had come in from the mountains. Harris was tremendously excited by his findings. He said there was no possibility that they were albinos. They were something entirely new to science. Mrs. Harris had expected to go home on the *Impro* when it returned to Colon, but she was so delighted with the Indians that she decided to stay over for another ten days so that she could sketch them and model them in clay.

The next day was a rather exciting one. We had our first encounter with Governor Mojica. About eleven A.M. the Panamanian auxiliary schooner, *El Norte*, dropped anchor in the bay. I knew that she was expected, so I had placed all my party out of sight in the village. On board were Mojica and four armed policemen. With them was Ina Pagina, whom they were ostensibly taking to Panama to protest to President Chiari about certain outrages recently perpetrated. I thought it was more likely that they were taking him to prison.

As soon as the *El Norte* had anchored, Chief Golman sent out a big white Indian in a canoe to report who was on her and what they wanted. As soon as he got on board, he was seized by the police, shaken roughly, and dragged before Mojica for questioning.

Particularly Mojica wanted to know what my party was doing in Alligandi. But he got no information from the Indian, who replied doggedly that he knew nothing about our activities or our intentions. Mojica then asked what house we were staying in. The Indian said he didn't know. The policemen beat him cruelly with their fists, but still he kept silent.

Finally Mojica said that if the white Indian did not tell

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what house we were living in, the Panamanian Government would send airplanes to find out.

"Very well," said the white Indian. "Send the airplanes. Then the Indians will find out if Panama has any airplanes."

Mojica flew into a rage. Of course Panama had no airplanes, as the Indians know perfectly well. He threatened to kill the Indian if he would not tell where the Americans were.

"Kill me," the Indian replied. "I am not afraid to die. The Americans are my friends, and I will not tell you anything about them."

"You are a brave man," said Mojica.

"Yes," said the Indian. "I am as brave as you are."

All this took place on the *El Norte* not more than a hundred yards from shore. Hundreds of angry Indians lined the water-front, prepared to launch their canoes at a moment's notice and board the ship. I kept out of sight in one of the houses and through interpreters told the chiefs to keep their men in check. I did not want to start a fight unless necessary. The Indians were wild with rage at the treatment of their countryman, but they obeyed orders well.

I had no intention, however, of letting Mojica take the white Indian away as his prisoner. I issued orders to watch the anchor of the *El Norte*. If the Panamanians started the slow process of raising it by hand while the Indian was still on board, they were all to launch their canoes and rescue him.

Mojica took note of these preparations. Finally he let the white Indian go, after telling him to warn his people not to have anything to do with the Americans. Then the *El Norte* raised her anchor and sailed for Colon.

So much for my first encounter with Mojica. I was glad I had not met him personally. He was technically governor of San Blas, and I did not want to be put in the position of rejecting his orders at this point. I knew that he considered

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us dangerous troublemakers who were likely to expose the graft and injustice of his administration. He would undoubtedly find some pretext for ordering me out of the country. So it was fortunate that I had been able to keep out of his way for the time being.

That night we had another conference with the chiefs, more of whom had arrived in the meantime. The Indians were full of fight and anxious to attack the Panamanians at once. But I held them in check by telling them the unpleasant truth. They might be able to kill or expel all the Panamanians along the coast, but that would not be the end of the matter. Panama would send a ship with big guns, which could lie off shore out of reach of the Indians and wipe out every island village. The Indians on the mainland could fight off any force from Panama, but if the island Indians retreated there, they would lose their villages and their plantations. The best thing to do, I told them, was to wait and see if the United States would intervene in their favor.

After long discussion the Indians agreed to follow my advice. They would not allow any Panamanians to land on their islands or enter their villages, but they promised to keep away from the police and their boats.

Another decision was to post guards to keep watch all night. A little time before, the Panamanians had attacked the Indian village of Azucar in the middle of the night while the people were all asleep. They had killed the chief and the leading men and had held the village ever since. We did not intend to have that happen at Alligandi.

All this time the Harrises and Johnson were collecting data about the Indians, both white and brown. Their efforts were made easy by intelligent and enthusiastic coöperation on the part of the Indians, who had previously resisted all attempts to study them. Among the more important discoveries

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was a book filled with native picture-writing which was brought in by a head-priest. The characters were not mere allegorical pictures such as the Indians often draw, but actual hieroglyphics.

After the day of Mojica's visit, things seemed to quiet down somewhat, and I saw a chance to make my long-planned trip to the interior. It looked much easier now than ever before, for the Indians were with me, not against me. They had always prevented explorers from passing into the country of the upper Bayano from the Caribbean coast, but I was different. They not only gave me permission to go everywhere I wanted, but offered to carry my baggage and arrange for coöperation from the interior Indians.

Chief Nellé of Portogandi had great influence with the mountain Indians because of his reputation as a "doctor" and spirit medium. He had just sent messengers asking all the Walla chiefs to come down to the coast to meet me and take me back with them. Naturally I was rather excited and eager to start, for the Bayano was completely unexplored country.

While I waited, I devoted myself to Indian politics. Every evening we held big meetings in Chief Golman's house. New chiefs were constantly arriving—from the mountains, from Pinos Island, from Navagandi, Portogandi, Cardi, and Tigre. They insisted that I make a speech every night. I would tell them to work together, forget their petty squabbles and weld themselves into an effective unit.

Gradually I saw that my efforts were bearing fruit. The sub-chiefs were beginning to rally around old Chief Golman and his adherents, Chief Nellé and the head-chief of Cardi. Ina Pagina had returned by this time from Panama, and still resentful about the episode of the passport, was trying to undermine my influence. But even his own followers were deserting him.

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One of the chief grievances of the Indians was the fact that over a hundred negroes had camped on Pinos Island, near Ina Pagina's village of Sasardi and were sending strong parties of rubber hunters into the interior from there. They were destroying the wild rubber trees, overrunning the Indian plantations, and threatening the Indian villages. Ina Pagina had done nothing to drive them out, and they were becoming stronger and bolder every day. He had protested to President Chiari, but got no satisfaction. I found later that Governor Mojica received a fee from each rubber-hunter.

The Indians were exceedingly bitter about the negroes at Pinos Island, and I had no doubt that they would attack and drive them out of the interior sooner or later. The matter was complicated by the report that the negroes were led by two Americans, explorers for the United Fruit Company. I made it very plain to the Indians that whatever they did to the blacks they must not harm the Americans, who would be forced to leave in any case as soon as their black followers were killed.

A few days after the departure of Mojica, two American airplanes appeared over the village from the direction of Colon and flew back up the coast an hour later. Evidently Mojica had reached Panama with tales of a threatened uprising, and General Lassiter had sent planes to investigate. This was a very encouraging sign, for it showed that the American authorities in the Zone were taking interest in the developments along the San Blas Coast. Investigation was the first step toward intervention, and American intervention was just what we wanted.

I felt that this was the proper moment to write a letter to General Lassiter, telling him what was going on in Darien. The *Impco* was about to sail on one of her trips to Colon, I could give the letter to the Captain.

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My letter to Lassiter was a rather long one and need not be quoted here in full. I told him why we had come, and what we had done so far. And I drew a rather detailed picture of conditions in the territories under the care of Mojica. I told about the numerous outrages committed against the Indians by the negro policemen. How villages had been attacked and conquered. How men had been imprisoned for trivial reasons so their wives could be attacked while they were in jail. I told how young girls had been arrested for resisting the attentions of a negro, and then kept in jail until they submitted to outrage.

All these facts, I wrote, had come to me from responsible Indians whom I knew and trusted. The result of this set of conditions was that the Indians were leaving their homes in the occupied villages, abandoning their plantations and possessions, and escaping by night to the villages which were still free.

I told about the critical situation developing at Pinos Island, and warned him that resistance by the Indians was sure to come if the rubber-hunting negroes were allowed to continue their depredations. I assured him that the Indians were armed—mostly with shot-guns sold illegally by Governor Mojica—and that they would fight bravely and successfully against further encroachments.

Finally I told him about the decisions of the Indian "congress." They demanded that their country be set aside from the public lands of Panama and not granted to concession hunters. They wanted some just system of settling disputes before an outside court, preferably American. They would accept schools only if they were adapted to their requirements, which the Panamanian schools already established were not. And they demanded that further encroachments cease at once.

I made it as plain as I could that I was not inciting the

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Indians to revolt, but that I was their friend and devoted to their interests. So far my advice had been entirely peaceful. I signed the letter with my full name and told the General that he might use it in any way that he thought advisable.

After I got the letter off on the *Impco*, I set again about my plans to explore the interior. All looked peaceful enough, and the Indians were more than willing to cooperate. I intended to leave as soon as the Harrises returned from Portogandi, where they had gone to examine the white Indians there.

My equanimity was somewhat disturbed the next day by an Indian messenger who arrived by canoe from Cardi. He said his chief had heard that Governor Mojica had threatened to return with two hundred police and burn both Cardi and Alligandi. The chief asked instructions. I sent back word that it sounded like empty talk, but that he should be prepared and should resist further encroachment to the last ditch. I really thought this was only a rumor, although the Indians were not as optimistic. Their tempers rose quickly to the boiling point, and I had all I could do to keep them from starting an attack on the nearest Panamanian posts.

For a time I seemed to be right. A later report arrived to the effect that Mojica was still in Panama City and was making no move to attack Cardi and Alligandi. I hoped that my letter would reach General Lassiter before Mojica could do anything rash. And I made my plans to set out for the interior the next day.

But the situation was worse than I'd thought. Another report arrived that night. Mojica had renewed his threat and according to the messenger had actually started down the coast. I doubted this last item, but the Indians did not. There was no holding them now. They felt that they should prepare for



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war and attack before the arrival of Mojica and his force. Reluctantly I gave up my exploration plans. I had made the decision to stand by the Indians in their crisis, and I determined not to run away, no matter what might be the consequences to me and to them.