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TENSION ENVELOPE CORP.

TEN ROOMS *and* TWO PATIOS

By

GENEVIEVE HOEHN BELLIS

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TO OUR PARENTS

I am indebted to many friends for their help in the preparation of this manuscript. May I thank in particular Miss Martha Shea, the kindest critic I know, who gave so generously of her time and talents.

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I

QUININE SENDS US SOUTH

THE subdued hum of the airplane gave me soothing assurance that I was on my way to South America, welcome assurance following months of uncertainty. I was floating through the Sierra Madre Mountains, leaving behind the Mexico I had visited so briefly. I became interested in the slowly changing landscape. It was like looking down on a relief map, with the mountains, rivers, and fields in Lilliputian array below. Terraced hillsides showed man's attempt to produce crops on this rugged terrain. So would these hillsides have looked to Cortés, perhaps, could he have viewed them from the air; for long before the Spanish conquered Mexico, Aztec farmers were terracing these same slopes which now held my attention. Little towns were sprinkled about, the orange roofs of their houses and the white spires of their churches contrasting with the green vegetation and the brown earth. It seemed that the plane was stationary and that the view below was moving slowly and smoothly under it. I felt an elation not unlike that which a snow-covered landscape brings—some magic force had suddenly changed a drab world to a gleamingly perfect one.

The Mexican landscape, however, was only in a small way responsible for my sense of elation. Awareness that I was to join my husband in Bogotá, Colombia, made even the beautiful Mexican scene seem relatively unexciting. The year before Tom had been sent to Colombia by our Government. I had not known very much of his assignment, but I knew that it was regarded as urgently important to the war program and that it related to the procurement of quinine.

From my childhood in Southeast Missouri, I knew that quinine was the time-proved remedy for malaria. In the last weeks before Tom left Washington I had learned that in recent years more than 95 per cent of the world's quinine had come from the bark of trees cultivated by the Dutch on plantations in Java; and that when the Japanese captured Java the loss of that source of antimalarial had been regarded by our military leaders as a serious blow. I had learned that quinine trees had not grown in Java

originally. The original wild trees had been found in the mile-high rain-forests of the Andes Mountains of South America, in regions now in Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, and Bolivia.

Although South America was the original source of quinine, the drug trade had been so long dependent upon the Dutch plantations in Java that little was known as to how much quinine could be procured from the wild trees in South America. This lack of information dictated that a survey be made for sources of the drug, and so our Government had sent a small group of scientists and businessmen to Colombia for this purpose. Tom had been sent as the chemist for that survey party. The group came to be known as the Cinchona Mission.

After Tom had gone, I became increasingly aware of the strategic role of quinine in the war. We received news of the seriousness of malaria to our fighters in the Pacific area. Then the beginning of the campaign in Africa made me realize that quinine was strategic, too, in the European theater.

Tom's letters never mentioned quinine, and I realized that he was not at liberty to write of his work; but I sensed that the purpose of the mission was being accomplished. In the second summer of the war his letters indicated that his stay in South America might be much longer than we had anticipated when he left. This suggested to me that the Cinchona Mission was not only conducting a scientific survey, but was also going into a procurement program to exploit the quinine bark discovered. I had then begun planning my trip to join him, and now I was on my way.

My account is not the story of quinine procurement. That story must be told by the botanists, the businessmen, and the chemists; it must be told in terms of genera and species, of rates of exchange and bills of lading, of extractions and alkaloidal assays. This is the story of the house in which we lived, ten rooms with two patios; of the little sightseeing trips we made; and of the friendships we established during the two and one-half years that Tom and I lived in South America. My sources are the numerous snapshots which both Tom and I made and the letters which I wrote to our families and friends in the States. (I confess that I have borrowed from some of the letters which Tom wrote to me during his first year away.) Now that Colombia is distant in

months as well as miles and memory is less to be trusted, I find that our snapshots have been particularly helpful in my attempt to be accurate in this account.

Anyone recording impressions of Colombia has the problem of the blind men who tried to describe the elephant. Like the elephant, Colombia is not alike all over. It is a thousand miles across the country from the Panamanian border, where the Isthmus separates by less than a hundred miles the Atlantic from the Pacific, down to Leticia, Colombia's port on the Amazon River, at which latitude more than three thousand miles of the South American continent separates the oceans. That expanse covers every phase of civilization from medicine-man to public health service and from dugout canoe to airplane. Bogotá, the capital, was founded by the Spaniard Jiménez de Quesada on August 6, 1538, and the Chibcha Indians already had a settlement on the site when the conquistadores came. Thus the Spanish had been in Bogotá for more than two hundred fifty years when George Washington recommended the swampy region around Georgetown as the site for the capital of our country.

While Colombia's capital is more than four hundred years old, there are regions in the country as yet unvisited by white men. Colombia had the first commercial air line in the world; yet you cannot drive an automobile or go by train all of the way from Bogotá to either of her seacoasts. A cautious Colombian driver does not leave his car without first removing the blades of the windshield wipers; but one hundred pound bars of solid silver are accorded no more care than a shipment of gaskets as they are hauled around in the delivery truck of Avianca, Colombia's national air line. On a farm near the capital, a new tractor pulls a disk harrow, while on an adjoining farm men use a crude wooden plow drawn by two yoke of oxen. Lottery tickets are hawked on almost every street corner; but it is against the law to snap a photograph without a police permit.

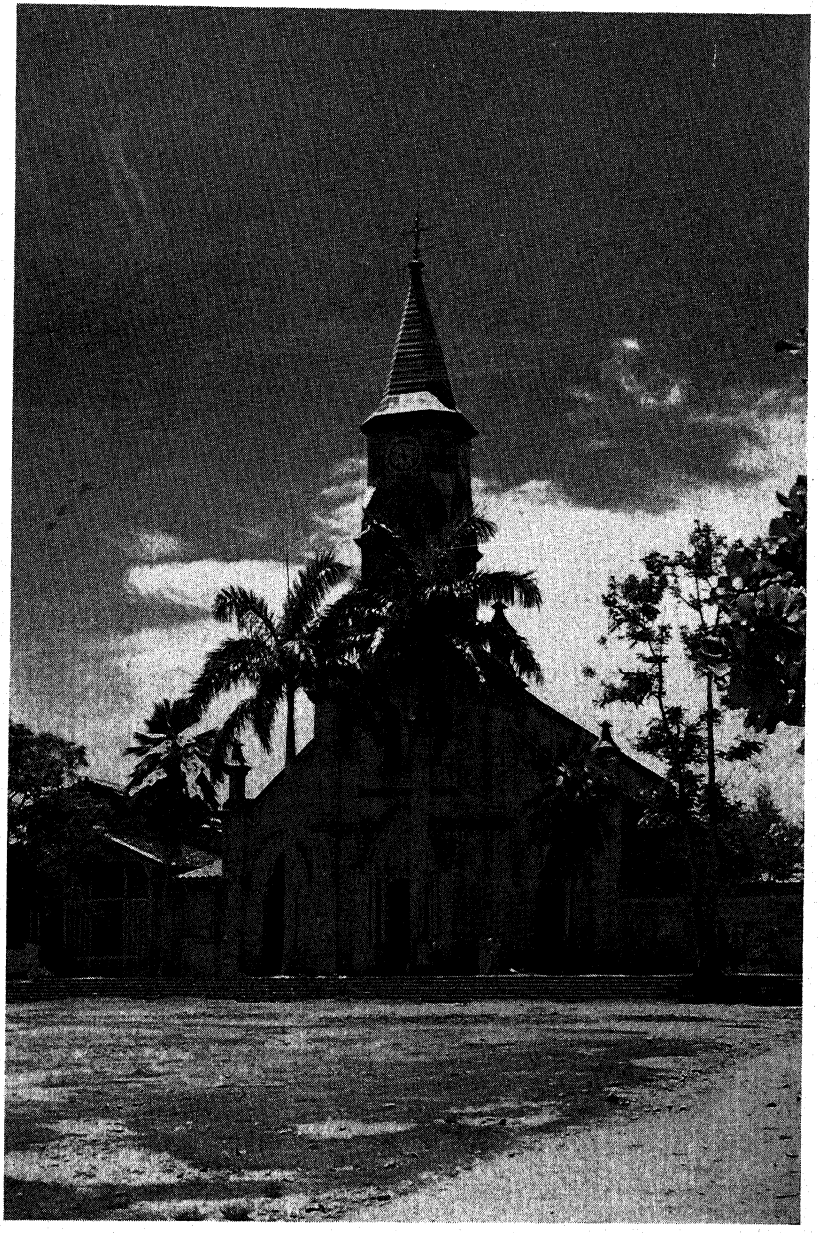
We found such contrasts intriguing. We found Colombians tolerant of our peculiarities and patient with our imperfect Spanish. We think that Colombians are not only good neighbors, but exceedingly hospitable ones also.

I wish that I possessed a magic pen to express adequately our gratitude to those who opened their homes and their hearts to us.

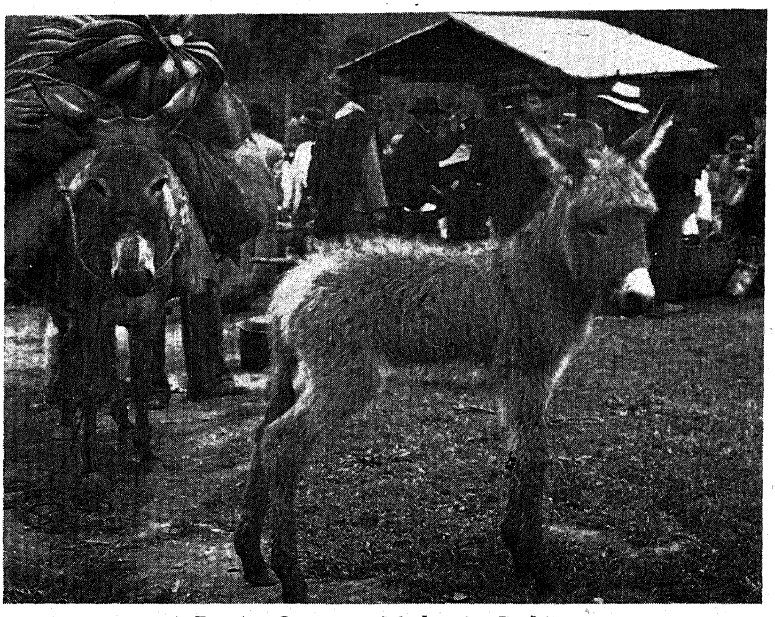
Lack of that magic pen—and a desire to respect their right of privacy—makes the fulfilment of my wish impossible. We returned with many pleasant memories of Spanish Americans. One such memory takes us back to an attractive modern home on Calle 75 and an evening made brighter by a hearty fire in a large fireplace; another takes us back to a charming century-old home in downtown Bogotá, among its attractions a patio garden and rare souvenirs of colonial Colombia; a third brings back a visit in the home of a young doctor who lived near us, his library as full of books as his keen brain is of ideas. These three homes are quite different in architecture and furnishings, but are alike in that all shelter people innately courteous and friendly, skilled in the art of gracious living. I remember, too, the kindly woman of humble station, a friend of our cook's, who volunteered to "make market" for me at a time when she knew I had no servant to do it—she did laundries for two or three families each day, but she was not too busy to offer to give me, a foreigner, several hours of her time.

For these and for many other kindnesses, we are sincerely grateful.

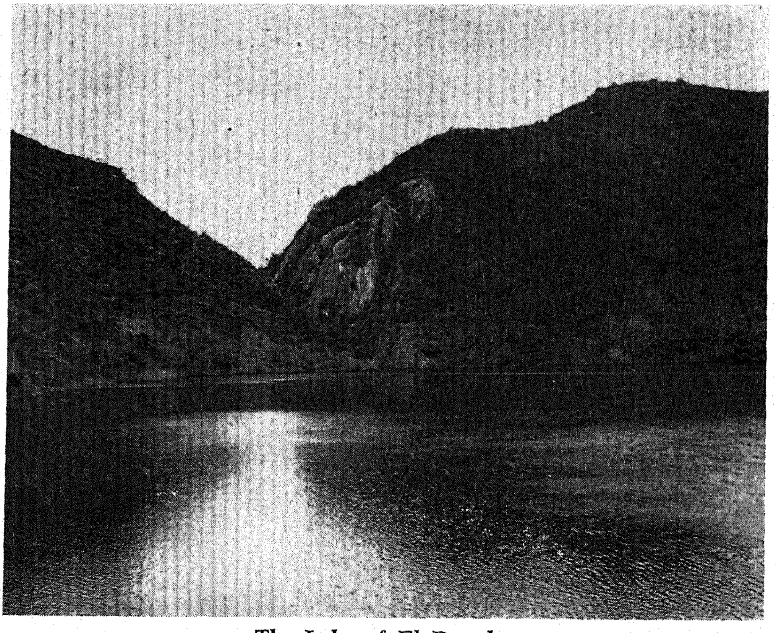
HITCHHIKING TO SOUTH AMERICA



Church in Puerto Berrío



A Burrito Comes to Market in Cachipay



The Lake of El Dorado

II

TO THE LAND OF THE AZTECS

ACCORDING to Tom, I hitchhiked to South America. He says this because I gave up our apartment, put our furniture in storage, and started out from Washington with no assurance that I should ever reach Bogotá.

Although Tom had been sent to Colombia on a four months' assignment, the four months stretched into six, and in the summer following his arrival it appeared that he would be in Bogotá indefinitely. He suggested that I come to Colombia by way of Mexico and Central America, but inquiries around Washington always resulted in the reply, "You can't go to Colombia without a priority." I wasn't entitled to a priority at the time; perhaps, if I'd wait a few months, the regulations would change. The steamship lines had discontinued passenger service due to the war, making air travel the only transportation available. The most direct air route from Washington to Bogotá is by way of Miami. "Miami is a bottle-neck," I was told. "Then," I asked, "what about going through Mexico and Central America?" Mexico City was another bottle-neck; Panama was a third.

However, I imagined people had gone to South America without priorities, and I decided to try it. I applied for a passport. Then I began getting the numerous injections and certificates which I was told that I needed. I soon learned that it is not fair to say that Bogotá is 2,344 air line miles from Washington and that therefore I was slightly nearer to Bogotá than to San Francisco. You must add to the 2,344 miles one passport, several visas, four inoculations, one health certificate, one airplane ticket, and enough Travelers Checks to shrink seriously a modest bank account.

I reached Laredo, Texas, late one night in July, and the next morning I began to make inquiries about the Pullman reservation I had made in Washington for travel from Laredo to Mexico City. I couldn't find anyone at the railroad ticket office who had a record of my reservation. I learned that a number of the passengers who had come in on my train were going on by bus that afternoon. I was told that the bus was cheaper and faster, and that I could see

more of the country from the bus, so I walked to the bus station and secured a one-way ticket to Mexico City, with seat reservation. I exchanged some dollars for pesos, made a few last-minute purchases, returned to the hotel for lunch, and caught a taxi to the bus station. Most of the passengers waiting to board the bus were Americans.

We rode to the U. S. customs post near the International Bridge over the Rio Grande. The customs and immigration officers conducted their inspection in a good-natured, leisurely manner. Several people ran into difficulties because of wartime restrictions, but I had known in advance that I couldn't take out film and no currency other than a limited number of two-dollar bills, so I had no trouble. (I never learned what role two-dollar bills played in the war, but it occurred to me that here was another change in the usual order of things. The unlucky travelers were not those who had two-dollar bills, but those who didn't have them!)

We crossed the Rio Grande to Mexico, where we got out again for Mexican inspection. Passports and tourist cards were reviewed and stamped, and bags were taken out, opened, inspected, and sealed. (In Mexico I encountered the only instance where the customs officials suggested that travelers were obliged to tip the porters who assisted the inspectors in their work. No fixed charge was announced, and it was apparently considered legitimate for the porters to get all they could from travelers. This practice, condoned, if not sponsored, by Mexican customs officials, gave a disagreeable impression to the traveler upon entry into Mexico and upon departure from the country. I regretted that such an easily-remedied evil was allowed to reflect unfavorably on the hospitality of our southern neighbors.)

We followed the Pan American Highway (Mexican National Highway Number 1) toward Monterrey. The straight road and the roomy big bus were not unlike roads and buses in the States, but the country through which we passed had a foreign aspect and reminded me that I was actually out of the States and en route to Bogotá.

The scenery that rolled by that afternoon looked as if it had been painted with loving care by a Mexican artist. I had never seen the sky more blue nor the clouds more fleecily beautiful. The near-by country was barren desert, level as a table top. Far ahead

in the distance rose the mountains. Along the road were herds of goats, small donkeys, and cowboys driving scrawny cattle. The principal forms of vegetation were dusty mesquite and prickly cactus; touches of color were added by the blooms and ripe fruit of the cactus. An occasional humble habitation showed that the region, poor though it was, furnished a living to a sparse population. Along the highway were rural elementary schools, rural agricultural schools, and experimental farms—tangible evidence that Mexico is making progress in her program to better the lot of the poor.

Several times en route, Mexican officers stopped the bus to recheck passports and tourist cards. One of the officials wanted to see a suit-box that a Mexican woman had placed on the shelf inside the bus, so it was taken down, opened, and inspected in full view of all passengers. It contained an assortment of women's apparel, and I could imagine the embarrassment of the owner at having her underclothing spread out before the curious eyes of her fellow passengers. One officer asked to see my tourist card. I had not secured one, since it is not needed if the traveler has a passport stamped with a Mexican visa. (To simplify travel in Mexico, experienced American travelers often get tourist cards, even though they have passports.) The inspector held my passport in his hand for some minutes, still dissatisfied with it, even when I pointed out the Mexican visa. Finally he appeared to decide that it might be all right and returned the passport to me.

Monterrey, 150 miles south of Laredo, marked the end of comfortable riding for me, for passengers were taken on to occupy the jump-seats in the aisle. I had been congratulating myself on my good fortune in getting a comfortable seat and a congenial seatmate. I had an inside seat near the front of the bus, and the woman who occupied the adjacent seat, by the window, was an extremely likable person whose interest was painting. Perhaps the occupant of the jump-seat was no less congenial, but the nature of the seat was such that we bumped shoulders throughout the trip.

Aside from being crowded by my neighbor seated in the aisle, my principal annoyance on the bus was occasioned by the indiscreet behavior of some of my fellow countrymen. There were times when their manners were such that I was thoroughly ashamed that they were Americans, and I could readily see why many Mexicans

have a bad opinion of us. A couple who sat near me displayed particularly bad taste: they talked loudly, practicing the Spanish which they had learned, evidently, for the purpose of adding vulgar and obscene Spanish stories to their already adequate supply of English ones. Another American, in outward aspect a cultured woman, did a thoughtless act. She wished to look inside a lovely old church in one of the villages where we stopped. She walked into the church without bothering to cover her head or to set down the bottle of soda water which she had in her hand. I could understand the feeling of the blond girl on the bus who said indignantly, "*No soy gringa; nací en México.*" "I'm *not* an American; I was born in Mexico.")

All chauffeurs appeared capable and drove well. Each time we changed drivers, however, the new one seemed to speak less English than his predecessor. When I asked the third one, "What is the name of this town?" he pointed the way to the rest room. No matter what the question, he invariably responded with the same gesture. (Such conveniences were labeled: *Señoras* and *Señores, Damas* and *Caballeros, Baño, Inodoro,* and W. C. They were always dirty, they never had paper, and usually they didn't flush. The cleanest one was attended by a small boy with a pitcher of water. He waited just outside the door, ready to pour water in the toilet as each of us emerged. He also poured water for our hands. I gladly tipped him for his welcome, if unconventional, service.)

We were now in the hills, and the landscape was assuming a tropical appearance. I saw a few orchids, the huge begonias which I knew by the name "elephant's ears," bananas, purple flowering trees, and clouds of yellow butterflies. The country was more densely populated, and stone fences divided the rocky hillsides into small farms whose shapes defied description: some were round, others were elliptical, still others allowed the hills to mold them into non-symmetrical forms. Women carried baskets on their heads, spread laundry to dry on the grass, and carried babies in packs on their backs. The road became winding, and often it crawled along the edge of deep valleys, permitting me to see where I had been and where I was going. Chasms that appeared a mile deep made me hope that the bus would stay on the road. I did not know whether it was awe at the grandeur of nature, the altitude, or my fear of heights that made me feel so breathless! I con-

tinued looking, for I was afraid that otherwise I'd miss something.

We reached Mexico City about eight in the evening, having traveled almost eight hundred miles in the thirty hours since we had left Laredo.

My decision to take the bus resulted in my making a new friend, Nora Thompson of Philadelphia, who turned out to be my guardian angel. Without her, I might have reached Bogotá, but I surely would not have had so pleasant a trip. I was an exceedingly inexperienced traveler, south of the border for the first time, and not at all sure I was going to reach my destination. My next goal, after Mexico City, was Guatemala. I had considered making that part of my trip by train if plane passage was unavailable. But I had heard wild tales of that train service—all of them told by people who'd never even seen the train. I learned that Nora had once traveled from Mexico City to Guatemala by rail. (Some time later I read the account of that trip in her charming booklet, *Vignettes from South of the Border.*) Her destination on this trip was Guatemala, and as I talked with her about that country, we found that we had a mutual friend.

Neither Nora nor I had a hotel reservation in Mexico City, and she offered to find a place for me at the time she secured a room for herself. Had it not been for her "know-how," I would probably have spent that night in the bus station or on a park bench!

Mexico City was crowded with American tourists and with Latin Americans attending a convention. There simply were no rooms available in any of the better hotels. The taxi driver who had taken us on our round of the hotels ventured a suggestion. "If the señoritas can find no other place, perhaps they will wish to consider a small hotel of which I know. It is unpretentious—but it is clean and respectable." We decided to look it over. The room was clean, the beds were comfortable, and we felt a bit more secure because there were two of us. However, we felt uneasy about the safety of the place when we found that the door to our room locked not from the inside but from the outside. At last I made my first contribution to our partnership: I set my huge traveling bag on end in front of the door, and atop it I stacked our smaller bags, hoping that they would tumble to the floor with a loud crash should anyone try to get in. Thus barricaded, we went to sleep.

Upon awakening, we smelled smoke, and we noted that the coal-

burning hot water heater was just outside our window. My first thought was that I surely was glad that we hadn't died of carbon monoxide gas in a sixty-cent Mexico City hotel room. One would prefer a more dramatic ending—say a plane crash in the jungle!

The next day we managed to get a room at a different hotel, file our applications for passage to Guatemala with Pan American Airways, catch up with the eating we'd neglected on the bus trip, and do some sightseeing. There are many good hotels in Mexico City, and though we could not obtain accommodations at the best one, we secured a room that was entirely satisfactory. Our call at Pan American Airways was quite encouraging. We were told that we could probably get out in two days.

As usual, I was very much interested in eating. While the highway from Laredo to Mexico City is a good road, the eating establishments at which we had stopped had been decidedly dirty, and my friend and I had eaten very little and had drunk soda water rather than trust the drinking-water. Many foods were rationed in the States at that particular time, and it had been some months since we had seen such a varied fare. We found at Sanborns an abundance of good things to eat: steaks, roasts, chops, seafood, tropical fruits, and a second or even a third cup of coffee—with sugar.

I realized that Nora was saving me the difficulties confronting a stranger in a large city: she knew which hotels were acceptable; she knew the procedure for applying for passage at Pan American Airways; and she knew the best places to eat. But when we started to do some sightseeing, I really began to appreciate how fortunate I was. Nora had traveled extensively in Mexico and in Guatemala and had spent several of her summer vacations conducting groups of teachers on study tours in those countries. It was fun going around with her.

The climate of Mexico City was perfect for our sightseeing trips. The city is located at 7,300 feet above sea-level and has warm sunny days and cool nights. From June to September, the rainy season, there are hard downpours each afternoon, but they last only a short time. I was thrilled by the snow-clad peaks that overlook the city, Popocatépetl and Ixtaccíhuatl. (I cannot yet pronounce either word nonchalantly!)

One day isn't enough in which to learn very much about a city

rich in history and inhabited by two million people, but in that one day I made a hurried inspection of Mexico's capital.

At the east end of Avenida Madero is the Zócalo, a plaza where have occurred events important in the history of Mexico since the time of the Aztecs. On the north side of the Zócalo rises the huge Cathedral, erected on the site of the first Christian church to be built on the North American continent (1525). Near the Cathedral an excavation reveals part of the ruins of the great Aztec temple which was torn down by the invading Spaniards. (What a pity that in their zeal to conquer they destroyed not only the buildings, but the written records of the Aztec civilization—a culture more advanced, in many ways, than their own.) The Cathedral was completed in 1667 and the ruins of the temple represent a civilization dating back at least three centuries earlier. Both are in sharp contrast to the smart modern shops we had passed in our walk down Avenida Madero, and to the noisy, bustling traffic. The hurrying traffic and the frenzied tooting of auto horns came as a shock to me—I had been led to believe that all life is leisurely in Spanish America!

A block from the west end of Avenida Madero looms the white marble Palace of Fine Arts. A few squares away, we stopped to see the flower market. Here men and women were making huge and ornately designed funeral wreaths of white flowers, then painting part of the flowers with purple dye. In spite of the profusion of flowers, the market had a sombre look, increased by the presence of a bereaved family bargaining for a wreath. Later we bought from a street vendor corsages of gardenias for the equivalent of twelve cents each. We wore them even though it marked us unmistakably as tourists and seemed to attract even more sellers of lottery tickets.

The next morning we again called at the Pan American Airways office and learned that we could secure passage on the afternoon plane. As I exchanged a fat bunch of Travelers Checks for a long ticket to Bogotá, I tried to act unconcerned. After all, Mexico City hadn't proved to be much of a "bottle-neck."

III

QUICK TOUR OF GUATEMALA

IN THE three short commercial flights that I had previously made, along the Missouri River Valley, I had never been above the clouds, and I was curious to see them from the top side. A half hour or so out of Mexico City I got my wish, for the plane climbed to eleven thousand feet, above the rugged Sierra Madre Mountains. At the time the steward served lunch, he told us that we were going to run into bad weather. The flight was still smooth when I fastened my seat belt, but after a few minutes the plane began to bounce around—another experience I had heretofore not had! The pilot took us around the storm, and soon we were below the clouds and west of the Sierra Madres. The storm continued to threaten the mountains, dark clouds and lightning almost obscuring a rainbow that timidly appeared in a clear space. Seeing in the distance a very large body of water, I asked the steward the name of it—maps were forbidden. "That," he said, "is the 'Paceefic' Ocean." The ocean came nearer, and our plane drifted slowly above the coast. We were flying at a lower level now, low enough to see whitecaps on the water and little clearings along the shore with flimsy-looking thatched huts and tall palms.

Riding out a storm together breaks down reserve somewhat, and after it was over we talked with our fellow passengers. A Texan interested in hunting asked Nora to tell him what animals lived in the jungles whose green canopy we could see. Her description of the jungles into which she had gone aroused the interest of a Mexican physician and the Mexican student sitting beside him, and they joined in the conversation. I vividly recall the reverent tone and rapt expression of the student as he looked from the plane window toward the mountains and said, *"Que bello es mi país!"* ("How beautiful is my country!")

When the physician learned my destination, his eyes sparkled and his hands moved expressively as he talked of Colombia, a country which Mexicans hold in high regard. "Colombia is a land of cultured people," he said, "and Bogotá is a city of poets. Not only are Colombians literary, but theirs is a progressive country and a true democracy." The physician realized that he had heard

me say only a few words and he asked, "Do you speak Spanish, señora?" I replied that my Spanish was still inadequate, but that I planned to continue studying it. "Then you are truly fortunate, señora, in your destination; for you will hear spoken in Bogotá the very pure Spanish for which Colombians are famous."

Our plane was scheduled to land at Tapachula, Mexico, near the Guatemalan border, but due to unfavorable weather we went directly to Guatemala City. We flew between two of the volcanoes overlooking the city, coming close enough to see some of the vegetation on their sloping sides. Then the steward covered the windows and we saw no more of Guatemala's capital until we landed. Of course this aroused my curiosity as to what I wasn't supposed to see. Later, when I noticed numerous Flying Fortresses and even more numerous AAF fliers in Guatemala City, I assumed that the United States had air bases in Guatemala. It was one of those things that everyone seemed to know but no one dared talk about, because it was wartime.

At the airport in Guatemala City, attractive señoritas cordially welcomed us, pinned corsages on us, and politely directed us to the proper windows for immigration and customs inspection. The señoritas also handed each of us a five-by-eight inch card, printed in English and in Spanish, which clearly set forth instructions for travelers. These printed cards made it easy for us to know what was required of us; they also conveyed the feeling that Pan American Airways wanted to be of help.

Guatemala was like a second home to my companion, and she as eagerly looked for familiar sights as I did for strange ones. As we drove from the airport to our hotel, I remarked that the well-paved streets looked as though they had been scrubbed by hand. "They do scrub the streets!" Nora said. I was told that Guatemala City is comparatively new, having been destroyed by earthquake in 1917 and rebuilt. Because of the possibility of a recurrence of violent tremors, there are no high buildings. Directing traffic at each street intersection was a policeman, a big umbrella protecting him from sun and rain. Auto traffic was not heavy, but I saw many bicycles and motorcycles. I learned that autos were not being used much at the time because gasoline was rationed. Guatemala imports gasoline, and the amount received was restricted by war conditions.

Soon we reached the San Carlos Hotel, where we again shared a room, not from necessity this time, but because it was more fun. I was exceedingly pleased with the hotel. Meals were exceptionally good and adapted to the taste of the American tourist, our room was comfortable and clean, and the hotel was so decorated as to call attention to the attractions of Guatemala. On the walls were colorful pictures, among them copies of the striking oils and water colors of Guatemalan Indians by the native artist Alfredo Gálvez Suárez. Everywhere I saw hand-woven textiles made by the Indians: the halls were carpeted with runners made from woolen saddle blankets, a generous number of colorful woolen blankets were on our beds, and the chairs were covered with the cotton material used by the Indian women for the wrap-around skirts which they wear. In the Mayan Room and in a small room just inside the entrance were articles used by the Indians in fiestas, including masks and drums. As reminders of wartime Guatemala, the flags of the United Nations waved from the balcony over the attractive patio lobby.

The next morning Nora and I went to the Alien Control Bureau. We were required to register with this Bureau within twenty-four hours of arrival in Guatemala, and then report to the Passport Office prior to leaving the country. (The regulations have changed somewhat since that time.) The Guatemalan Police added my name to their files and relieved me of several of the numerous passport pictures I had secured before leaving Washington. With the help of my friend, who acted as translator, I answered queries as to my age, citizenship, marital status, occupation, height, and weight. I began to get the dubious consolation of learning that governmental curiosity, otherwise known as red tape, is not confined to the United States.

Fortunately, life moves more slowly in the capital of Guatemala than in the capital of Mexico, or I should have been run over as I craned my neck to see the strange sights. A large proportion of the Guatemalan population is made up of Indians who dress in garments fashioned of bright-colored textiles, hand-woven and often elaborately embroidered. Indian women balance baskets and water jugs on their heads. Frequently a baby accompanies its mother: sometimes the baby's head protrudes from a cocoon-like wrapping that we associate with the American Indian; at other

times the child is suspended from the mother's shoulder in a sling. Nearly every Indian man carries a load on his back as he dog-trots along the street. I noticed that an Indian man, though carrying a heavy burden, walks almost erect—his load is held in place by a strong cord tied around it, the ends of the cord fastened to a woven strap resting against his forehead.

The relief map of Guatemala in the city park, with rivers that run, gives an easy lesson in geography. The market, overflowing with bright flowers and strange and familiar vegetables and fruits, is quiet and clean. (That is not typical of Latin American markets!) The climate of mile-high Guatemala City is delightful: warm in the sun, cool in the shade in the daytime, and cool enough for blankets at night.

I talked with Nora about how best to spend my few days in Guatemala, and upon her recommendation I made a trip to visit the ruins at Antigua, the old capital. On Saturday morning I traveled the twenty-five miles to Antigua by bus. As my bus clattered over the mountain road, we met Indians going to the market in Guatemala City. Most of them were afoot, but there was an occasional lumbering oxcart or a sturdy bicycle. Firewood was carried on oxcarts and on the strong backs of Indian men. Chickens, flowers, vegetables, and fruits traveled in baskets balanced on the heads of the women. Underneath each basket a piece of cloth coiled into a doughnut-like padding served to keep the basket in place and to protect the woman's head. Pigs, large and small, quiet and squealing, were driven along the road ahead of their owners. Perhaps the oddest sight was a man pedaling a bicycle, a live calf slung over his shoulders. It was a festive-looking procession, as most of the women wore skirts and blouses woven in the patterns characteristic of their native villages.

I reached Antigua in little more than an hour and took a room at the Hotel Aurora for myself and for Nora, who was coming over with friends later in the day. The hotel was of Spanish style, the rooms opening on a patio. A fountain in the patio murmured softly to the flowers surrounding it: red and green coleus, red roses, red geraniums, white and yellow daisies, red begonias, green ferns, dark red petunias, and crimson and pink bougainvillea.

I was told that the attractive furniture in my room was fashioned of wood from the lowlands of Guatemala. The dresser had a key

for the guest's convenience; doors to the rooms were not locked.

Our maid, María, was typical of many of the Indian women, even to her name. Her black hair hung in two braids, and she wore gold earrings in her pierced ears. She was dressed in a purple cotton blouse and blue cotton wrap-around skirt of native material. She was barefooted. María had a full figure, a graceful carriage, a smiling face, and a pleasant laugh.

The capital of Guatemala was established on the site of Antigua in 1543, and it had grown to a city of sixty thousand before it was destroyed by earthquake in 1773. The seat of government was then moved to its present location, and now Antigua is a sleepy Guatemalan village, known for its ruins and its history.

Antigua has been visited by many Americans, some of whom have written fascinating stories of the city that bore the impressive name, *Muy Noble y Muy Leal Ciudad de Santiago de los Caballeros de Goathemala,* "Most Noble and Most Loyal City of St. James of the Knights of Guatemala." (I particularly like the chapters on Antigua in *Four Keys to Guatemala* by Kelsey and Osborne.) There are tales of the glitter of the city's social life, the rivalry of its monasteries and convents, the perfection of its eighty churches, the scandalous behavior of some of its citizens, and the violence of its destruction.

Among the personalities connected with Guatemala's colonial history, I have two favorites. One is Beatriz de Alvarado, who lost her life in the earthquake that in 1541 destroyed the first capital, located some three miles from Antigua. Truly Doña Beatriz is a woman to be remembered. She was beautiful, and she was of noble birth. She was only twenty-two when her husband, the conqueror and then governor of Guatemala, died in battle in Guadalajara, Mexico. When news of her husband's death reached her, Doña Beatriz mourned in such a thoroughgoing way as to arouse the fear of the Indians that her unseemly grief would bring about a punishment from the Almighty. She had the governor's palace stained black, inside and out. Within a month she had recovered from her grief sufficiently to have herself appointed governor to succeed her husband. She was thus the sole woman ever to be named ruler of a government in the Americas. But her term of office was short. Within two days she died in an earthquake and flood that destroyed the city.

My other favorite among those people of colonial Guatemala is Brother Pedro de Betancourt, whose spirit must surely walk at times through the cobblestone streets of Antigua. For in life he trod them many times, in his work of caring for the sick. Brother Pedro converted a hut on the outskirts of the city into a small hospital, where he nursed the children of the poor. He inspired others to join him in this work, until at length there were founded not only a hospital and a church, but a new religious order, the Bethlehemites. Today the tomb of Brother Pedro in Antigua is a shrine to which the ill make pilgrimages.

I hired a little boy to guide me around the streets of Antigua. As I visited the ruins, I belatedly learned a little about them from the lad and from a borrowed guidebook. Our journey took us also to the market, its setting the ruins of the once magnificent church of the Jesuits. Near by we entered a small factory to watch Indian boys and men weave colorful cotton textiles on small foot-operated looms. Here I tried my hand at bargaining for a white luncheon cloth whose blue design was worked in to resemble embroidery.

Nora came over in the afternoon, and after dinner we sat on a bench in the plaza to observe an old Spanish custom: walking around the plaza in the evening. Antigua's plaza is like many found in Spanish-style towns. In some towns, market is held in the plaza; in others the plaza is a park. Whether the plaza is utilitarian or decorative, surrounding it are a church, a municipal building, and business houses. Antigua's plaza is a park, with trees, flowers, a fountain, walks, and benches. Shoeshine boys find customers among the people resting on the benches, and on Sunday mornings a band plays in the park.

On Sunday I visited more of the ruins with Nora, and I snapped pictures with film which I had bought in Guatemala City. Like many who visit Antigua, I tried to take pictures of the volcanoes which dominate the town: El Agua (water), Fuego (fire), and Acatenango (place of reeds). Each of the volcanoes has its claim to distinction: El Agua is the most symmetrical in shape; Fuego smokes a little as if to warn that it isn't dead yet; Acatenango has two cones, its highest one the loftiest point of the three volcanoes.

In the afternoon I took the bus back to Guatemala City. All seats were taken, and wooden boxes were placed in the aisle to accommodate more passengers. The driver's helper hung almost

out of the entrance to the bus, which had no door. Before we started, a man was playing a guitar and singing, but after we set out the only noise was the rattling and sputtering of the bus. The vehicle was getting old and had spent a rough life jolting over the rocky mountain roads. It had to be cranked; the radiator leaked and was filled from the public wells in the villages through which we passed—a watering can was carried on top of the bus for this purpose. (The public well, *pila,* in each village is a meeting place for the women who visit it daily to launder their clothes and carry home—along with the latest gossip—a jug of water for cooking and drinking.)

We passed two buses which had given up and refused to go any farther, but ours made it in to Guatemala City. Inside the bus, above the windshield, were two pictures of Christ, and fastened to the dash board was a St. Christopher's medal. Considering the state of the vehicle, the Patron Saint of Travelers had a heavy responsibility!

On Monday I checked with the Pan American office and learned that I had passage for the next day from Guatemala to Balboa, on Saturday from Balboa to Medellín, and on Sunday from Medellín to Bogotá. In the afternoon I purchased a few hand-woven textiles at the market in Guatemala City. They were just too pretty to resist, even though I knew that they'd probably run my baggage over the fifty-five pound limit.

I had found Guatemala a picturesquely beautiful country, and the kindness of my new friend had made my stay there exceedingly pleasant. I said, "Adiós," with genuine regret.

IV

ON TO COLOMBIA

AS THE Sun Ray Clipper flew south from Guatemala that July morning, Central America hid beneath the clouds over which the plane smoothly floated; smoothly, that is, until a storm changed the tranquil passage to a roller-coaster ride. Up and down we went, the plane wings tilting in a most disconcerting way, and I was grateful to my stomach for behaving itself! There were several children among the passengers, and one of the small boys thought the storm was fun, laughing out loud and shouting, "Whee!" every time the plane took another lurch. Grown-up passengers chuckled with him, though some of us were not very much amused.

We came down at San José, the capital of Costa Rica. The Spanish-style airport building, the bright flowers, the suave climate, and the gracious manner of the Costa Rican señoritas who greeted us caused me to think well of Costa Rica. The señoritas pinned corsages on us, answered our questions, and saw to it that we did not get lost. We didn't need Costa Rican visas for that short stop, but we were not permitted to leave the airport.

We flew above clouds most of the way to Panama. A half hour out of Balboa, the steward covered the windows, so I didn't get to see the Panama Canal. When we landed at Balboa, no dark-eyed beauties welcomed us; in fact, numerous officials made us feel very unwelcome in the Canal Zone. I had to show my passport and other papers to many different people, including U. S. Army officers. It was hot, I was deaf from the change in altitude, I was not feeling very alert, and I was disinclined to want to argue with an officer as to where my husband was—in the States, as he said; or in Colombia, as I said. The Canal Zone probably never puts out many welcome mats, and some of the personnel at that time seemed to feel obliged to make travelers uncomfortable.

After the inspection ended, I went to the Pan American ticket office at the airport to check my passage. There I got good news: I was to go out the next morning to Barranquilla, rather than wait until Saturday for passage to Medellín. My heart turned a somersault and had I acted as I felt I would have imitated the small boy on the plane by laughing out loud and shouting, "Whee!"

I spent a rather restless night in Panama City. The hotel room was noisy—and I was very sure I didn't want to miss that plane. I was supposed to be at the airport at four-thirty in the morning, and I was wide awake by three. That morning the employees at the airport treated me so well that I decided Panama was a pretty nice place. Some of the Pan American people asked me eagerly for news of the States. Like most of us away from home, they were glad to talk with someone who had just come from there.

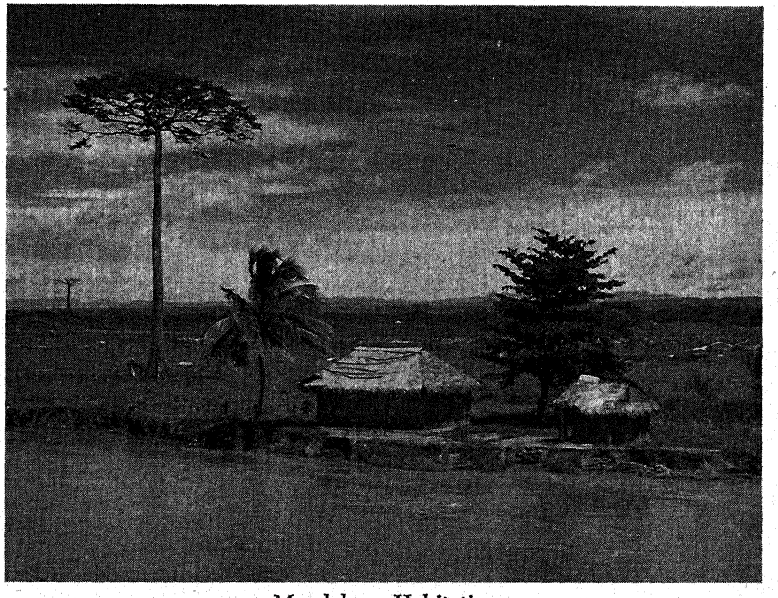
My plane's departure was delayed by an army maneuver known as a "smoke-out," which reminded me of "smog" in the old days in St. Louis, before the smoke problem was solved.

There were only five passengers on the plane, one of them a baby, and the rest of the seats had big boxes marked AIR EXPRESS lashed to them. I noticed something new—life preservers fastened under the seats. The other four passengers dozed during the trip, but I was wide awake and as I ate breakfast I kept telling myself that I was within three hours of Colombia. When the steward uncovered the windows, the plane was over the Atlantic Ocean. Soon it was buffeted around by a storm, but I thought, "Since the wings didn't come off yesterday, they probably won't today!" I had noticed by the numbers on the wing that it was the same Douglas DC-3 that had brought me from Guatemala to Panama on the previous day. When the storm was over, the fleecily soft clouds looked as if they had been freshly laundered and hung out to wave gently on an invisible line, puffs of white down against a clear blue sky.

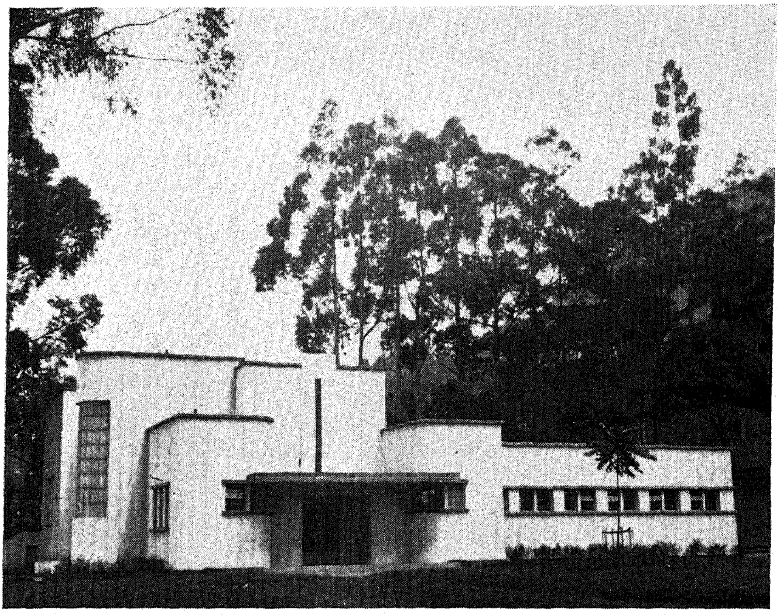
Then I saw land, which I knew was the Colombian shore. Next I saw Cartagena, the city of thick-walled forts and exciting history. I remembered that Cartagena had been designated the "heroic city" because of the hundred days' siege in which six thousand people died, during the Colombian War of Independence. For more than two hundred years, the city was attacked by a succession of notorious, even illustrious, pirates, among them Sir Francis Drake—pirates seeking the treasure of silver, gold and emeralds awaiting shipment to Spain.

My contemplation of Cartagena was interrupted by three soft beats of the plane's bell, which told me that we were going to land. As the wings of the plane tilted in circling to lose altitude, I began to feel that the earth beneath me was behaving queerly. I stopped my inspection of Colombia until my feet were on the ground.

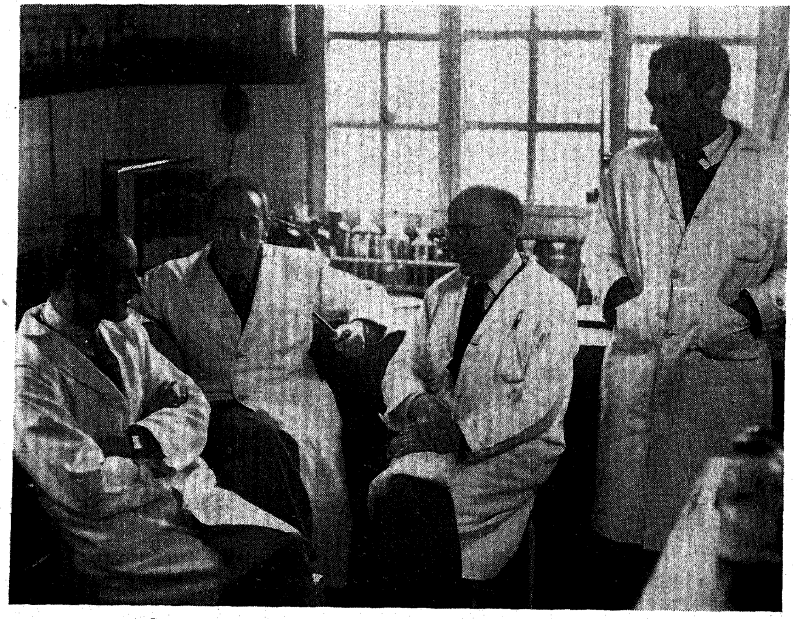
Río Magdalena Fisherman



Magdalena Habitation



Children's Theater in the Parque Nacional, Bogotá



Scientists of the Instituto Nacional De Higiene

I was the only passenger leaving the plane at Barranquilla, and immigration and customs inspection delayed me only a few minutes. I then traveled to the city office of Avianca by bus, a rather bumpy ride over the rough road leading in from the airport. I was told at the Avianca office that I couldn't go out until Friday; that meant two whole days in Barranquilla—an interminable delay!

The Avianca bus then took me to the Hotel del Prado, which is one of the better hotels in South America. It is big and modern; a swimming pool, green palm trees and bright flowers add coolness and color; and from the hotel I could see the cream-colored houses with their red roofs that make Barranquilla so attractive. The city, of course, is in the tropics, and has the abundant animal life of a hot country: twenty-seven buzzards perched on the garage roof (they are the protected scavengers in tropical countries); numerous little ants crawled everywhere; and on my way to dinner I saw two bats on the portico.

I wanted to send Tom a wire soon after I reached the hotel, and it occurred to me that I'd have to put it in Spanish. I got a panicky feeling, but it was really quite simple when I regained my nerve and reached for my little English-Spanish dictionary. I wrote: "Barranquilla *a* Bogotá *viernes por* Avianca." I knew that *a* meant "to" and that *por* meant "by," but I had to make sure *viernes* was Friday—I always got it confused with *jueves,* which is Thursday!

Early Friday morning I left Barranquilla for Bogotá. At first the plane followed the Río Magdalena. (A year later, when we traveled on Colombia's "Mississippi," I was to see many of those small boats that from the air appeared as dots on the river's muddy surface—and I was to visit some of the little river towns that are scattered along its green banks.) The plane left the valley to climb over the lofty Andes. Only occasionally could I see the earth through the clouds. Always I could see the shadow of the plane far below, now on the clouds, now on the ground, keeping pace with us.

I did not see Bogotá until a few minutes before we landed, for the city lies on a level savanna, surrounded by steep mountains that enclose it like an oval wall. When I came out of the plane, it seemed rather odd not to have customs inspection. Inside the airport building Tom was waiting for me. I was startled by his ap-

pearance—he had lost thirty pounds since leaving Washington. I was short of breath due to the altitude, quite deaf, and suddenly very tired now that I no longer had to catch planes. I knew I should be making plans for fattening up my husband, but it was easy to postpone things until mañana.

We rode into the city to the apartment of friends of Tom's who had asked us to share their home until we found a place to live. All advised me to go to bed and stay there for a few days until I got somewhat accustomed to the 8,700-foot altitude. I followed their advice and spent most of my first three days in Bogotá sleeping.

KEEPING HOUSE IN BOGOTA

V

SETTING UP HOUSEKEEPING

DURING the days that followed my arrival in Bogotá, I gradually learned something of Tom's activities since I had last seen him, and in these I found the explanation for his gaunt appearance. For many months, he had been working twelve to fourteen hours each day, seven days a week; and he had been bothered by bacillary dysentery. He felt that he could not shorten his working hours without running the risk of slowing down the shipments of quinine bark. However, he was sure, now that I was going to resume my role as his housekeeper, that he'd gain back his lost weight and energy.

The cinchona laboratory was located in the National Institute of Health, some fifty blocks from downtown Bogotá. Tom told me that his preference was for an apartment within walking distance of his work. He thought that we should rent a furnished place, if possible, because of the indefinite nature of his stay in Colombia. He employed a *muchacha,* Carmen, to help me search for an apartment. (Muchacha means "girl" in Spanish, but in Colombia it has the special meaning of "servant girl.") Carmen and I had some trouble in communicating with each other, since my Spanish was quite limited and her English consisted of two words she had learned at the movies, "Goodbye" and "O.K." But Tom described to her the kind of apartment we wanted, and she and I reported to him each evening about the places we had seen during the day.

In the course of apartment hunting, I became better acquainted with Bogotá architecture. I noticed that the building material most used is brick, both kiln-dried red brick and sun-dried adobe. Some of the adobe houses and stores are plastered on the outside and painted in pastel colors—pink, yellow, blue, or green. Here and there is a house with a feminine name—"María," "Carmen," or "Isabel"—painted above the entrance or spelled out in the iron grillwork of the gate. Quite frequently I saw reminders that Colombians are deeply religious—some homes have small outdoor shrines, or an image of the Virgin or of the Christ Child is set in a niche in the front wall. Occasionally I saw a *mirador,* a small

many-windowed room rising above the principal structure to provide a view of the surroundings. In downtown Bogotá well-preserved houses more than two centuries old rub shoulders with modern steel and concrete office buildings.

I was impressed, too, by provisions made for protection against burglary. Some stores are provided with heavy steel shutters large enough to cover windows and door. At closing time these "steel curtains" are pulled down and padlocked to iron rings set in the concrete foundation. Other store-owners strive to achieve security by use of many padlocks. I counted six locks on one door.

Many houses are built flush with the sidewalk, and the windows of these are strongly barred. Other houses are set back from the street, their front yard or patio inclosed by a high brick or adobe wall. Set in these walls are heavy iron gates closed with padlocks. Embedded in concrete atop some of the walls are broken bottles, their jagged edges sticking up to cut the hands of anyone attempting to scale the walls.

There are modern apartments in the city, with conveniences which appealed to us: electric ranges and hot-water heaters, clothes closets, bath tubs, and fireplaces. Such apartments, however, are much in demand. For a week Carmen and I rang many doorbells, consulted real estate agents, and read the ads in the daily papers; but we were unable to find a place, either furnished or unfurnished. Tom then advised that we give up the search for an apartment and look for an unfurnished house near the laboratory. I learned from friends about a bank which handled many Bogotá properties and I secured a list of their available houses. After visiting a number of places, we located a satisfactory house only eight blocks from the laboratory.

Tom and I returned to the house together and the owner, an attractive señora, called our attention to some of its features. The house was typical of many in Bogotá. It was of red brick, built with no space between it and the houses on each side of it. It had two patios, separated from the patios of the adjoining houses by high brick walls. And it had a red tile roof. The living quarters consisted of library, living-room, dining-room, three bedrooms, and bath; service quarters included kitchen, ironing room, two bedrooms for servants, and servants' bath.

A feature of the house that I had particularly liked was the

small library—it seemed homey. Tom liked it, too, and he saw possibilities of heating it with an electric heater.

When we looked at the bathroom, Tom told the owner that he was especially interested in having really hot water, and she assured him that hot water came out of the faucet marked *caliente*. (Often in Colombian construction both the hot water tap and the cold water tap connect to the same cold water pipe on the other side of the wall.)

The señora pointed out that one of the bedrooms had a clothes closet. These are rather rare in Bogotá, and I hadn't seen closets in any of the other houses. Clothing is customarily kept in a huge piece of furniture known as a *guardarropa*—I believe we would call it a clothes press or wardrobe.

I think that, conventionally, the lady of the house in Bogotá is supposed to be only mildly interested in the kitchen. Since I had the notion that what went on in the kitchen was most important to our health, I was more concerned over it than over the living-room. I did not consider that the kitchen was very satisfactory, but it compared favorably with other kitchens that I had seen. It had the usual cooking equipment, a coal-burning stove built into one corner and a grill for cooking with charcoal when you did not want to build a fire in the stove. The owner called to our attention a large pantry, with four wide shelves.

The señora mentioned to us that the light fixtures which we saw in the house were not furnished, merely the light sockets in the ceilings. This is customary in Bogotá houses; and in many of the modern apartments, also, tenants furnish their own light fixtures. (Some fixtures are imported from the States. Others are locally made, not in factories but in small shops where most of the work is done by hand. These hand-made fixtures vary greatly in design, since they express the artistic concept of the individual craftsman. For the most part, they are made of small pieces of colored glass put together with wood or metal, and they do not serve well to diffuse light over a room.)

Renting the house involved the signing not only of a lease, but of an inventory. Tom and a bank employee together checked a long list of window-panes, light switches, and plumbing fixtures—everything which might be considered removable or breakable. These formalities over, Tom was given a handful of keys and two

padlocks. Only one of those eight keys was for the front door, and I never did figure out where all of them belonged. Had we made use of all of those keys, we would have had a very thoroughly locked house!

When Tom became responsible for the property, he hired a carpenter who was working across the street to watch out for the house and to sleep in it at night. It is a general practice in Bogotá to guard unoccupied buildings in this way. Two years later the wisdom of this practice was brought home to us by a burglary—but that story is told under "The Police."

In another week I was to assemble enough furniture to start us off; shortly afterwards, we were to employ Susana and Beatriz, the two servant girls who worked for us until we left Bogotá; and during the months that followed those ten rooms and two patios were to be our home.

My biggest help in furnishing the house came from the friends with whom we were staying. They told me that in Bogotá many things are made to order. This has its disadvantages if you are in a hurry, but it has its good points, too. Mahogany, walnut, and other fine woods are available, and there are a number of carpenters who turn out beautiful work. (Many of them work with incredibly meager equipment.) An American going to Colombia to live should take along a mail-order catalogue. Skilful carpenters can make many things if they have a picture to show them what is wanted.

We admired the beautiful mahogany furniture which our friends had, and they suggested that they would be glad to get in touch with their carpenter, who had made things for many Americans and was used to our wants. The *maestro* called at the apartment to take our order for a dining-room table and chairs, a desk, a bed, and luggage racks. I typed a list of the articles, with dimensions, and Tom and the maestro agreed upon the price for each item, everything to be made of the best quality mahogany.

Tom was especially anxious to get a good bed, and he learned that the carpenter had a set of American-made springs he had bought from a departing member of the staff of the U. S. Embassy. He agreed to sell Tom the springs and make a bed to fit them. Our friends had American beds, and at the time I had no first-hand knowledge of Colombian beds. It seemed to me that a great deal of talking was necessary to get a rather simple article of furniture,

but after I had made the acquaintance of a Colombian bed, I understood.

The typical Colombian bed is of solid mahogany, including the springs! That is, the slats make a solid floor upon which rests the mattress, a cotton-filled pad some three inches thick. Actual dimensions of one such bed showed it to be three feet wide, five feet nine inches long, with the slats six inches above the floor. Colombian beds have an advantage over American beds—they do not require bed boards to keep them firm.

In setting up housekeeping in the States, you feel obligated to buy not only springs but an inner-spring mattress. In fact, many pages of advertising, complete with pictures, have convinced a great many of us that all sorts of ills are apt to befall the person who sleeps on anything other than the springs and mattress being advertised. If the owner of this superlative bed gets a backache and consults his physician, he will probably then be told to purchase a board to put under the mattress, in order to make the bed more firm. So he has a bed equipped with springs to make it give and a board to keep it from giving. The Colombian bed achieves this firmness in a more direct way. I do not know whether Colombians have fewer or more backaches than Americans!

There's a sequel to the story of the furniture that I feel I should tell. As the time came for us to leave Bogotá, we began to wish we could send our nicer mahogany pieces back to the States. Tom made inquiry as to shipping rates and began to compute the dimensions of crates needed for the purpose. We told an American friend of our plans. She was horrified. "Furniture made in Bogotá can't be used in the States," she warned us. "As soon as it begins to dry out, it falls to pieces."

We didn't argue with our informant, but we made some mental reservations. We'd seen furniture made in Bogotá of green wood, and it did warp and come apart. But our furniture had been made by a reliable man from seasoned wood, and it had been used for more than two years in Bogotá. Nevertheless, the suggestion that maybe our furniture would suddenly turn into a pile of kindling worried me a little. As I write this, I'm sitting on one of the mahogany chairs and resting my paper on the mahogany table. Both have been used in the States for a year and a half and show no signs of collapsing.

I had forgotten our friend's advice until I read a recent book on Colombia. In it the writer, an American woman, repeated this warning that it isn't safe to bring back to the States furniture made in Bogotá. So far as I know, neither of the women giving this advice brought back any furniture, and they in good faith repeated what someone had told them. Our experience convinces us that furniture made in Bogotá of properly seasoned mahogany will stand up in the States. We're glad we were stubborn!

After the furniture had been ordered, I began a search for such things as sheeting, a mattress (which had to be made to order), light fixtures, cooking utensils, dishes, cutlery, towels, light bulbs, and an electric iron. Before my shopping trips, I had first to learn the Spanish names for the items sought and ask where I would be most likely to find them. (Although an English-Spanish dictionary is helpful, there's so much local variation in the names for everyday items that it isn't safe to trust the dictionary implicitly.) Colombia is dependent on imports for many consumer items and imports were limited due to war conditions, so several of the purchases represented calls at many shops.

There's a peculiarity of Colombian speech that I found both amusing and confusing. I entered a hardware store looking for an aluminum double boiler. *"Buenos días, mi señora,"* said the proprietor. "In what can I serve you?"

"Will you have the kindness to tell me if there is in your shop a double boiler of aluminum?"

"Si, señora, hay." But just as I was ready to ask to see it, he added, *"Pero ahora, no."* ("Yes, I have one. But not now.")

A Latin hates to say no, so he says yes and then you figure out that the answer would have been yes—last week, last month, or perhaps last year.

From time to time Americans leaving Colombia advertised their possessions, and I completed our furnishings by several lucky purchases. The prize finds were two comfortable chairs, a radio, a good floor lamp that had been made to order in Bogotá, and an electric heater. To call some of those things second-hand was to be guilty of understatement. Some of them had changed ownership four or five times! And each new owner was exceedingly pleased to find them. Such an item as a flour sifter, for instance, would be highly prized by some American woman who liked to do

her own baking. If she'd brought a sifter with her to Colombia, it wore out eventually. (I never saw one in a store.) If she tried to get another sifter from the States, she'd probably be several years older before it made its way through the maze of red tape which impedes commerce between nations. If she had as much trouble getting her sifter as we've had in sending a gift to a friend in Colombia, she'd probably become an advocate of free trade.

Later on, I bought a typewriter from a furniture dealer. Buying the typewriter was even more difficult than some of the other undertakings. Typewriters weren't being received from the States, and those that were for sale were becoming not only rarities but antiques. After a long search I found an old Royal which had an apostrophe, *ñ*, and an accent mark, so that it could be used to type either English or Spanish without difficulty. Even when typewriters are plentiful in Bogotá, you can't take the keyboard for granted. In the course of adapting the machine for Spanish, some strange things happen to the keys. Generally the apostrophe is replaced by something else, since it is not used in writing Spanish. Often the machines lack the naught which appears on the top row of standard keyboards. Characters needed in Spanish—the accent mark, the *ñ*, the inverted question mark and inverted exclamation point—do not appear in standard position on the keyboard.

The purchase of the typewriter was sort of a family affair. Beatriz knew I had been looking for a machine and she came home from the bakery one day to report, "Señora, I just saw a *máquina de escribir* in a furniture store on Carrera 13." I went to the store with her, and we picked our way through beds, tables, chairs, and kitchen stools to reach the typewriter. I looked it over, pecked out a practice sentence, and decided that I liked the way the machine worked. Then Tom asked his helper, Trujillo, to bargain for the typewriter. Trujillo went by the shop after work and got the seller to agree to knock ten pesos off the price. (A peso is worth about sixty cents in United States money.) The following day Trujillo returned with the money and got a further reduction of five pesos before he completed the purchase!

Our house was rather bare for a while, and we never did furnish all of it. We really didn't need ten rooms. We were pleased to have hot water, a comfortable bed, a good desk and reading lamp, to be near Tom's work, and especially to be together again, so it

didn't seem important that we lacked a lot of things. The library became our favorite room. It was only ten feet square, and by closing the door and turning on the small electric heater we could get the room comfortably warm. On the shelves of the built-in bookcases I put our few books, the souvenirs of Mexico and Guatemala that I had picked up on my trip, and some Colombian curiosities that Tom had bought. The colorful textiles I had brought from Guatemala hung at the windows. A big map of Bogotá was fastened on one wall and a map of Colombia on another. Here also we put my typewriter and table, Tom's desk, and our floor lamp. We used red and gray woolen saddle blankets as throw rugs.

There was one luxury we could have at very little cost—flowers. Each week Susana and Beatriz brought home from the market enough flowers for the house. The muchachas enjoyed them, too. We got an assortment of flower holders from the market, and each room had at least one touch of color and fragrance.

Though the muchachas and I agreed in our liking for flowers, they found it hard to understand some of my other tastes. First, there were the chairs. The carpenter lent us dining-room chairs to use until he completed ours. The borrowed chairs were of ordinary wood, and the backs and seats were covered with red imitation leather. When our chairs came, Tom and I proudly examined them. They were of very fine mahogany, stained and finished beautifully, and they were comfortable. We especially liked the backs and seats, which were woven of *fique,* a Colombian-produced fiber resembling hemp. The girls were too tactful to tell me they didn't like the chairs, but I could see that they were disappointed that they weren't like the borrowed ones! Later on, when I bought a hand-woven tablecloth of natural colored cotton, Susana said that it should last a long time. I sensed that she didn't consider it very "elegant." One day I learned that they couldn't understand why I chose to use the back bedroom, which they thought was less fashionable than the two at the front of the house. I had selected it because it was the only bedroom with a clothes closet.

But perhaps the most unconventional furnishings were the wastebaskets. Susana was more conservative than Beatriz, and she couldn't conceal her consternation when I bought small market baskets to use as waste containers. A basket, evidently, was in-

tended for use only by servants. Several times I had asked Susana to get me some small baskets, but she would always forget. So finally I went to the market and bought them myself. She didn't leave us, but I know she hoped the neighbors wouldn't find out about those baskets. I was a little amused over the muchachas' concern over such things, but I was touched, too. I realized that they were loyal to us and didn't want outsiders to think we were peculiar.

VI

DIFICULTADES

DURING the twenty-seven months that we occupied our house, we experienced many of the trials of the Colombian householder. We had the additional difficulties arising from our efforts to Americanize somewhat our Colombian domicile. Indispensable aides in these household problems were our two helpers, Susana and Beatriz. The girls also helped us with the Americanization process, even though they viewed some of our practices with great alarm.

The electric heater in the library was strictly American. The muchachas considered it very dangerous to go from the warm room to the cold hall. (I once heard of a heating stove in Colombia, but I never saw one.) The dining- and living-rooms were separated only by an archway, and together they made too big a space to heat, especially since Beatriz in serving dinner had to pass through the patio to reach the kitchen, and every time the door was opened cold air rushed in. I always suggested that dinner guests might wish to leave their topcoats on. It is not unusual for Bogotanos to wear overcoats in the house.

One of the biggest undertakings was to take a hot bath. Our idea of a satisfactory bath is a tub full of hot water. Factory-made tubs in Bogotá are imported from the States or from England, and the prices class them as collector's items. In our bathroom, a ten-inch high partition parallel with a side wall made what was called a tub, but it was not a good substitute. To begin with, it was too large—it was seven feet long and two and one-half feet wide. I calculated it would take almost seventy gallons of water to fill that space six inches deep. To make it worse, the tub was filled from the shower fixture, and the water had to spray through the cold air into the cold tub, some seven feet below. And hot water in Bogotá is colder than hot water at sea-level—water boils there at 196° F. rather than at 212° F.

The first attempt to take a bath showed that the hot water in the tank was sufficient to fill the tub only to a depth of two inches. So we could not take a hot tub bath without advance prepara-

tions by the muchachas. First, Susana would carry in some extra coal and get the stove red hot. Next, Beatriz would assemble all available buckets and pans, fill them with cold water, and crowd them on the stove. When this water had been heated to boiling and carried upstairs, there was enough hot water in the tank to complete filling the tub.

Taking a tub bath was such an undertaking that it recalled to us memories of winter Saturday night baths by the kitchen stove in a galvanized washtub. We usually took quick showers before the hot water ran out and dreamed of the day when we could again just turn on a faucet and fill the tub.

Bogotanos consider it unhealthy to bathe in hot water, and I know that the muchachas always expected us to develop pneumonia after such an experience. But, then, Tom shaved even when he had a cold, which was very bad, too, since it drove the cold in.

We made no attempt to get a telephone, as we did not think it worth the trouble. A new system was being installed, and in a few years Bogotá will have modern dial telephones. The instruments in use during our stay there were made in England some years ago. If you wanted a telephone, the first step was to find and buy the instrument, which was not easy to do. After service had been installed, getting a number was an adventure requiring time and patience. Beatriz was good at telephoning, and she ordered coal for us by calling from a pay phone. These instruments were located in small stores, and there were practically always several people waiting to use them. The charge was fair enough—the telephoner paid three centavos if he was lucky enough to get his number.

In telephoning, I felt that I had the sympathetic support of the people in the store—like the fellow with a swollen jaw in the dentist's reception room.

I pick up the receiver and then turn the crank on the telephone. I wait for the operator to reply. *"Número, por favor."* The "voice with the smile" is asking for the number.

"Seis—Cero—Cuatro—Cero, Chapinero, *por favor."* I ask for 60-40 Chapinero. The operator rings.

"A ver?" A voice replies. That means "to see," and I don't know why it should be the right answer.

"Señorita, will you have the kindness to tell me if this is the office of Dr. Jorge Gómez?"

"*No, señora, no es.*" Wrong number!

I hang up and start over again. But the call hasn't been disconnected, and I can't get the operator. I hang up and wait a few minutes and try again. At length I get the operator.

"*Seis–Cero–Cuatro–Cero,* Chapinero, *por favor.*" The operator rings. Something goes wrong and I quickly move the receiver away from my ear to shut out the loud buzzing. She rings again.

"*A ver?*"

"Señorita, will you have the kindness to tell me if this is the office of Dr. Jorge Gómez?"

"*Si, señora, es.*"

"And will you please tell me if the doctor is in his office?"

"No, señora, I am sorry to say that he is not."

"Then will you have the kindness to tell me at what hour the doctor will be in his office?"

"The doctor will be here from two until four, señora."

"Thank you very much, señorita."

"You are quite welcome." I hang up, and someone else picks up the phone.

I'm sure the equipment is more to blame for the poor service than the operators, but telephoners sometimes get aggravated after the third wrong number and bawl out the operator. An editorial in a daily paper once called upon the public to treat the operators more courteously, for after all, they are cultured señoritas. I made perhaps half a dozen phone calls while in Bogotá, just enough to decide it was easier to write a letter, send a messenger, or get on the streetcar and go to see the person with whom I wanted to talk.

When I had been house-hunting, I was impressed with the number of bells I saw. Almost every house and apartment not only has a doorbell, but numerous buzzers with which to call the servants. Our house had them, too. In addition to the doorbell, there were buzzers in the dining-room and in the three bedrooms. After we had occupied our house for several weeks, one day the bell began ringing and would not stop. Beatriz ran and turned off the master switch, and then reported to me. I'm not much of an electrician, but I concluded that I could loosen the screws connecting the wires to the buzzer and stop it. When Tom got home, he said that the short might be anywhere in the course of the wiring, and he didn't want to try to run it down, so we just let it go. One of

Susana's favorite stories was about the time the señora "repaired" the doorbell.

A popular style door-knocker was a metal replica of a woman's hand, complete with ring on the third finger. (I think it was generally a right hand. At least the one I photographed was, and Colombian women wear their wedding rings on their right hands.) I was fascinated by those dismembered hands and was sorry we didn't have one on our door. I recall something Trujillo said about them. He lamented the high incidence of petty thievery in the capital—he told us that in the country people are more honest. But even though he regretted the thievery, he did not ignore it. In typical fashion, he made a joke about it. Looking at the knocker on a door of a house near the laboratory, he remarked, "It's a wonder someone hasn't stolen the ring off that hand!"

Petty thievery sometimes seems to amount to a game of wits between thieves and the unwary victims. The American who is new in the city is apt to think that Bogotanos are overcautious, but he soons learns to do as Romans do. There was a light fixture over the front door on the outside of our house, and soon after we moved in I put a bulb in it. The next day, the bulb had disappeared. Thereafter we inserted a bulb only when we were expecting guests and removed it after they left. I bought a small latch for the front gate, since burros, cows, and horses came in to eat the grass and flowers. The latch cost only a few centavos, but after a few weeks it disappeared. Then we used a loop made of a piece of wire. For some reason, wire wasn't regarded as worth stealing, so it lasted.

Another problem in Bogotá is the 150-volt current, which makes necessary the use of special appliances or of transformers. There are various stories as to why that unique type of power plant was foisted upon the city fathers. Whatever the reason, it is a constant source of expense and trouble and will no doubt some day have to be altered to conform to the type used in other cities. Appliances are imported and are rarely designed for the current. Our electric iron supposedly had been adapted, but the element burned out three or four times and had to be replaced. Though light bulbs were made for use in Bogotá, they did not have a long life—this may have been caused by unevenness of the current. Our electric heater, which had a 110-volt element, burned out fre-

quently. Finally we located a 150-volt element for it, and it held up from then on.

There is less oxygen in the air in Bogotá than at sea-level. As a consequence of this, fires burn poorly and there accumulate in stoves and in chimneys large quantities of soot. We had been living in our house for two months when Susana told me that the chimney needed cleaning. I asked her how this was done and she said we'd have to hire a *deshollinador* (translated literally, a de-sooter—one who removes soot). Within a week or so one of these men came along our street seeking chimneys to clean, and Susana struck a bargain with him for twenty-five centavos. His tools were a long ladder, and a chain attached to a coil of rope. He climbed up on the roof, lowered the chain down the chimney, and rattled it around to loosen the soot. Then he removed three ten-gallon pails of soot from various sections inside the stove. Susana paid him and he left, even blacker than when he came.

Tom told Susana before hiring her that there were two things he wanted: breakfast at six o'clock every morning, and a clean kitchen. Keeping the kitchen clean meant a never-ending battle against *cucarachas*. My personal opinion was that the stove-maker had a grudge against cooks, but Susana said that it was a very nice stove. Whatever his feeling about cooks, he evidently had no prejudice against roaches, and the stove provided numerous dark spaces just warm enough but not too hot for them. One particularly good place was under the grill, into which fell small particles of food. We nicknamed this space the "cockroach house" and Susana was charged with evicting the tenants. When insecticide failed to clean out the roaches, Susana washed out the cockroach house with hot water. (I guess she thought that since hot water was dangerous to humans, it was also dangerous to other animals. It was her favorite remedy for both roaches and rats.) I knew that her intentions were good, but I kept an eye on her progress to see that she continued the battle.

Roaches also liked the pantry. On the pretext of being able to reach the top shelves better, I helped clean the pantry each week. (Since I was almost a foot taller than Susana, this wasn't too hard to put over.) At first we sprayed the shelves with insecticide, but we soon discovered that it was not killing the roaches. I guessed that perhaps the war had cut off the supply of roach-killing in-

gredient. Susana fell back on her old stand-by, hot water, which she doused on every shelf and into every crack. Gradually we acquired containers, with tops, for the staples: rolled oats cans, powdered-milk cans, a few hard-to-get canisters. When the day came that we could clean out the pantry and find not even one roach, we could both see that we'd made some progress.

We were bothered with flies, too. There were no screens at windows or doors, and in dry weather flies were especially thick in the kitchen. Screen-wire was for sale in Bogotá and I tried to get a screen-door made for the kitchen, but didn't succeed. Then I got the idea of making for the kitchen door a curtain of mosquito netting. It kept out most of the flies, but it made the kitchen warmer. Susana never liked that curtain, but she took it philosophically.

Rats and mice also came into the kitchen. Tom nailed a strip of wood on the bottom of the kitchen door to make it rat-proof, and we asked the girls to close the door at night. In spite of these precautions, we averaged one or two of these intruders a month. It would make Susana furious when a mouse or rat ate the green corn she had just bought at the market. "I didn't buy the *mazorcas* for the rats," she'd say.

We trapped a number of mice and rats, and Susana and Tom killed some by direct action. I merely supervised. One morning I discovered a rat on the pantry shelf, and I yelled, "Susana! Beatriz! Come in a hurry!" I was so excited I forgot to tack on the polite phrase, "Will you have the kindness to—" They both came running from the back patio, and I told them where I had seen the rat and waited for Susana's suggestions as to a plan of campaign. The kitchen was her responsibility, so keeping rats out of it was part of her job. She took up her station at the pantry door, armed with the scrubbing brush. I stood just behind her, with a broom. Beatriz decided to hold down the fort just outside the kitchen door, also equipped with a broom. "Beatriz, you'd better close the door and come in, so that the rat won't get away."

"Don't you think it would be better, señora, if I stood out here and hit him with the broom if he runs out?" I knew just how she felt and didn't insist on her coming in, but I thought that I shouldn't desert Susana.

Susana doused the rat with hot water and finished it off with

the brush, and Beatriz carried it off on a broom to the garbage can. My contribution was bragging on them for doing a good job!

No account of pests would be complete without a mention of fleas. The old Spanish proverb, "He who sleeps well isn't bothered by fleas," didn't work in our house. They annoyed us. There are few places in Bogotá where you do not encounter these crawling, biting insects. They like wool and warmth and find this combination in clothing and in beds. I didn't know how to catch a flea, so I asked the muchachas.

"First you dampen your finger, señora, in this way. Then you put it over the *pulga.*" They demonstrated with an imaginary flea.

"But how do I get rid of the flea after I have it under my finger?"

"I drop them on the top of the hot stove, señora," replied Susana.

"I crack them between my fingernails," added Beatriz.

I usually wasn't handy to the stove and I never mastered the fingernail trick, so I decided a pretty good way to dispose of fleas was to wash them down the drain. I told Beatriz to spray the blankets and the bedroom with insecticide twice a week and leave the room closed for half a day afterwards. She was an enthusiastic little worker, and a few days later I saw her examining each of the blankets individually for fleas. The insecticide proved effective, and in a few weeks we were molested by only an occasional flea. I always brought home a few new ones when I rode on a bus. The battle against fleas was like the battle against roaches. We couldn't relax our vigilance or they'd gain on us.

The first heavy rain taught me something new about our house. The rain came right through the closed windows, where the panes were not well puttied. Every time it rained, unless it came straight down, Beatriz had to mop up afterwards. If it was a really hard rain, all three of us mopped in order to keep the water from soaking through the upstairs floors and damaging the plaster. I was always hearing complaints about leaky roofs, but the only bad leak in our roof obligingly located itself just over the bath tub.

One of the most distressing peculiarities of our house was the plumbing. Since we have been back in the States, a number of people have asked me: "What kind of house did you have in Bogotá? Was the plumbing like it is here?" The proper answer, I think, is, "Yes—and no!" I believe the best advice to one departing

for foreign parts would be: cultivate a patient disposition, learn to be a jack-of-all-trades, and take along plenty of tools. As manager of our Bogotá household, I acquired a fair vocabulary of Spanish plumbing terms and a speaking acquaintance with the men at the bank who took care of keeping their various properties in repair.

At the time Tom signed the lease, he reported to the bank that the hot-water tank leaked, both kitchen faucets dripped steadily, and there was a leak under the sink. The hot-water tank was located above the stove and when it leaked hard it put the fire out! After we moved in, he sent me down to call attention again to these defects, and after two visits from bank representatives and a day's work by two plumbers, the hot-water tank leaked in a different place and the pipe under the sink still leaked, but the faucets had stopped dripping. We were unable to make fire in the stove all one day, and the plumbers got the kitchen walls dirty.

I reported to the bank that the leaks were not stopped, and then our troubles really began. During the week following we had in all a total of six plumbers. It began on Sunday morning. We were instructed to make no fire in the morning, as the plumbers were coming. Susana prepared breakfast and lunch on the charcoal grate, which made the kitchen pretty dirty and smoky. When the plumbers stopped work on Sunday afternoon, nothing had been repaired, the walls were dirtier than ever, and the hot water was disconnected. Every day for four days the hot-water tank was drained, taken to the patio just off the kitchen, and worked on. In repairing the pipe under the sink, the plumber knocked the sink loose, and there was more water under it than before, because it ran down in the crack between the sink and the tile around it. About Wednesday, this was repaired by putting cement around the sink.

I finally returned to the bank and advised that we were being severely inconvenienced. The next day another bank representative came out and a different plumber began repairing things. He fixed almost all of the holes in the hot-water tank that the others had made. He returned the following day to inspect his work and plugged up the final holes with cement. When he left there was no water dripping from the tank, but half an hour later the water began leaking from five places. The next day the plumber returned and this time he patched the leaks with red lead, and again the tank stopped leaking. But in an hour or so it began again. The

plumber returned the day following, removed the tank once more, and soldered the leaks. Solder was expensive, and he had put off using it as long as possible.

We had no more water troubles for several weeks. Then early one morning a man from the aqueduct came and shut off the water, telling the muchachas that the bill was not paid. I got out my receipt and read all the fine print on the back of it, with the help of the dictionary, and interpreted Section X as meaning that we had the whole month of October to pay October's bill. At the office of the company, I was assured that it had all been a mistake—the men were supposed to cut off the water at some other address. I was told that I should go to another office down the street and ask for the water to be turned on. Late in the afternoon, the water was again connected.

The following month, Beatriz reported that there was no water in the bathroom. By this time I knew what to do: I sent her out to phone the water company. That afternoon two men came, told us that the valve in the street controlling the water had not been turned on completely after it had been cut off the month before, and that now it was properly adjusted.

I got a forerunner of our next trouble the following month, when I saw that the cold water faucet in the bathroom was discharging along with the water insects, soot, and pieces of leaves. I learned then that the two metal storage cans atop our house were not covered, and that all water entering the bathroom and hot-water tank first spent a time in these open tanks. The tanks were oil drums, 55-gallon size. A valve caused them to fill automatically when water was used in the bathroom or hot water in the kitchen.

I asked Susana if she knew why the tanks had been placed on our house. "Ah, yes, señora. One should not think of renting a house without tanks," she said. "All of the newer houses have them."

"But why, Susana?" I asked.

"Because when there is a severe drought, the *acueducto* has to shut off the water for part of each day. When the water is cut off, the tanks furnish a reserve to last until the water is turned on." (A year and a half later, we had an opportunity to see how this worked.) Of course, it was better economy to enlarge the aque-

duct rather than put storage tanks on each house, and this was being planned at the time we left Bogotá.

The assortment of insects which drowned themselves in these storage tanks did not stop up the pipes completely until three months later. At that time we had no water at all in the bathroom. I took Susana along to the bank to help me do the talking, since she'd had experience with this trouble before.

I had to return to the bank a second time before they sent a representative to look over the job, but this plumbing worry had the happiest ending of all of our difficulties in that line. Ten days after I had reported the lack of water in the bathroom, two men from the bank came out to look things over. They tried out the faucets and listened to my story. Then after a few days a workman came out and he also tried out the faucets and listened to my story. (In the meantime, Beatriz carried water up to the bathroom from downstairs.) The plumber said he'd send his helper the next week to clean out the tanks, unstop the pipes, and put covers on the tanks.

One afternoon a few days later, Susana answered a knock at the door and then came to the library to announce, "The plumber has now arrived, señora."

"*Bueno!* I'm really glad he has come." But when I saw the plumber, it was hard to conceal my disappointment. "This child can't possibly know anything about plumbing," I thought. "He can't be more than ten years old." But I was mistaken in both my assumptions.

"*Buenas tardes,* señora." The little plumber greeted me. "I have come to make the repairs in the plumbing."

"We are very glad to see you, for we have been much inconvenienced by the lack of water in the bath."

The formalities over, the young plumber attacked the job in a very professional way and I soon realized that the little boy in coverall and tennis shoes was not just a child playing at plumber.

"What do you call yourself?" I asked him. He seemed a little young to address as "señor."

"Jorge Pardo, at your service, señora."

Some time later on, after we were better acquainted, I asked, "How many years do you have, Jorge?"

"I have fifteen years, señora."

Jorge got up on the roof by way of the bathroom window. Susana and I were on hand just to make sure that nothing disappeared—and out of interest in seeing the job done, too.

Now that Jorge was on the roof and it was hard for him to get down, he discovered that he needed several things. "Señorita," he addressed Susana, "I find that the tanks are full of very dirty water. Will you have the kindness to bring me a bucket and a can?" Susana plodded downstairs to the kitchen and to the patio and came back with the bucket and can.

Jorge dipped bucket after bucket of black water out of the tanks. After a while he began to lower the level of the water, and he could no longer reach it. "Señorita, I find that I will need a kitchen stool to reach the bottom of the cans. Will you have the kindness to bring me one?" Susana plodded downstairs again and came back with the stool.

Jorge was now dipping from the bottom of the tanks, and each time he emptied a bucket into the guttering, I noticed that it was filled with dead *cucarrones*, big, hard beetles. Along with the cucarrones were mud, soot, leaves, and smaller insects. After nearly two hours of work the tanks were empty, and Jorge had another request. "Señorita, would you have the kindness to bring me a rag with which to wash out the tanks?" And Susana plodded downstairs to get the rag.

Beatriz was gone that afternoon, so she missed out on the excitement. Susana received one recompense for her labors—she got to tell Beatriz all about the plumbing operation.

When Jorge got the cleaning finished, he started the job of opening up the pipes. This involved a great deal of sucking with a pump, and with his mouth, and removing faucets to clear out the parts of insects in them. Soon water was running from all sources. I never thought the sound of running water inside the house could be so musical! Our little plumber returned the next day with galvanized metal tops that fitted snugly over the cans, and we could say with pride that we had the best-covered *canecas* on the block.

We thought it best not to worry about the dirt and beetles in the hot-water tank, as to remove it to clean it would probably open up several holes. Susana assured me that she did not use the water from it for cooking, only dishwashing. I concluded that washing

the dishes and ourselves in water contaminated with well-boiled beetles was probably not injurious to the health.

We had no more plumbing troubles for six months, and then water again failed to enter the bathroom and we did not have hot water. Tom and Trujillo corrected this by adjusting a valve on the storage tanks. I was pleased not to have to report it to the bank. The man at the service window always treated me as though nothing made him happier than listening to my complaints, but I suspected him of wishing I'd go away and let him alone.

Some eight months later there was a prolonged drought and in order to conserve water the aqueduct cut off the supply completely during the afternoons. Schools and some factories had to close, but we were not seriously inconvenienced, as our storage cans tided us over until the water was turned on. Concern about a complete water failure with its consequent danger to health disappeared when it again began to rain. During the water shortage, the pipes bringing water in from the street got stopped up and we had to notify the water company. Beatriz phoned and men were sent promptly to correct this. The hot-water tank continued to drip and finally leaked so hard that I had to return to the bank once more. The plumber who undertook the job soldered a new top on the tank and it hadn't resumed leaking at the time we left. During the last months, I fervently hoped that the plumbing would hold out just a little longer.

Our hot and cold water faucets were properly labeled: *C* for *Caliente* (hot) and *F* for *Frío* (cold). Some Bogotá faucets that I noticed were labeled in English, "Hot" and "Cold," and others were both "Hot" or both "Cold." The prize pair read "Hot" and "*Caliente.*" Out of both ran cold water, and cold water in Bogotá isn't just cold—its icy.

VII

HOW MUCH DOES A POUND WEIGH?

"BUY this chicken, my señora. It's fat—it's cheap."

"I don't like that one, *marchante*. How much do you want for this one?"

"Why, two pesos, my señora. That is the fattest and finest of all of my chickens."

"The drumsticks don't feel very fat to me. I'll give you one peso and thirty centavos."

"One eighty, my señora."

"No, no, no! I'll pay one forty."

"But, my señora, I myself paid one fifty."

"Go along with you! I can buy a fatter chicken for less. But I'll give you one forty-five."

"Take it, my señora."

So terminates the purchase of a chicken in a Bogotá market. I was accustomed to self-service grocery stores, and I found it hard to bargain. I entrusted most of the buying to Susana and Beatriz, who enjoyed bargaining and probably would have found my self-service store a pretty dull place.

Bargaining was just one of the things that gave life a different flavor, one of the practices to which I had to accustom myself. Gradually I learned the answer to such questions as these: Where do we buy our groceries? When do I bargain and when are prices fixed? How much does a pound weigh? How do I mail a letter? Where do we get our coal? Where do we buy firewood? Where can I get feather pillows? Why do people bounce coins? Where can I get long pajamas and size 11 sox? How do we dispose of our garbage?

Once we started keeping house, I soon learned the answer to the first question, "Where do we buy our groceries?" One reason servants are needed is that acquiring the items used in everyday living takes a great deal more time than it does in the States. For in Bogotá, most produce is sold in the market—that confusing Old World institution of multiple stalls and animated bargaining.

Tom and I always found markets fascinating. Though they tend

to be dirty and smelly, crowded and noisy, they contain the things that people use in their daily life. Markets always reminded us that we were in a foreign country, a country which had products different from those of our own. In the markets, we saw on display such things as tropical fruits and vegetables, a profusion of flowers, poultry in odd homemade cages, green coffee and cacao beans, crude pottery, baskets in many sizes and shapes, bright-colored birds, sweet-smelling roots to put with linens, and wooden spoons from two inches to ten feet long. Many of the vendors cry out their wares in a sing-song fashion. I was enthralled one day at hearing a woman chant, *"Cuantos manguitos?—Baratos—bonitos."* It sounded like poetry rather than just sales talk, "How many mangos?—Cheap—pretty." On the less intriguing side, there is meat hanging on hooks in shops which lack both refrigeration and screening.

The Chapinero plaza was only five blocks from our house, and the muchachas bought most of our food there. Thursday was principal day of market. Each Thursday morning there was a bustle of activity as Susana and Beatriz got ready for market. "Making market" was Susana's job, but I gave Beatriz permission to go with her, presumably to help Susana. Actually, Susana didn't need any help—the people she bargained with needed it! I didn't especially need Beatriz at home that half-day, she liked to go, and I wanted her to become more experienced at marketing.

The Chapinero market building covers half a block. It is a square building with a patio in the center, and the roofed part is largely open to the air—the windows are covered with iron bars rather than with glass. Under the roofed portions are many stalls, each of them rented to some individual on perhaps a yearly basis. The stalls at one side carry staples, such as chocolate, sugar, flour, corn, and wheat. At another side, there are pottery, brooms, baskets, wooden spoons and other household items—many of these wares hang from the ceiling. At a third side are the meat counters, and at the fourth are fruits and vegetables. In the patio, spread out on tables and on the floor, are more fruits and vegetables. On market days, produce and vendors overflow to the sidewalks, to the streets, and to an open lot across the street from the market building. Produce is spread out on the ground or on green banana leaves, piled atop fique sacks, or heaped in large baskets.

Produce begins arriving at the plaza on Wednesday evening, and extra policemen are stationed there during the night to guard it. By early Thursday morning, the ground around the plaza is so crowded that it is difficult to avoid stepping on produce, children, or somebody's bare or alpargata-clad foot. (Alpargatas are the sandals worn by the poorer people.)

Susana bought meat daily, since we had no refrigerator, but on Thursday she bought most of the fruits, vegetables, and staples for the week. She took with her to the market a large basket, a small basket, and a fique bag (similar to a tow sack). When she returned from market, she carried the small basket containing easily-crushed items, such as eggs, tomatoes, blackberries, strawberries, and flowers. Tucked under her arm would be a chicken. (If Beatriz went, too, she often returned home early with some of these purchases.) Accompanying Susana was an old woman, carrying the sack on her back. The big basket was inside the sack, and in it were the bulk of the vegetables and fruits: yuca, *cardos*, *guatilas*, *azelga*, cauliflower, peas, green peppers, *pepinas*, onions, corn, *calabazas*, garlic, celery, carrots, turnips, green beans, cabbage, brussels sprouts, sweet potatoes, beets, *curuba*, papaya, coconut, pineapple, oranges, avocados, plátanos, bananas, and lemons. (I'll describe the strange ones later.)

You must take with you to market something in which to carry home your purchases. Staples like rice and beans are packaged in paper bags, but produce is sold loose. Meat and fresh cheese are often wrapped in a green banana leaf. Small stores keep unwrapped bread in large baskets, and if the muchacha does not take a napkin in which to wrap the bread, the merchant puts it in a sheet torn from an old magazine, or perhaps in an old invoice. The girls usually took a flour sack with them to carry home corn and wheat. Paper shopping bags are for sale in the market, and the muchachas consider them more "elegant" than baskets.

The container situation put one of our friends in an amusing predicament. He stopped by an ice cream shop one day, expecting to buy a quart to take home. "Señorita," he said in his best Spanish, "I should like to purchase eight scoops of *helado*."

"Surely, señor." She began to pile it on a dish.

"Wait a minute, señorita. I do not wish to eat it here. I want to take it home with me."

The clerk was so startled she nearly dropped the scoop. "But didn't you bring anything to carry it in?"

But I was telling about Thursday mornings in our house. Following market, Susana and Beatriz rushed into the house, changed to other aprons, and proceeded to put their purchases in order. To my consternation, they always dumped the produce in the sack out on the dirty kitchen floor preparatory to sorting it and putting it away in the pantry. Then we followed a regular routine: I looked over the produce and asked the names of the things I wasn't familiar with, and Susana reported what things cost. She would hold up a large pineapple and ask, "How much do you think I paid for it, señora?"

"Thirty-five centavos, Susana?"

"No, only twenty-five," Susana stated.

"Only twenty-five? You certainly got a bargain." Susana grinned broadly.

Soon she picked up the avocados. "They were fifteen centavos each. Should I have bought them?" The grin had been replaced by a worried expression.

"That's rather high, but they're nice avocados." Susana was a conscientious shopper, and once in a while she'd tell me that she didn't buy any tomatoes—or pineapples—or avocados—because they were too high that week. I told Tom that if prices kept going up Susana would starve us to death!

One market day as we were looking over the produce, Susana held up a little piece of yuca, which she said was *la ñapa.* I didn't know the word and I couldn't find it in the small dictionary we kept in the kitchen, where I looked for it under the *l's.* (Very few words begin with *ñ.*) From Susana's explanation I learned that it meant something thrown in for good measure. She illustrated with the brussels sprouts and string beans. I thought at the time that I had discovered the southern migration of the French word used around New Orleans—*lagniappe.* I later learned that *la ñapa* and *lagniappe* have a common origin traceable to the language of the Peruvian Indians.

There is not much color in the dress of the people at the markets, but the flowers are numerous and colorful. The flower vendors sell an armful of flowers in exchange for very little money. Orange calendulas; red, pink, and white carnations; white lace-like *gasa;*

purple violets and pansies; various hues of sweet peas; red roses; white gardenias—all of these make splashes of color among the black shawls and coats of merchants and shoppers.

I went to the plaza with Beatriz one afternoon of market day to buy some house plants, and as usual I asked her to do the bargaining. We found two plants that we liked, and Beatriz practically pulled them out by the roots. She wanted to be sure they were really growing in the dirt in the old tin cans, and hadn't just been stuck in it a few hours before.

"How much for these two, señor?"

"Twenty-five centavos for each one, señorita. That's very cheap."

Beatriz laughed as if to say, "The very idea of asking that much for the plants." Then she said, "I'll give you fifteen centavos for the two of them."

"Forty centavos, no less, señorita."

"No, no, no!" We walked away, but not very far and not very fast.

The *marchante* called after us, "Thirty centavos."

We returned and Beatriz made a counter offer. "I'll pay twenty centavos."

"Take them for twenty-five." Again we walked away toward another stand.

"They're a bargain at twenty-three," the marchante called out.

Beatriz turned her head and said, "Twenty centavos, no more!" and continued to walk away.

The vendor surrendered—"Then take them for twenty centavos."

Many families who lived as far from the center of Bogotá as we did nevertheless sent their cook downtown to the principal market to buy produce. Their baskets, sacks, and live poultry were rather a nuisance on the buses, and someone was always complaining about this in a letter to the daily newspapers. Susana rarely went to the market in *Centro* unless it was for something special. One morning before she left for market I said, "Susana, see if you can get a duck this week instead of a chicken."

When she returned, Susana didn't have a duck. "There were no ducks in the Chapinero market, señora. I can go to the Plaza Grande in Centro tomorrow and I'm sure I can get one there."

Early Friday morning she rode the bus to the Plaza Grande, the largest Bogotá market. She didn't take a basket, but folded a paper

shopping bag and put it in her purse. Some time later she returned. I heard her at the door, so I opened it and followed her to the back patio. "Si, señora, I got a very nice duck." She reached into the bag and lifted it out. Susana turned to her "little sister" and said, "Beatriz, have the kindness to get some corn and some water." Beatriz ran into the ironing room and returned with a small sack of corn and a tub. She put some corn on the floor of the patio and then she filled the tub with water.

"How hungry he is!" said Susana, as the *pato* gobbled down the corn.

"And thirsty, too!" added Beatriz, as he guzzled down the water.

Soon the duck had enough to eat, and he waddled up to the pan of water and got in. He jerked his head under the water and got as wet as he could. The three of us stood watching him.

"Isn't he *simpático*, señora? And he's so pretty and white." This from Susana.

Then Beatriz asked, "Couldn't we keep him a week or two before we kill him, señora? He's such a nice duck."

I laughed at this. "By that time nobody would want either to kill or eat the duck, Beatriz. I think we'd better get it over with before we make a pet out of him."

There are five or more large markets in Bogotá. Small stores scattered throughout the city also offer wares for sale. Many of these are located in the garages attached to private homes. These stores carry small stocks of goods, the things used every day: bundles of firewood, bread, chocolate, perhaps lemons and bananas, beer and soda water.

There are larger stores, too, which carry staples, but ordinarily these stores carry no fruits, vegetables, or fresh meats. In addition, there are numerous meat markets, very few of which have refrigeration. It is never warm and butchering is done daily, and the muchachas by using care ordinarily got passable meat.

Bogotanos are rather proud of the Carulla stores, which are similar to some of the nicer groceries in the States: they have delivery service, they fill phone orders, and they have fixed prices. All carry a large assortment of staples, including canned goods from the States and Argentina. Two of them also carry meats, vegetables, and fruits. The Carulla stores are clean and well-lighted, and their goods are attractively arranged. We liked to look over their dis-

plays of canned goods. Carulla had printed lists for the use of customers who wished to send their orders rather than phone them. When I had learned all of the words on their list, from *Azúcar* to *Vinagre,* I had the beginning of my kitchen education! (Carulla's lists are not alphabetized beyond the initial letter. That is a Colombian practice followed in scientific publications as well. As I hunted through forty-nine *a's* in search of a particular plant listed in a botanical publication, I muttered, "What Colombia needs is more three-by-five-inch cards.")

Susana wanted some fresh milk for cooking, so she arranged to have it delivered to the house each morning. The milk girl carried several large cans with bails, and she poured milk from one of these into a pitcher which Susana took to the door. At first Susana paid for the milk each day, but later on the girl suggested that she could pay by the week. The trial of this was not satisfactory. The trouble arose in connection with the Spanish practice of referring to a week as "eight days." The milk girl wanted to collect for eight days at the end of the first week. Susana got the account straightened out, and I then told her to return to the daily basis. This was one spot where Susana failed me. She could never remember to have the change for the girl. I finally gave Susana the exact change for the milk apart from the other grocery money.

It was hard to find the answer to my question, "When do I bargain and when are prices fixed?" In the markets, bargaining is the accepted way of doing business. In some stores prices are fixed, and you do not bargain at all. A sign indicating prices are fixed, however, is no sure indication that the store never bargains. I gradually learned that the principal pharmacies, bakeries, and restaurants sell at fixed prices. Bargaining is such an established procedure that it is sometimes attempted in places where one least expects it. The electric power company had a large *PRECIOS FIJOS* sign posted in the lobby, in full view of the windows where bills were paid. Evidently some customer had asked for a reduction in his light bill.

I overheard a heated argument at one of the Palace Bakeries between a servant girl and one of the clerks. The muchacha insisted on a *rebaja* (reduction in price) and the clerk refused to give it.

Tom even had to engage in some bargaining when he made a

final settlement with the bank from which we rented. We owed for only a week's service of electricity. We were supposed to pay the bank, which in turn would settle with the light company. We read the meter and computed the amount of electricity used as worth a little less than one peso fifty. The clerk at the bank insisted it was four fifty. Tom showed the clerk the receipted bill for the previous month, stood his ground that it was worth no more than one fifty, and won out.

An even tougher question is the one, "How much does a pound weigh?" Sixteen ounces is the right answer north of the border, but in Colombia there are several answers. There are four kinds of pounds: one of five hundred grams, one of four hundred sixty grams, one of four hundred fifty-four grams, and another of four hundred grams. (The five hundred gram pound is official.) Other measures are equally confusing.

Soon after I reached Bogotá, Tom gave me a short lecture on the merits of the metric system. He convinced me that all Americans should learn it and encourage its adoption in our own country and in the other countries which have the English system. I had never even learned to convert from degrees Fahrenheit to degrees Centigrade, so I resolved to follow his advice. In the months that followed, I succeeded only in getting more muddled than ever, and I am not yet sure how much I weigh in kilograms or how tall I am in centimeters.

Shortly after we had rented our house, I went out to measure the rooms, so as to be sure we wouldn't buy any furniture we couldn't get into the room in which it was to be used. I asked the carpenter who was guarding the house to let me have the keys, and he followed me into the house. I told him, as well as I could, what I had in mind. I guess he could not imagine a lady's doing such a job, so he and his little boy did the measuring for me. He called off the measurements in meters and centimeters, and I was not very sure I was getting them right. Of course, this bore out Tom's advice that I should learn the metric system—and my own conviction that it is important for a person to learn numbers well early in his study of a foreign tongue.

My next encounter with the metric system was in buying sheets and pillow cases. I had been told that the way to get good quality sheets and cases was to buy sheeting and have it hemmed. I wrote

down the name and address of the recommended store and memorized the Spanish words for sheets and cases. I got a tape measure that had inches on one side and centimeters on the other, and recorded in centimeters the length and width desired. I checked all measurements three times. I was very proud of myself for making such careful preparations.

The following day I found the store which had been recommended. "*Buenos días, señora.* In what can I serve you?" asked the clerk.

"*Buenos días, señor.* I am told that this store carries sheeting of the best quality. I need enough for four sheets and four pillow cases."

"Surely, señora. We have the very finest sheeting, imported from the United States. What width sheeting does the señora wish?"

I reached into my purse and pulled out the memo of the carefully checked dimensions. "I wish sheeting two meters and twenty-eight centimeters wide," I said. "I need twelve meters and seventy-nine centimeters of this material. Will you be good enough to tell me the price of that quantity?"

The clerk looked puzzled. "We will have to make some calculations, señora. I do not know the width of the cloth in centimeters, but I do know that it is ninety inches wide. And we sell it by the yard rather than by the meter." He got out a tape measure that had inches on one side and centimeters on the other, and we figured out how much material I'd need, in yards. I was so befuddled by this time that I was not at all sure I was ordering what I needed. But it all ended well—the sheets and cases were the right size. I am sure most of the credit is due the clerks at the store, who had dealt with Americans before.

The longer we lived in Bogotá, the more complicated the weights and measures began to appear. The metric system is more or less official, but the English system is often employed. And a number of Spanish measures are in use.

Much produce is sold by the pound—or rather, by one of the four classes of pounds I've already mentioned. Potatoes are sold by the *arroba,* a Spanish measure equivalent to twenty-five pounds. (Of the five-hundred gram pounds, that is!) Some produce is sold by the dozen, coal is sold by the *bulto* (about one hundred thirty-five pounds), gasoline is sold by the gallon and by the *botella.*

Milk also is sold by the botella. (A botella varies from seven hundred thirty-five to seven hundred fifty cubic centimeters.) In measuring precious metals, a weight called a *castellano,* which is one-hundredth part of a troy pound, is used. (A troy pound, if you've forgotten, is twelve ounces.)

Land measures are, I believe, a mixture of the metric system and an old Spanish system. Land descriptions are made more difficult by the fact that in most of the populated areas the earth wants to stand on end and more than halfway succeeds.

It was some months before I encountered still another measure. A merchant in the principal market offered me some homespun cotton material at so much per *vara.* I asked her how long a vara was, and she said eighty centimeters. I had to convert that to inches and then convert the centavos to cents before I could tell how much it was worth per yard in U. S. money. When Susana bought the long skinny sausage she used in making *enchiladas,* she paid for it also by the vara, rather than by the pound.

I used to tease the muchachas a little about their large shoe sizes. They wore size 35. Of course they could see that I had scandalously long feet, so they knew I was kidding when I told them I wore a smaller size. By the Colombian system, I would have worn about a size 41, if it had been available. I could never make any more sense out of their shoe sizes than I can out of ours.

I thought it rather fun learning the Colombian system of weights and measures, and not too hard, since I could always consult the dictionary, the handbooks on our library shelves, the muchachas, and my husband!

You'd think any adult would know the answer to the next question, "How do I mail a letter?" But even mailing a letter is somewhat complicated. An air mail letter directed from Colombia to the States requires three stamps: an air mail stamp, costing thirty centavos; a regular mail stamp, costing five centavos; and a tax stamp, costing one-half centavo. Ordinary mail also needs at least two stamps: a postage stamp and a tax stamp. There are very few mail boxes, so usually you take a letter to the post office. And while ordinary mail is handled by the Correo Nacional (Post Office Department), air mail is handled by Avianca, the national air line. Some post offices are for air mail only, some are for regular mail only, and a few are for both. In the principal office for air

mail, people line up at the windows; at the other post offices, they do not.

I used to boycott regularly the post office nearest our house, because the clerk would keep me waiting while she took care of people who came in later and shoved envelopes in ahead of me. I tried to get around this by weighing up some envelopes and paper, so that I would know how much postage to put on letters of various lengths and could drop them in the mail box outside the post office. I then had the problem of buying stamps in advance. If I asked for ten stamps at once, the girl always had a time figuring out how much I owed her. I finally decided that the best plan for handling mail was to buy enough stamps for ten letters at the time I was at the Avianca office. There people queued up, the clerks were less surprised at a request for stamps beyond the number required for letters being posted at the moment, and they usually had stamps. One time even the Avianca office failed me—they had no five-centavo stamps. (And no twos and ones to take their place.) Occasionally all of the offices ran out of tax stamps, and during those times we could send letters without them.

(While discussing stamps, I mustn't neglect to mention the new issue of Colombian stamps which show orchids in their natural colors—they're truly beautiful.)

Parcel post is notoriously undependable, and Colombians do not put much confidence in it. It has a rival in the private company Expreso Ribón. Ribón may be compared to a combination of our Railway Express and parcel post system. You can mail letters by Ribón, too, although you must pay regular postage as well as a small fee to Ribón. Through Ribón you may send drafts, letters, and large and small packages, with confidence that they will reach their destination. I am told that Ribón sends a man along with each shipment to see that it gets there.

We didn't see the postman every day, since most of our mail came through the Embassy and was delivered to Tom's office. Many people who get much mail have post office boxes downtown. (Separate boxes are required for regular mail and air mail.) Many business institutions employ their own messengers to deliver bills and other correspondence. When a postman did come, he blew a whistle to announce his arrival. The air mail postman rode a bicycle, but the regular postman just walked.

Susana supplied the answer to my next query, "Where do we get our coal?" We got it from a company she recommended. She'd learned on a previous job that their coal burned hotter and left less soot. She or Beatriz telephoned the company and the coal was delivered. That was all there was to it when Susana ordered in time! Ever so often it was a gamble to see if we would run out of coal before it was delivered.

There was in the back patio a concrete coal bin which held somewhat more than five bultos (sacks), the standard order, and we had a large wooden box which held two sacks more. I tried to get Susana to order coal as soon as there was room to put in another five bultos. Sometimes she would order early two or three times in succession, and I would think that I had reformed her. Then the race would again be on, and she would be scraping the bottom of the bin for the last small lump of coal. It just seemed so silly to get more coal when we had enough for ten days!

When the coal came, it was delivered by truck and required three men to handle it, a chauffeur and two workmen. The coal was sacked in five fique bags, and as each bag was dumped into our bin, the empty bag was thrown down on the patio. When all were emptied, the foreman of the two-man team counted the bags in our presence. Susana told me that it was customary to tip the foreman five centavos. If we overlooked tipping, he asked for it.

"Where do we buy firewood?" There were many answers to that one. All over the city, especially in the little stores in garages, I saw *leña* for sale. It is used as kindling to start fires, and it usually consists of small branches, tied in bundles which sell for one centavo. Susana was always running out of leña, and she or Beatriz would have to go out and buy five centavos' worth before a fire could be started. And they were always tearing an apron on the wood as they carried it home. As he walked to work in the morning, Tom often saw near the laboratory burros loaded with firewood—they had just come down from the mountains. I told Susana to buy a load, and she went over one morning and completed a negotiation. Soon she returned just ahead of the burro and its owner. Beatriz opened the garage door, and in went burro and his cargo. The man untied the wood and let it fall to the floor. As Susana stacked the wood, she counted the small bundles and concluded that it was cheaper than buying wood two or three

bundles at a time. That load lasted for several months, and then she again bought leña piecemeal until I insisted she buy a peso's worth.

The little burro who carries firewood is a fairly quiet fellow. He must be envious of his city cousin, who carries beer bottles—two cases of them—on his back. Clank, clank, clank, clank—as he walks along at his unhurried pace, the bottles beat out a steady rhythm.

"Where can I get feather pillows?" First, get a chicken!

At the time we were buying furniture for our house, I arranged to have a mattress and some pillows made. The mattress was hard, but it was smooth, and we considered it quite satisfactory. The pillows we didn't like so well. They were not only hard but lumpy, and when I investigated the inside of one of them I found it contained ravelings and scraps of wool. I explained to Susana that in the United States we used feathers in our pillows, and that while we consider duck and goose feathers better, chicken feathers are also used. She thought the feathers were pretty dirty, and said that American chickens must be cleaner than Colombian chickens. Then I remembered that I had once heard there were feather pillows for sale in Bogotá for twenty-five pesos a pair, and I told her this. That impressed her.

Susana began saving feathers and I looked them over each week, so she then entered into it with more enthusiasm. After a few weeks she came home from the plaza and told me she had a chicken with nice feathers. Before, she had always said that it was heavy or fat, so I began to wonder if I'd done the right thing. After a few months, there were enough feathers for one pillow, then two, and finally three. I had to discard the big feathers myself. To Susana, it was just as logical to stuff pillows with big tail feathers as it was to stuff them with the softer ones.

"Why do people bounce coins?" I asked Beatriz.

"To learn if they are *moneda falsa* (counterfeit), señora," she replied.

It is not unusual to find counterfeit coins, and because of this people inspect money carefully. Twenty- and fifty-centavo pieces are particularly apt to be counterfeit. The methods for testing them are a bit startling to the stranger. I have seen coins thrown violently to the floor. Often they are flipped on a counter to see

if they ring true and bounce properly. (The latter is a favored method at the ticket windows of theaters.) Sometimes they are bitten. The person to whom the coin is offered may try to break it in two, and sometimes it breaks. Trying out coins does not mean that the integrity of the person offering the coin is being questioned, and I never saw anyone take offense because his coin was bounced or bitten.

Paper money is rarely counterfeited, and bills are not usually questioned. But in the markets and smaller stores more often than not the merchant will say he does not have change, even for a one-peso bill. Sometimes he doesn't; sometimes he just doesn't want to part with it. (I never knew what word I was going to encounter for small change. I learned four different ways to say it: *trueques, plata, suelto,* and *cambio.* Doubtless, there are other terms which I never learned.)

Another question was really a puzzler for two tall people in a country where people are shorter. "Where can I get long pajamas and size 11 sox?" (And shoes to fit big feet!) We had them made to order or sent from home.

My idea of what the well-dressed sleeper wears in Bogotá is long-sleeved flannelet pajamas. Mine were getting pretty ragged, so I decided to give Beatriz the assignment of getting some made. As I was busy at the time, I entrusted the whole undertaking to her. The seamstress wanted a pair of pajamas to use as a pattern, and I told Beatriz to tell her they were an inch too short. (Patterns are imported from the States and are rather more expensive than they are here, and many of the dressmakers cut their own from another garment.) The seamstress never saw me, but I know she must have concluded that I was the tallest woman in the world. The pajamas were six inches too long. I should have slept like a baby—the flannelet had little bears printed on it and had the sentimental name *tela de dulce abrigo* (cloth of soft protection).

It is not uncommon to have your shoes made to order, also, though more and more Bogotanos are buying factory-made shoes. I was told that having shoes made to order isn't very satisfactory for tall Americans, because the shoemaker just doesn't have lasts large enough for us. I was always wishing that I could have hose made to order, since the shops rarely carried anything except the smaller sizes. My attempt to get size 11 wool sox for Tom caused

me to learn of an exceedingly worthy institution whose work was little known.

Someone had told us that at a school run by the Catholic Sisters known as *Las Hermanas de la Señora de Sabiduría* we could secure wool sox of good quality. Tom asked me to see if I could get some in his size. We did not know the address of the school, but we knew that it was in San Cristóbal, one division of Bogotá. Susana said that she believed that she knew where the school was located.

Susana and I set out by bus one day right after lunch. En route a large woman wearing a black shawl, panama hat, numerous skirts, and carrying a large basket, tried to sit between two other people when there wasn't space for a midget. However, the people protested with such vigor that she got up. Susana giggled for some blocks over this episode.

Susana had something else to giggle about later on. I got my tongue twisted and told the policeman on guard at the entrance of the school that I wanted to see the Sisters about "wools of sox." I presume the policeman was amused, too, but he kept a straight face.

We learned that the school was an institute for the training of blind and deaf-mute girls. (On a subsequent visit, Beatriz and I saw demonstration classes in lip-reading and in braille.) We were told that when the girls completed their training in this institute, they could attend the regular schools. The knitting of woolen articles—on American-built machines—was a part of the "busy work" of the deaf-mute girls. The woolen articles thus made were sold and in part paid for the support of the school.

Tom was much pleased with his warm sox, and we were both interested in learning of the work that the Sisters were doing.

Another question, a rather smelly one, was, "How do we dispose of our garbage?" At first, the muchachas dumped it in a vacant lot. We were in a new section and garbage collection hadn't been extended to our neighborhood. After two or three more families moved to our street, the collectors came by three times a week. That initiated in our house a series of races, an average, perhaps, of one a week. As the garbage truck turned the corner to enter the street, one of the men blew a whistle. Then the muchachas sprang into action.

"La basura!" shouted Susana, and ran toward the back patio. She had forgotten to set out the garbage. She grabbed one handle of the can and Beatriz grabbed the other, and they carried it toward the front door and out to the street as fast as they could manage it. If they had remembered to set out the can, when the whistle blew one of them ran to bring it in before someone stole it.

We didn't throw out bottles and jars. We saved them to sell to the bottle woman. I can still hear her shrill call: *"Frascos, botellas—los compro."* ("Jars, bottles—I buy them.") The Quaker Oats Company packs oats for export in tin rather than in pasteboard containers, and these tins were fairly plentiful. They brought two centavos; vinegar bottles brought five; some cologne bottles were worth as much as fifty centavos. (I was told that they were filled with a locally-made product and resold as imported cologne.) Medicine bottles, cold cream jars—all had a price. Beatriz took quite a bit of medicine, and when she decided to clean out her stock she would collect several centavos from the bottle buyer.

Someone was always wanting to buy paper, too, but we never had enough for our own use. The daily paper wasn't very thick, and starting a fire and lining pantry shelves kept us using up papers as fast as we got them. I couldn't help but remember the pounds and pounds of papers that I had thrown out in the States because they accumulated too fast.

As I was learning the answers to my questions about markets and marketing, I observed many interesting things and acquired some additional varied—and sometimes useful—information.

There are no department stores, and ordinarily a shopper buys shoes in a shoe shop and only shoes there, hats in a hat shop, yard goods in a shop selling nothing else, drugs in a drug store, and jewelry in a jewelry shop. There are several "dime stores," offering a variety of small items. (Their prices are often higher than the price of the same merchandise elsewhere.) Sometimes shops sell things just as foreign to their principal merchandise as our drug stores that sell dishes. Tom's favorite story along that line was about the time he searched for onions downtown, after the markets were closed. He found them in a florist shop. I couldn't equal that story, but I could approach it. I once had to go to a hat shop to buy some tax stamps which I needed to renew my cedula, identification card for aliens. A stationery store sometimes dis-

played bathroom tissue in the window, a new supply having just been received from the States.

Flowers are for sale in the markets. They can also be bought in florist shops and from there they often are delivered to the recipient on a silver tray. It is necessary to go to a florist shop to buy orchids, which usually come by air from Medellín.

Streetcar passengers frequently had a treat when a muchacha delivered flowers by streetcar. I always felt almost as excited over them as was the little four-year-old American girl I saw one day. A muchacha entered the streetcar with a silver tray on which were arranged orchids, sweet peas, huge pink and red rosebuds, cream and pale pink blossoms similar to water lilies, and some strange red blooms. Under the flowers were green palm leaves. My little fellow countrywoman took one look and said, in English, "Flowers!" The word is so like the Spanish *flores* that all understood her, and a ripple of pleased laughter went through the car.

The most persistent of the street vendors are the sellers of lottery tickets. They are especially thick downtown, but we saw them also in our neighborhood and on the streetcars. I would have bought a ticket for a souvenir, but I didn't need to. Susana and Beatriz bought them regularly.

Other street vendors have interesting arrays of articles. On Carrera Septima, almost any day there is a man selling articles made of panama hat straw, *jipijapa*—women's hats, cigarette cases, lapel ornaments, and purses. He usually wears the big hats on his head, one on top of the other. Another vendor is the candle man. (Often the rooms occupied by the poor do not have electricity.) Daily the candle man makes his rounds through the streets, a pole balanced across his shoulders, and suspended from the pole by their wicks are dozens of tallow candles.

During the Christmas season, stands for the sale of fireworks are set up in the Plaza de Bolívar, just in front of the capitol building. Vendors of toys spread their wares out along the wide sidewalks across the street from the Plaza, and near by in the Colegio de San Bartolomé is a fair for the sale of toys, the Feria de Juguetes. When I visited the Feria, I looked for miniatures of household things which were particularly Colombian. There were *portacomidas,* sets of four or five round pans stacked up like erect Towers of Pisa, fitted with a bail for carrying them—they are the

equivalent of our lunch boxes. There were *chinas,* used for fanning the fire. There were charcoal irons. There were *olletas,* the aluminum pitchers for making chocolate, and *monenillos,* the sticks for beating chocolate while it is cooking. There were straw hats and alpargatas. There were tea sets, doll furniture, and dolls. And there were little plates and soup bowls made from beer bottle caps.

On Palm Sunday and on several days preceding it, there are in the streets near the markets vendors of palm. Worshipers take their palm to the church to have it blessed, instead of getting it at the church. Some of the vendors weave the palm into crosses, but more frequently it is made into shield-shaped pieces.

If you are interested in window-shopping, it is best to go in the daytime, for at night many of the windows are entirely covered by solid metal shutters. Along Carrera Sexta, the silver shops display tea sets, trays, and jewelry, hammered out by hand in Bogotá. Other windows show English china, Irish linens, Canadian furs, oriental rugs, and fine furniture. Bookstores are numerous. In a leather shop, you usually see a bedraggled-looking tiger skin hanging on the wall. In several small shops which have opened up recently are displayed things in which tourists are interested: brass stirrups which look like shoes, brass chocolate mugs of colonial times, copper *pailas* (bowl-shaped pans with two handles), tiles from Medellín, and carved wooden figures. Sometimes there is a mail order catalogue—they're prized for the styles. One coffee shop used to display a very gruesome-looking shrunken head. (Someone spoiled my fun by insisting it was a fake.) If you notice a group of people looking toward the second floor of a building, the chances are they are reading the latest news bulletins, written on a blackboard just outside the window of a newspaper office.

There is one appealing sight which never loses its charm—children dressed for their first communions, the little girls in long white satin dresses, wearing veils, and carrying lilies; the little boys dressed in black or navy blue suits trimmed with white braid, and also carrying lilies. Often the children ride to the church on the streetcar, accompanied by their mothers, and a little of their happiness seems to spread through the car.

A curious sight, of interest to Bogotanos as well as to foreigners, are the Indians from the Putumayo region. The men wear

long ruanas (ponchos), white with black stripes. Their hair is cut as though a bowl had been turned over their heads. The costumes of the women are set off by bright red shawls.

All of these things and more—stacks of fruits and vegetables, flowers, baskets, fique bags, burros loaded with firewood, candle vendors, silver shops, the sing-song chant of the mango vendor, the persistent cries of men selling lottery tickets, the shrill call of the bottle woman—I recall as part of life in Bogotá. Sometimes it was confusing, but it was never dull!

VIII

LA COCINA

OUR attempt to keep healthy resulted in our most radical departure from Bogotá custom—we ate in the kitchen. The muchachas wanted to please us, but they knew nothing of microbes, and we were afraid that through their ignorance of the principles of hygiene they would not use care in preparing food. By eating in the kitchen, we could better supervise what went on there. It was not an attractive room, but I made curtains for the window and stuck a few decals around—that helped a little. The nicest thing about the kitchen was that it was warm. When we had guests we were conventional and ate in the dining-room and everyone shivered.

After dinner we enjoyed lingering at our small table in the kitchen and talking with the muchachas. Perhaps Susana would tell how some dish was prepared, how wheat was harvested, or what it was like when she worked in an insane asylum. Sometimes Beatriz would relate something funny that happened in the market, or describe her school days. Sometimes Tom would tell Paul Bunyan stories. Or perhaps I would try to describe what snow is like. We talked about Idaho potatoes, how Flit is made, fiestas, movies, and just about everything else imaginable.

The discussion one evening got around to mermaids, and we learned that Beatriz thought that there were such creatures, because she'd seen them in the movies. We told her that they were only imaginary, but could see that she still wasn't convinced. Tom and I laughed about it afterwards. We decided that we weren't making much progress in teaching the girls—Beatriz found it easier to believe in mermaids than she did to believe in germs or vitamins!

We should have had trouble getting the food situation under control, I suppose—Colombian cookery is quite different from American cookery—but actually things moved along smoothly almost from the first and it wasn't long before Tom was again enjoying some of the American dishes he had missed, such as hamburgers, apple pie, and doughnuts. Susana and Beatriz were apt pupils. I had to prepare a dish only once and they thereafter knew how to make it. Susana was an exceptionally good cook. Beatriz

had not had much experience in cooking, but she learned from Susana. They had worked for a German family at one time and had thus gained experience with people whose eating habits differ from those of Colombians.

I had a great time learning Colombian dishes, finding out what foods were available, and teaching the girls how to prepare American dishes.

Tom had written me about some Colombian dishes and had told me that the fare is quite different from ours. The pattern of meals in the better hotels is something like this: for breakfast, a roll and very sweet chocolate (frequently made with water rather than with milk); mid-morning, coffee, or coffee with milk, and toast; for lunch, a fruit, soup, meat and rice, cheese and potatoes, a piece of bread, a *dulce* (fruit cooked with a great deal of sugar), and coffee; in midafternoon, chocolate and bread; dinner, similar to lunch. I am told that this pattern is followed in the homes of people of means. The diet of the poor consists largely of starches, such as plátanos, yuca, and rice, and is lacking in protein.

As best I could, I told Susana what we liked: for breakfast, fruit juice, oatmeal, toast, sometimes bacon and eggs, and coffee; for lunch and dinner, fruit, one protein dish and one starch dish, two vegetables and something other than the very popular dulce for dessert. Since Susana had no idea what protein and starch were, I had to make my explanation in a roundabout way. "For dinner, we like meat or eggs or cheese or beans or fish—but only one food of that kind. And we like either rice or potatoes or yuca or spaghetti—but only one food of that kind. When we have meat for dinner, we don't want fish for that meal. When we have potatoes, we don't want rice for that meal."

That was incredible. "The señora doesn't like rice?" she asked, thinking perhaps she hadn't understood my poorly worded description. She had been with us only a day or two, and we couldn't talk with each other very well.

"Yes, Susana, I like rice. But I don't want rice when we have potatoes or yuca or spaghetti. They're too much alike." Susana continued to look puzzled. She couldn't quite imagine our not wanting rice served twice daily! (Colombians who come to the States usually get hungry for rice, and I always include it in the menu when we have a South American guest.)

I let Susana continue to serve soup twice a day for a number of months. By that time we were so tired of soup that I told her to make it for us no oftener than once a week. The one exception was tomato soup, which she made from fresh tomatoes and served with shoestring potatoes—she was to prepare it whenever tomatoes were reasonable in price.

One way in which Colombian cookery differs from ours is that they do not use pepper to the extent that we do. Tom likes pepper very much. He had trouble getting it before I got to Bogotá, since he didn't have time to hunt for it. But one day he stopped in a small store and found that they had black pepper in bulk. He bought a small quantity, carried it home, and gave it to the cook. She put it in an empty glass jar and brought it to him at mealtime. (Salt and pepper shakers are not used much—salt is most often put in a small dish.) After a day or so, the pepper developed a disagreeable taste, and Tom learned that the cook had tried to improve it for him by adding cumin. He returned to the store and got some more pepper and this time made her understand that he liked it just as it was.

One of our favorite dishes was roasted corn, which we had never eaten until Susana prepared it. She took ears of green corn with the husks still on and put them in a hot oven for about thirty minutes. Then she removed the husks, brushed the ears with a split green onion dipped in butter, and browned the corn by rolling it around on top of the stove. Since my childhood I had heard the expression "roasting ears," but we had used the term to refer to any kind of green corn. (Hint to cooks—I have substituted the broiler for the stove-top, and it works well, too.)

Another Colombian dish is *ariquipe*. It tastes somewhat like sweetened condensed milk. To make it Susana put five quarts of milk in a large aluminum kettle with a pound and a half of granulated sugar. (The sugar had been emptied into a canister, per my instructions, and Susana did not know how much a pound of sugar was by measure, so she called on me. She was used to sugar sacked in one-pound paper bags.) Susana then added a pinch of soda and two sticks of cinnamon, and cooked the mixture for three hours. During the last hour, she had to stir constantly to prevent sticking. Toward the last she added a teaspoon of flour. The following Sunday morning she made pancakes, put ariquipe in the

center of each one and rolled the pancake around it. They were good.

For sale in Bogotá theaters are *obleas,* paper-thin wafers of pastry put together with ariquipe.

Another confection that we liked was prepared for us by Carmelita, one of the laboratory helpers. I did not learn how to make it and I have forgotten its name. I was told that the ingredients were sugar, pineapple juice, and *arracacha* (a starchy root). The confection had somewhat the consistency of gum drops, and it was very tasty.

I noticed that Susana prepared for herself and for Beatriz a dish called *morcilla,* using the chicken's head and the skin which covered the neck. I suggested that she prepare it once for us. She was reluctant to try it, because she thought we wouldn't like it—it is as ugly a dish as I have seen. She stuffed the chicken's head and the skin covering the neck with a mixture of potatoes, rice, vegetables, and some of the chicken's blood. She then boiled this a while and afterwards baked it. It did not taste bad, but we were not used to seeing the chicken on the table with its bill and comb still on.

From time to time Susana brought home some unusual glands for us to try. Once we had udder. Susana told me that it was considered a delicacy, but I thought it rather fat. We also had tripe and some other internal organs that I ate on faith—I could not find in the dictionary the names she gave me.

While the girls liked many of the American dishes we had, we sampled one Colombian dish that they weren't interested in: fried ants. In the Department of Santander, there is a large ant which is in season at times during the year, and by Santandereños it is considered very tasty. Tom got a few fried ants from a Santander friend. They had a nut-like flavor, and I think I might learn to enjoy them—in time! The muchachas found it hard to believe that Colombians ate such things.

To us, plátanos in soup were out of place. Many Colombians like them. Across the Magdalena River from Girardot, in Flandes, there is prepared a dish called *viudo.* It is a stew containing fish, plátanos, yuca, and arracacha. The Colombian verdict—delicious. Ours—no! More to our liking were *pasteles* (fried pies containing

rice, pepper, and meat), coconut soup, and *pan de yuca* (yuca bread).

Some of Susana's cooking methods were quite different from mine, particularly the way she made chocolate and coffee. She prepared chocolate in an aluminum chocolate mug, an *olleta.* Olletas are of various sizes. We had two of about a quart capacity and one which held a gallon or more. (We used the large one for heating water.) To make two cups of chocolate, Susana put into the olleta two or three ounces of chocolate, some water, and a little more than a cup of milk. (The chocolate as she bought it was about half sugar.) When the mixture began to boil, she rotated in it a *monenillo,* a wooden stick with a spiral of fine wire fastened near the end of it. I never became an expert at twirling the monenillo, but when I tried to make chocolate in a pan and stir it with a spoon, I found that the mug and beater were useful. The local chocolate did not dissolve so readily as chocolate to which I was accustomed in the States. A Colombian custom which we didn't adopt was that of dropping a piece of cheese in the cups of chocolate.

I suppose Susana made coffee very poorly, but we got used to it and liked it. She put the coffee in a pan and poured boiling water over it. She stirred it, let it settle overnight, and poured it off and reheated it the next day. We had a drip coffee-maker and a percolator—items highly prized by Americans in Bogotá—but the only times I tried to make coffee in them, I had bad results. I decided that perhaps the coffee wasn't ground or roasted for them, and we continued to drink reheated coffee.

My education as to what foods were available was a very gradual one, most of the lessons taking place on Thursday morning following market.

We had a good choice of foods. Of protein foods, we had beef, veal, pork, lamb, chicken, turkey, duck, eggs, and cheese. At small shops run by Europeans, we could get fair ham and bacon, as well as sauerkraut, wieners, pickles, and pumpernickel bread. In addition, there was smoked lamb, so I had to specify "pork ham" or "mutton ham." At shops which carried canned goods, one could buy corned beef from Argentina and Uruguay and salmon and tuna from Chile. Fresh meat was cut differently, and I never mastered the names of the cuts, since Susana did the shopping.

Of starches, we had potatoes, yuca, arracacha, rice, macaroni products, and plátanos. Yuca is a root, similar to potatoes. Arracacha seems related to yuca, but it is yellow. Plátanos are starchy members of the banana family.

We had a large assortment of fresh fruits and vegetables throughout the year, and we rarely bought canned fruits and vegetables. (So far as I know, there are no canneries in Colombia.) Oranges, grapefruit, lemons, bananas, pineapple, avocados, figs, blackberries, and strawberries we were already familiar with. There were also many tropical fruits, including *chirimoya, mango, anón, momencillo, mamey, guayaba, lula,* papaya, and *curuba.* We were especially fond of mamey, which does not resemble a fruit at all. It is large and round, with a skin as brown as that of a potato. The meat is yellow and somewhat similar to that of the apricot. Susana wanted to make all of the mamey into a dulce, but we tried a piece of it raw first. Later on, we asked her to make mamey pie, which was a huge success. Curuba looks like a Southeast Missouri pawpaw, and has a similar taste. I won't attempt to describe the others, as they're unlike anything we have in the States. Most of them are worth trying.

In addition to the familiar vegetables, there are a few strange ones. There is a type of tomato which is orangish-red, pear-shaped, and has firm flesh. It is practically tasteless when eaten raw, but when cooked with sugar is similar in flavor to the small yellow tomatoes that "come up volunteer" in some parts of the States. *Cardos* are similar to celery. *Guatilas* are a starchy vegetable, white inside, but green and prickly on the outside. *Azelgas* are also similar to celery, and the top is a green leaf not unlike spinach. *Pepinas* are similar to green peppers, but more the shape of a fig. *Calabazas* taste something like squash, and look like fat cucumbers.

Susana had instructions to bring home from the market one or two of each fruit and vegetable that she thought would be new to us. We say, "There's no accounting for tastes." The Spanish say, *"Contra gustos y colores no hay disputa,"* which amounts to the same thing. Some of our friends would declare delicious the fruits we thought tasteless. I recall in particular a fruit called the *pomarrosa* (rose apple)—to me it tastes like a rose smells. I have heard Americans say that bananas are much better in the tropics than

in the States. I could not say that I noted a difference. In the tropics they are also pulled green and set aside to ripen. The American usually gets homesick for apples and peaches, as those in Colombia are small and not very tasty. But he can console himself with pineapple, if he likes it as well as I do. Colombian pineapple is truly delicious.

Staples like flour, sugar, chocolate, and dried beans are similar to the U. S. products. In fact, you can buy Canadian flour if you like, and some of the sugar comes from Cuba. Coffee is of course plentiful, since it is the principal export crop. (During our stay in Colombia, coffee was just as high there as in the States.) Most corn is consumed green. Dry corn is available as whole corn, as a coarsely-ground product called *cuchuco* of corn (used in soup), and as corn flour. We finally got corn meal by having it ground to order. (I overtaxed my Spanish trying to tell Susana what corn meal was until I had some to show her.) Our muchachas had never eaten corn bread made as we make it in the States, but they liked it. We bought imported tea. Colombia produces a little tea, but it does not come up to the standard of fine quality established by Colombian coffee. I should add that tea is to many Colombians something to drink when you are ill, and unless you show your cook how to prepare it, she'll probably boil it five or ten minutes.

A Colombian staple that we do not have is *panela*, a crude brown sugar. It is not granulated, but brick-like. I had Susana grate it to use in recipes calling for brown sugar. Colombians eat it by the chunk and drink it as *agua de panela* (panela water), a sirupy beverage. There is also a dark panela which has a chewier texture. Tom always asked Susana on market day if she'd bought any dark panela, but she usually reported that she hadn't found any for sale.

Most dairy products are of poor quality and Colombians generally consider it wise to boil the milk which they buy. The breeding of better dairy cows and the improvement in methods of handling dairy products are receiving attention from the Colombian Department of Agriculture, and gradually the standards are being raised. Buttermilk is unavailable, but there is a product called *kumis* which is like a sweetened buttermilk. Susana got some of it and used it for a starter to make sour milk.

Most food prices were high and they continued to rise during our stay. The problem became not what you could find, but what you could pay for, particularly for the poor people.

I especially enjoyed showing the girls how to prepare American dishes, more so since they washed the dishes and flattered me by saying that everything the señora prepared was good. Tom got his enjoyment out of teaching the girls the names of the new dishes—and out of helping eat them, too. "Chile" and "tamale" were easy to say, since they were Spanish words before we adopted them. The dishes themselves were foreign to the girls—the Colombian diet is bland rather than highly seasoned. Some of the American names were harder for them to learn—for instance, pickled peaches, hamburgers, and pumpkin pie. Beatriz had an ear for sound and readily learned English words. Susana was reluctant to try them and for a long time instead of using the word "hamburger" she would tell me she was going to prepare meat like that the señora had prepared once, with pickles and onions.

In some of our after-dinner sessions, we told the muchachas of our holiday, Thanksgiving, which we wanted to celebrate in the American way. I had Susana buy a turkey and I even got a can of cranberry sauce—the last one in the city, I am sure. The first year, I let Susana make the turkey a little tipsy by giving him aguardiente and then exercising him considerably before killing him. The idea was to make all of the blood go to his head so that the white meat would be whiter, she told me. The next year she just chopped off his head—I told her I'd like her to kill the turkey American style since it was an American holiday. I'd never baked a turkey, but knew how I wanted the stuffing seasoned and what I wanted the finished product to be. I didn't let Susana know that I was inexperienced insofar as turkeys were concerned. I looked up the recipe and then told her what to do. I made the stuffing myself, just to play safe.

One evening we had dinner at the home of friends, and their cook had prepared broiled steak that was very tender and tasty. The following morning, Susana wanted to know what we had had to eat. "The meat was delicious, Susana," I said, "but I don't know what to call it in Spanish. I would call it 'filet mignon' in the United States."

"What kind of meat was it, señora, beef or pork or lamb?"

"It was beef, Susana. It didn't have any bone in it and was nearly round. It was tender, brown, and juicy, and it hadn't been cooked very long."

"I think I know what it was, señora. I can prepare it on top of the stove."

A few days later, as Susana was leaving for market, I reminded her of the meat. "Get a piece that's very *delgada* and very *gruesa,* Susana, and roast it on the stove."

"*Delgada* and *gruesa,* señora?" I'd told her to get a piece that was very thin and very thick. We both laughed, and Susana left for market.

Later that day, Susana had washed off the chunk of meat and cut it into thick filets. I was in the kitchen as she was cleaning off the portion of the stove-top where she was going to broil the meat. "Look, señora, I did what you said," she told me. "Here are the pieces that are very thick; and this piece that I cut off the end is very thin. So the meat is both thick and thin!" I hadn't heard the last of that slip of the tongue, and Susana and Beatriz are probably still giggling over that one and others.

An American invention that Susana liked very much was the pressure pan. When I was getting ready to go to Colombia, I was told that I could send a trunk of household effects by boat. One of the first things I packed was my most prized kitchen possession, a pressure pan. I reached Bogotá four months before the trunk did, and at various times I told the girls about the pan. I was not sure Susana would be able to use it. I thought that she might be afraid of it, as I cautioned her that it needed to be handled carefully. When the trunk got there, I showed Susana how to use the pan and it immediately became her favorite. Since in Bogotá water boils at a lower temperature than at sea-level, it takes longer to cook things. With the pressure pan, beans could be cooked in half an hour and tough meats could be made really tender. Susana used the pan several times a day. She liked it especially for the *hueso*—the soup bone.

The pressure pan developed a lot of peculiar names, such as "automatic pan" and "electric pan" (this from Beatriz, who thought the pan was something special and therefore must have something to do with electricity). Generally the girls called it *La Olla,* mean-

ing the pan—it was so much superior to the rest of the pans that the others did not matter.

The muchachas had used the pressure pan for several months with no accidents. Then one Sunday morning Beatriz came to the library and told me there had been an explosion, and she didn't know whether it was La Olla or the hot water tank. I examined the pan and concluded that it had gotten up too much pressure and blown out the rubber safety plug. Susana, who had been in the back patio washing her hair, came into the kitchen at that time. When she saw what had happened, she almost burst into tears, partly because all of the chicken broth had been lost, but mostly because she was afraid that La Olla was ruined. She had asked Beatriz to move it back from the hot part of the stove when the pressure got up, but Beatriz was dusting and had forgotten. The accident occurred three days after Beatriz had let the same chicken that was cooking in the pot eat up the garden, so she was feeling pretty bad about it, too. I wrote the manufacturer explaining my plight and sent the letter off to the States by air. I hoped that the war regulations would not forbid the exportation of a part of an ounce of rubber! Two spare safety plugs arrived in less than three weeks, and we never blew out another one.

Susana told me that she couldn't read, but I noticed that she could read the headlines in the paper. I translated some recipes for her, typing them in capital letters, and she had no great trouble reading them. (Sometimes when Beatriz wasn't busy she read the recipe aloud to Susana.) I translated only ingredients. Instructions got too involved for me, and Susana didn't need them, anyway. The first recipes I put in her book were for cookies. They were not only translations, but adaptations. We had no brown sugar, no nuts, no chocolate chips, no molasses, no refrigerator, and no oven regulator. And some of the ingredients didn't act the same. The flour had more moisture in it, the "vegetable" shortening was often part tallow, and the chocolate was different. My procedure was usually to try out the recipe first, to show Susana what we wanted in the way of a finished product. Then I would translate it and turn it over to her. Her system from then on was invariable. She made up a batch of dough. Then she took a small pan and made one cookie as a test. If it was not just right, she added sugar or shortening or flour or milk—I never knew just what—and it al-

ways worked out all right. The only recipe I had to repeat was pie crust. She couldn't quite believe anyone could like it, when it didn't call for sugar. After she learned what I thought the finished product should be like, she had no more trouble with it.

After two trials at making cake, I decided that I didn't really want it enough to try to adapt the recipes to the altitude. Susana could make one cake, which she called *ponqué*. (I didn't learn where the name came from. It was probably either "sponge cake" or "pound cake" originally.) Ponqué was fairly good, but not up to Susana's usual cooking.

Dysentery seems to be the curse of Americans traveling or living in South America, and in spite of our precautions, we did not altogether avoid it. I told the girls that Americans have delicate stomachs. That was easier than trying to tell them that people acquire immunity to bacillary dysentery, and for that reason Colombians can eat without ill effects foods that make us ill. People do not acquire immunity to the very serious illness, amebic dysentery, which is a source of concern for Colombians as well as Americans. I cautioned the girls to buy fresh meat, to clean vegetables and fruits carefully, and to boil water and milk. We got along pretty well. We did not contract amebic dysentery and only on two or three occasions were we bothered with bacillary dysentery. Once Tom and I were quite sick from it for several days. The girls had eaten some of everything we ate, but they felt no ill effects.

There is another factor to consider—the altitude. It helps produce a terrific appetite, but because there is less oxygen, metabolism is slowed down and it is advisable to guard against overeating. When you have a really good cook, as we did, that's quite a problem!

IX

BROOMS AND SCRUBBING BRUSHES

I NEVER tried to Americanize our household so far as cleaning and laundry were concerned, though I did try to make the work easier for Beatriz by suggesting a few changes. Her cleaning tools were quite different from the ones I was used to, the house was unlike any I had lived in, and I thought that she probably knew more about cleaning than I did. Since we were going to be just as healthy whether she cleaned the windows with Bon Ami or newspaper, I didn't think it made any difference.

Beatriz' cleaning tools were a broom, a stiff scrub brush with a long handle, a piece of woolen cloth, a rag for scrubbing, and a dust cloth. She would proceed upstairs each morning with this array of equipment. First she washed the tile on bathroom floor and walls with a soap which contained sand. She swept the other floors and then dusted them with the woolen cloth, which she pushed around with the scrub brush. She dusted the furniture by hitting it with her cloth—I saw other Colombian maids do this, too. I was convinced that this added more dust than it removed! Beatriz never dampened the broom. Dust mops and wet mops were items imported from the States for the use of foreigners.

Tom had written me that the Colombian beds he had slept on were made up quite differently from ours; that is, that the covers were not tucked in, but simply piled on top the mattress. I showed Beatriz how to tuck the covers in so that they wouldn't pull out, and we lengthened our Colombian blankets by sewing "tails" on them.

The biggest cleaning task was waxing the floors. The flooring (made from eucalyptus) had been sawed by hand, and the boards were not very uniform or smooth. They had probably been stained or oiled, but they had not been varnished. The way to clean them, I learned, was with steel wool and gasoline. Gasoline was applied to an area, and then the section was scrubbed with steel wool until it was clean—Beatriz used her long-handled scrub brush for this. I was afraid for her to use gasoline, and cautioned her to open the windows while doing it. Everyone else cleaned floors that way, apparently, so she couldn't get much concerned about the need for

care. After the floors were clean, she applied paste wax and polished them with a wool cloth. It was hard work, but the floors did look better afterwards. Beatriz always wanted to wax the floors before we had guests in for dinner. I generally forgot to tell her to clean the floors the day before the company came, and consequently a faint aroma of gasoline usually greeted our guests.

The laundry was in the back patio. In one corner was an open concrete storage tank for water and a cold-water faucet. I don't know what purpose that storage tank served, unless it was to provide a reserve supply for use when the water was cut off. A sloping concrete slab built beside the water tank was designed for use as a washboard. There was no provision at all for warm water at this spot, and if the laundress wanted warm water, she carried it from the kitchen. Colombian maids ordinarily wash clothes in cold water, but Beatriz' method was modified somewhat by her contacts with foreigners.

Beatriz told me that the Colombian laundry method was to soap clothes on the concrete slab and then spread them out on the patio (which had first been washed), and let them lie there in the sun for a while. Then they were rinsed by pouring water over one piece of laundry at a time and squeezing and beating it on the concrete "washboard." The modified technique which Beatriz used was to soak clothes in soapy water overnight in a small tub and wash them in warm water the next morning. (The icy cold water that came from the faucet made my hands ache and Beatriz said that it made hers ache, too.) She rinsed clothes by pouring water over one piece at a time. Colombian laundry soap comes in bars rather than as powder, and Beatriz cut the soap into small pieces and cooked it into a jelly beforehand. Bleaches were unavailable, but the water was soft and often there was sunshine, so our white things stayed white. Beatriz boiled the dishcloths. She told me that Colombians do not as a rule have any equipment for boiling clothes.

We didn't have any clothespins. It hadn't occurred to me to put some in the trunk I sent down, and I never saw any for sale. Beatriz draped the laundry over wire clotheslines strung across the back patio. It isn't very windy in Bogotá, and the high walls of the patio tended to lessen the force of any wind there might be. Usually the clothes didn't blow down.

Beatriz ironed nicely, using a padded table rather than an ironing board. She had the idea that everything must be ironed, and this was the cause of a minor feud between us. I felt that some things (for instance, my husband's long woolen underwear) need not be ironed. I tried to win her over to my point of view, but she didn't think she was doing her work well if she didn't iron everything. I finally quit trying to change her. If I thought the article would be damaged by ironing, I washed it myself; if not, I just let her iron it.

It seemed to me that every day was washday—if Beatriz wasn't doing our laundry, she was washing her own clothes or Susana was washing something.

It was Susana's responsibility to keep the kitchen clean, and the dirt and soot from the coal stove made this difficult. Daily she scrubbed the tile floor and the stove with the soap with sand in it. She liked to use an old tow sack for cleaning the floor and lamented the fact that they got scarce during the war. From time to time Susana climbed up on the stove to polish the copper hot-water tank with salt and lemon. Then she applied *agua de panela,* which she said kept the tank from getting tarnished so quickly. Whether it did this or not, it at least made the tank sticky. Panela water has many uses: it is a popular drink for children and adults, it is a cough remedy, and it is an improvised shellac for copper hot-water tanks!

X

IT CAN BE COLD IN THE TROPICS

IN OUR letters home, we complained about the cold, and we had to explain why a city within 275 miles of the Equator has a perpetually cold climate. Most of us think of the tropics as hot regions where blue mold grows on clothing and shoes; where there are clouds of biting insects, many venomous snakes, and cockroaches two inches long. That description fits some parts of Colombia, but the capital is in the refrigerated tropics.

Bogotá is 8,700 feet above sea-level. At that elevation there is 30 per cent less oxygen in the air. The body temperature runs about one degree Fahrenheit less than at sea-level, which is somewhat like having a continual chill. Only rarely is there frost, but the air temperature averages 57° F., and there is no provision for heating buildings. We always felt cold. When it was rainy and damp, we felt even colder. There is that feeling of chilly dampness of early spring and late fall in the States when there is no fire in the house. Tom and I wore more clothes than we had ever worn in winter in the States.

The annual rainfall in Bogotá is not excessive. (The 1941 *Yearbook of Agriculture* gives the average annual precipitation for Bogotá as 39.53 inches. This same source gives the average annual precipitation for St. Louis as 36.67 inches and for New York City as 41.63 inches.) There is some tendency toward wet and dry seasons, but it is rather unpredictable as to when they will come. It is generally considered that March through May, and September through November are the two wet seasons, but it is not unusual to have six months of rainy weather or six months of dry weather. During long rainy periods, parts of the *sabana* near the capital are flooded, and during long dry periods, there is a water shortage. The water situation undoubtedly needs controlling!

Bogotanos refer to rainy weather as *invierno* (winter) and dry weather as *verano* (summer). During dry weather, the days are warmer, but the nights are colder, and sometimes there is light frost in early morning. The muchachas referred to this chilliness as "cold of summer." It struck us as odd to hear them say, "*Que*

frías las noches ya que estamos en verano!" ("How cold the nights are now that it's summer!") So far as the Spanish words for spring and fall are concerned, Colombians have no need for them in speaking of their own country.

The most violent type of rainfall is known as the *aguacero.* It is an exceedingly heavy rain, usually of short duration, often accompanied by hail. An aguacero often begins right after noon, following a sunny morning. At such times, water comes down in sheets, and it runs down from the mountains like water running down the gutter of a roof. It floods the streets near the mountains, sometimes knee deep, and it carries down from the mountains stones weighing as much as a hundred pounds. Such a violent downpour often takes place in only one part of the city, and is more likely to occur in the eastern part, near the mountains. I was told that the likelihood of heavy rainfall was one factor considered at the time the site for the airport was chosen. The rainfall is significantly less at the airport than in Bogotá proper.

Since the trolley did not run toward our house, I was a bit puzzled when Tom came home one day following a heavy rain and said his shoes were dry because he came home by streetcar. There had been an aguacero, and on Carrera 13, which he had to cross, the water was six inches deep. The streetcars run along the curb. So he boarded a car on the east side of the street, rode about eight blocks north, where it was higher and the street was dry. He got off, crossed the street, and caught a streetcar back to the corner where he had first boarded it—and got off on the sidewalk on the west side of the street.

Bogotá has in times past had some violent earthquakes, but the tremors of recent years have been slight. There were two or three during my stay in Colombia.

I always felt that the coldness of the climate had its influence on the lack of color in the dress of Bogotanos. The predominant color is black: black shawls, black ruanas, black coats, and black dresses are most commonly seen. The padres, with their round black hats and long black coats, add to the impression. Bogotanos wear mourning for a long time following the death of a relative, and often you see a woman dressed completely in black, including her hose. In the warmer parts of Colombia, there is more color in the costumes, and in really hot parts, white predominates.

From the standpoint of health, the climate has its good and its bad points. Bogotá is free of most of the insect-borne tropical diseases, such as malaria and yellow fever. (The Spaniards chose the location because of the healthfulness of the climate, in contrast with the lower lands where they were plagued by fevers.) The most common ailments seem related to the cold and the altitude: colds, influenza, and circulatory troubles. Often when we caught cold we ached as though we had the flu.

Sometimes Bogotanos develop swellings in the joints of the fingers or toes. When I first saw this condition I thought of arthritis. Doctors say that the cause is an accumulation of waste from incompletely metabolized food. Recommended treatment is a trip to warmer country for several days, though the swelling usually clears up without this. Children have rosier cheeks than those living at lower altitudes, and even grown-ups have more coloring. The explanation for this is that people living at high altitudes develop more red blood corpuscles, and the blood is closer to the surface because of the lower pressure.

A cherry tree growing in a yard near our house was never able to decide what season it was. All year round it had blossoms, green fruit, and mature fruit. Like the cherry tree, we, too, were confused over the lack of seasons. We find it hard to recall the month in which various events happened, for January was just like July—the trees didn't lose their leaves, the grass stayed green, the flowers kept blooming, and it didn't snow.

XI

SPANISH WITH A MISSOURI ACCENT

WE ARE often asked, "Can you get along in Colombia without knowing Spanish?" I believe that an American can manage better in Bogotá without Spanish than a Colombian can in Washington without English. There seem to be more English-speaking Colombians than there are Spanish-speaking Americans, or at least the proportion is greater. Outside the cities, however, there are few English-speaking people. I think that knowing Spanish is an absolute essential to really enjoying a stay in Colombia. If I'd never felt critical of foreigners who come to the States and continue to speak their native tongues, I might not have felt compelled to learn Spanish!

The American in Bogotá will find a few familiar English words which have come into use there. American men are called "mister," pronounced "meester." (Of course, we call Spanish-speaking men señor.) The water closet is sometimes called "water." Also noted are closet, hall, radio, sandwich, switch, cookies, and other English words which have been adopted in Colombia, but which have a slightly different sound. Usually the word was imported along with the foreign object—in the same way that we acquired our words "chile con carne" and "sombrero."

One part of Spanish which the foreigner rarely masters is the use of gestures. You can speak English with your hands in your pockets; not so Spanish. A mannerism which caused us much amusement was the method of indicating the height of a child. To indicate the size of an animal, you hold your palm parallel with the ground, just as we do in the States. But to indicate the height of a child, you hold the palm at right angles to the ground. At first the muchachas didn't laugh when we used our hands wrong in describing a child, but after they got better acquainted they would giggle about it.

About the only gesture I mastered was the manner of saying no: wagging the first finger of the right hand sideways. It is very useful when passing by a group of vendors of lottery tickets. We didn't worry about gestures—you don't have to learn them to make yourself understood.

I was amused at Susana's story of her encounter with a man who spoke no Spanish. One afternoon the German woman for whom Susana had worked told her that she did not wish to be disturbed, as she was going to lie down. Soon the doorbell rang. Susana answered it, to encounter a man whom she recognized as a friend of the family. He asked her something in a language she knew was German, but which she did not understand. Susana assumed that the caller wished to speak with the señora. She replied that the señora was resting, but the caller merely looked puzzled. Then Susana had an inspiration. She pointed toward the upstairs. Then she cocked her head to one side and rested it on her folded hands and closed her eyes briefly. When she opened her eyes, she saw by the expression on the man's face that he understood!

Spanish has a convenient way of indicating something is small by adding an extra syllable or two at the end of the word. For instance, a *casa* is a house and a *casita* is a little house; a *mesa* is a table and a *mesita* is a little table. These endings also are used to imply affection. Juan may be called Juanito by his friends, even after he is a grown man. Almost any word is likely to turn up with a diminutive ending, particularly in the speech of the less cultured people. This results in some interesting words not found in the dictionary: *adiosito* (a little goodbye or goodbye for a little while), *permisito* (a little permission), and *mejorcito* (a little better). I once heard a woman call to her child to look at the *animalitos* (little animals). She was pointing out some huge oxen which were going by. The muchachas also called insects *animalitos*.

We would have preferred to speak Spanish faultlessly, but we didn't, and we had considerable fun out of our mistakes. One of my prize "boners" had to do with that Spanish word known to all Americans, "señor." Bogotá husbands refer to their wives as *mi señora*. I therefore assumed that a wife called her husband *mi señor*. After several months of so calling him, I learned from a teacher of Spanish that *Mi Señor* was the Lord. When I returned from that Spanish class, I chided Susana and Beatriz.

"Why didn't you tell me that *Mi Señor* means the Almighty? You know I've asked you to help me by telling me when I make a mistake. You must have heard me say that many times."

Susana grinned a little sheepishly. "Si, señora, we noticed the mistake, and we thought it was very funny. But we didn't want

to correct the señora—it was such a small thing." And then she went on with the regular "line" that makes learning Spanish in Colombia such a pleasure: the señora speaks Spanish so well—perfectly, in fact—which is really remarkable considering that she has been speaking it such a short time.

I knew it was flattery, but it was nice to hear it. I couldn't stay angry with them!

To add to the confusion of what one properly calls a spouse, I learned that it is perfectly correct to say *esposo* for the husband and *esposa* for the wife; but although it is correct to say *marido* for the husband, for some reason it is not good taste to say *marida* for the wife.

We named some flowers *cuales* because of my mistake that the girls enjoyed so much. I was looking at the flowers Beatriz had brought home from the market and I asked her the names of some which resembled straw flowers. *"Cuáles, señora?"* she asked. ("Which ones?") I at first thought that she was giving me the name of the flowers, but upon further discussion learned they were *inmortales.*

The biggest mix-up, though, happened after I had been in Bogotá two years and was quite sure I knew how to speak Spanish. I told Beatriz to take a large camera which Tom had borrowed *arriba.* I thought nothing more of it until I learned she had taken it to him at the laboratory. I meant for her to take it upstairs, where I thought it would be safer than in the downstairs hall. Arriba means "upstairs"—but it also means "up toward the mountain."

I always had trouble with *rr,* which is supposed to be trilled. Beatriz would bite into *"r-r-raro"* like a buzz saw, and I had her say some words for me to imitate. It didn't do any good. I was the only one who knew if I meant *caro* (dear) or *carro* (car), *pero* (but) or *perro* (dog). The muchachas, being diplomats, said that the señora said her *rr* "almost" right.

The Spanish name system at first caused us a little confusion. It is customary for a Colombian man to preserve his mother's surname along with his father's. Suppose Juan Osorio y Rodríguez (or Juan Osorio Rodríguez or Juan Osorio R.—all equally proper) marries María Gómez y López (or María Gómez López or María Gómez L.). Juan's father was an Osorio; his mother, a Rodríguez.

María's father was a Gómez and her mother a López. María now drops her mother's name and becomes María Gómez de Osorio. Their children are José Osorio y Gómez and Carmen Osorio y Gómez. Thus while the father's surname is Osorio y Rodríguez, and the mother's surname is Gómez de Osorio, the children's surnames are Osorio y Gómez.

In applying for a cedula and signing a lease, Tom was Colombianized. He became Tomás Bellis y Logan. (I was always forgetting his new name.) My name was changed less. I became Genevieve Hoehn de Bellis or simply Genevieve Hoehn Bellis—right back where I started. In Colombia, I would not be Señora Tomás Bellis.

This difference in practices with regard to names leads to many mistakes in the newspapers. If some American calls himself John Adams Smith, he may find himself rechristened Mr. Adams in the Bogotá papers. On the other hand, Juan Osorio Rodríguez will probably be called Señor Rodríguez instead of Señor Osorio in the society columns of the Washington papers. Perhaps that is why some prominent Colombians have dropped the Spanish practice and use only one surname.

The American does well to note another Colombian custom—the old Spanish practice of chaperoning young ladies. If you wish a young lady or an engaged couple to call at your home in Bogotá, you should also invite the mother or sister of the señorita. A man driving alone to work and seeing a woman fellow employee walking does not properly stop to ask her to ride.

I decided while in Bogotá that the main reason for learning Spanish was to enable us to joke with our friends and to understand their humorous stories. One day Tom remarked to a friend that he had just read in a history of Colombia about the exploits of a young revolutionary hero who had the same surname as this friend. The hero of the War of Independence turned out to be a relative of the man's, and he proceeded to set the record straight. According to the histories, this young officer was in command of a powder deposit. The King's forces were approaching, and the officer saw that his position could not be held much longer. In order to keep the powder from falling into enemy hands, he sent his men to safety and blew the powder to Kingdom Come and himself along with it. "The histories are wrong," said our friend. "Like

all the members of my family, the young officer was a smoker. Like all of us, he was very nervous. What happened was that he carelessly threw down his cigarette and blew up the deposit!"

Another friend, Eduardo, travels extensively in his position as representative of an American drug firm. His favorite story of his travels is of a particularly slow stretch of railroad. The run, he says, is eighty kilometers (about fifty miles). The terrain is very mountainous, so the railroad company stations eighty men along the tracks, at intervals of one kilometer, to watch out for landslides. When the train leaves for its run, it carries eighty *portacomidas*, containing the men's lunches. It jerks to a stop each kilometer to deliver the portacomidas, and sometimes the engineer waits while the man writes a letter to his wife to send out by the train. The result is that it is the slowest train in Colombia. (Don't try to buy a ticket on it!)

Eduardo made Tom custodian of a lot which he owned in our block—it became known as the "goat pasture." As custodian, Tom had to make reports at regular intervals. Eduardo was particularly fearful that someone would carry the lot off some night. We followed his suggestion of planting a brick to raise a house, but the brick hadn't come up at last account.

Susana told over and over a story about the padre, the cook, and the cheese. It involved a pun—it seems there are puns in Spanish, too. The padre liked cheese. So did the cook. The padre was finishing his meal and would soon be asking for the only cheese in the larder. The cook dropped a pan, making a big clatter, and the padre called out, "*Que sonó?*" ("What made that noise?") The cook quickly ate the cheese. Shortly the padre asked for cheese, and the cook said, "But, padre, you said '*Queso, no!*', and I ate the cheese." The point of the joke was that "What made that noise" and "No cheese" sound just alike in Spanish. Susana enjoyed the story so much that we came to think it funny, too.

We bought powdered milk in order to have safe milk to drink, and the muchachas mixed it with boiled water to make liquid milk. They knew that the powder was "dry milk" and took it pretty much for granted. They thought we were a little crazy, though, when we began to refer to Halazone tablets as "dry water." (That expression originated with one of our American friends.) In making Sunday trips, we customarily carried along some of these tablets

to chlorinate any water we might drink. We referred to them as "dry water" and explained that all you had to add was water. What would you have after you added water? Water! It *was* a little confusing.

In view of mixed sentiments on the matter, I'd better explain why I refer to people from the United States of America as "Americans." I just couldn't find a good substitute. I realize that everyone from Canada to Tierra del Fuego has an equal right to be called an American, but all of the others have a reasonably short distinctive name. I further justify my usage by the fact that Colombians call us *Americanos.* There is a special Spanish name for us, *estadounidense,* but it isn't in general use. I encountered it only on my cedula, an official Government permit. I believe we could translate it "United Stateser."

Allow me to air one of my pet peeves with regard to languages, the practice of translating the names of cities and countries. It seems to me it needlessly complicates things. As illustrations: In Spanish, New York becomes Nueva York, St. Louis becomes San Luis, London becomes Londres, Sweden becomes Suecia, Switzerland becomes Suiza, and so on. And in English we change España to Spain, Amazonas to Amazon, Italia to Italy, and Deutschland to Germany. I would think it simpler for everyone to call London, for instance, what Londoners call it. I guess I'm just lazy. I had a hard enough time keeping up with the news in Bogotá without stopping to consult the dictionary again to find out if it was a Swiss firm or a Swedish firm that was putting in the new telephone system. (I found the word—it was a Swedish company.)

XII

MUCHACHAS ARE IMPORTANT

AN AMERICAN scientist whom we met in Colombia expressed to us his admiration for the simple folk, a term he used to designate the poorer Colombians. His choice of words impressed us as a particularly fitting designation of the unsophisticated people of the laboring class. Colombians sometimes call them Indians, which is not a very accurate term. A more proper description, I believe, is mestizos, a word indicating that their ancestry is a mixture of the Spanish conquerors who came to Colombia more than four centuries ago and the Chibcha and other Indians whom they found there. (There are, in parts of Colombia, small groups of Indians who are little changed from pre-Colombian times. But if one of these were suddenly to appear in a Bogotá market, for instance, he would probably create as great a panic as if a tiger were loose.)

The simple folk reminded us of the friendly fishing people along the gulf coast in our southern states. Among them are people as fine and loyal as any we have known. Our contact with them came principally through the servants in our home and Tom's laboratory helpers. These helpers were an important part of our Colombian life.

At the time we rented our house, Tom asked a Colombian friend how many muchachas we would need, and he suggested two, one for cooking and marketing, and another for laundry and cleaning. That seemed like a pretty high proportion of servants to us, but we relied upon our friend's judgment. There's a lot of womanpower expended in a Bogotá household, what with washing clothes by hand in cold water with bar soap, buying groceries every day—and bargaining for them at that—grinding corn at home, carrying water to the bathroom when the plumbing takes out on you, and cooking without a can opener.

Our first household helper was Susana, whom we employed upon the recommendation of a Colombian friend in whose home she had worked. Never did a helper arrive at a more opportune moment.

We had been living in our house for five days. Our move had been complicated by a taxi strike and Tom's getting an ear infec-

tion. Because of the taxi strike, I moved our belongings in a horse-drawn buggy. I sat back in the outmoded "taxi" and enjoyed the experience thoroughly—until the driver stopped half-way there and told me the fare agreed upon wasn't enough and that he'd have to have a peso more for the trip. There wasn't much money involved and I shouldn't have been upset, but as I paid the fare I boiled inwardly against the petty injustice that I didn't have Spanish or experience enough to cope with.

Tom's ear infection necessitated a hurried trip to a specialist the day of our move—that trip was made by taxi, the strike having suddenly been settled a few hours after my buggy ride. The physician was reassuring and though the condition caused discomfort for a week or so it cleared up without complications.

Getting settled was one round of trouble: the fire didn't want to burn, though I babied it, fussed at it, and reasoned with it; the hot-water faucets wouldn't work; and the kitchen was overrun with cockroaches. That was the background for Susana. I guess it's no wonder she looked to my smoke-filled eyes like a little angel. A chunky, dark, practical angel, to be sure, who knew how to manage the stove, clean the kitchen, do the marketing, and cook.

Susana and I agreed on salary—we had asked our friend the usual rate. I showed her her room, she put on an apron and began work. By the following morning, we could note the difference. She got up at five and started the fire, got the water hot for Tom to shave with, and prepared us a tasty breakfast.

Added to her other qualities, Susana could go to market and buy five pesos' worth of fruits and vegetables and know exactly what each one cost. (I counted forty-five separate items in the basket she brought home the first week.) At first she had trouble understanding our Spanish, but she got used to even that. Occasionally I absent-mindedly said something to her in English, and this she thought was very funny.

Two weeks after Susana began working for us, she told us about Beatriz, with whom she had worked. We decided to take Beatriz on Susana's recommendation.

These two girls lived in our home and worked for us until just before we left Bogotá. I learned my "kitchen Spanish" from them; I grew very fond of them as we became better acquainted; and they made our stay more pleasant. They were sometimes as much

of a worry as two high school girls, since they were not very mature emotionally. Our worry was mutual, for they were always concerned about my unconventional behavior. Susana, especially, was worried for fear the neighbors would see me doing some work. Tom used to tell me that Susana was having a hard time making a lady of me!

Our two muchachas had many counterparts in the city. They had no other home than the place where they worked and no possessions other than the clothing and bedding which they packed into their paper-covered wooden trunks and moved from one job to another. The majority of them are unmarried, and they range in age from children of five to old ladies. A number of years ago, a muchacha often worked for one family all of her life; now they are inclined to change jobs frequently. They have little responsibility, but their employers have a great deal. Under Colombia's recent social legislation, the employer stands to spend a great deal of money if a girl gets ill while working for him; if the servant dies in his service, he is liable for funeral expenses. The girls are paid a small salary, and the employer furnishes a room, meals, and work-aprons. If muchachas do their work moderately well, they do not need to be concerned over having employment. However, only a few of them have a chance of bettering their lot.

I do not think that muchachas are unhappy. Some are treated badly; others are treated well. Many earn the affection and trust of their employers. Like other unsophisticated people, they get a great deal of pleasure out of small things.

But I was talking about Susana. I don't think she was a typical muchacha. I'm not sure I know what a typical muchacha is. Most of them are brunettes, but there are blondes and even redheads. There are short and fat muchachas, young and old muchachas, tall and thin muchachas, pretty and homely muchachas. Susana was just Susana.

Susana was twenty-seven when she began working for us. She was born on a farm some fifteen miles from the capital. She attended school until her mother's death, when she was nine. (Some eight years later a Colombian woman for whom she worked observed that Susana had forgotten how to read and taught her again.)

"How did you happen to leave Chipaque and come to Bogotá,

Susana?" Tom asked one evening as we were sitting around the kitchen table after dinner.

"My papá brought me to Bogotá when I was fifteen, doctor, to work in an insane asylum. Several muchachas from Chipaque had gone to work in the asylum, under the supervision of the Sisters. I had never been away from home before, and my papá thought that the Sisters would look after me and teach me how to work."

"And did you like it in the asylum, Susana?" I asked.

"I had to work hard, señora, but I didn't mind. The Sisters were strict, but they were kind to us. Each girl was told exactly what her duties were and shown how she was to do her work. I learned to clean first. Later I learned to wash and iron, and still later I worked in the kitchen.

"All of the muchachas slept in a large dormitory, and we had recreation rooms where we could play games. Once in a while, on a Sunday or holiday, some of the Sisters took a group of us on an excursion. One time I went with them to see the Falls of Tequendama, and another group visited the salt mines at Zipaquirá."

"How long did you work for the Sisters, Susana?" Beatriz asked.

"I was there for several years. Then I left the asylum to take a job with a family in Bogotá. I could earn more money there, and my papá thought it was all right for me to leave the Sisters, since I was older."

A few months before we left, Susana told me that she planned to be married when we returned to the States. Our return was postponed so much that she was married a month before we left, early one Sunday morning in the church of San Diego. She and her new husband went by bus to Chipaque to spend their honeymoon at the rather crowded home of Susana's brother. Then Susana and her husband returned to Bogotá to start housekeeping in their newly-rented quarters: one room, with cooking privileges in a kitchen shared by several families.

As to physical traits, Susana was four feet ten inches tall and rather heavy. She had dark brown, slightly curly hair, brown eyes, and a light brunette complexion. She was strong, had good health, and was not inclined to complain about slight illnesses.

If there is such a thing as a born cook, Susana was such. She liked to cook and she did it well. She was exceedingly practical. If there was no lard for sale, she bought fat and rendered her

own. When she needed grated coconut, she drained out the milk and then heated the coconut in the oven so that the meat readily came loose from the shell. She cooked rice—and I guess she had cooked tons of it—with a little onion, tomato, and bacon grease added to the water; it never seemed to be any trouble, and yet it was good.

Though the girls were unrelated, we used to refer to Beatriz as Susana's little sister. I think that started when they had on identical aprons. They didn't look alike, and their temperaments were quite different, but they might have been sisters if you judged by their affectionate regard for each other, the fun they had—and their occasional spats!

Beatriz was eighteen when she came for her interview. At that time she wore her dark straight hair in two long braids. (She later had it cut and got a *permanente.*) Beatriz was even shorter than Susana, only four feet seven inches tall, and of a rather chunky build. Her complexion was darker than Susana's, and she had very black eyes, red lips, and rosy cheeks.

Beatriz had always lived in Bogotá. Her only relative was her mother's sister, a tiny little woman in her fifties who worked as a servant. Beatriz had had some five years of schooling and could read and write fairly well. She learned new words readily and had picked up twenty or thirty English words before we left. Beatriz was inclined to be moody, and while one day I would hear her singing as she swept, on another she would be down in the dumps.

I sent Beatriz job-hunting several months before our departure, so that she would have time to be a bit more "choosy." She got a job in a bakery. The first week, she thought it was wonderful. After that, she began to realize that the bigger salary did not amount to much when she had to pay for her room and meals out of it. After less than a month she again took a job in a home, this time with other foreigners. She had changed to still another job before we left.

Beatriz had perfect teeth, a clear complexion, and in general a healthy appearance, but she was always going to a doctor and taking some medicine for her liver, her kidneys, or some other organ. While she was working for us, she developed a genuine ailment—appendicitis. And before she had fully recovered from her operation, she got roseola! The last time I saw her, she told

me that the doctor said that she had thyroid trouble. Perhaps that, in part, explained her moods. Goiter is quite prevalent in Colombia.

Beatriz was impetuous, and this trait often got her into trouble. However, she never took her troubles very seriously. I bought some seeds and decided to try a little gardening in our limited space in the back patio. Finally a few young plants came up. The rooster which Susana bought each market day was kept in the garage until Sunday, when he was killed. Beatriz felt sorry for him cooped up in that cold garage, so she let him out into the patio. The rooster than proceeded to eat the little plants. He left only the nasturtiums, and Beatriz said that she guessed he wasn't hungry when he got to them. She was very contrite—for a few minutes.

Susana was the expert on food, but Beatriz was our source of general information. She was observant, and she had a quick and retentive mind. I'd tell her, for instance, "Beatriz, today I saw a public school named 'República del Perú.'"

"Oh, yes, señora, many of the schools are named for other republics. There's the 'República de Guatemala,' for instance."

Beatriz always knew the hours the movies began and where the various theaters were located. And she had a whole collection of stories about things that had happened in Bogotá.

At the time Beatriz came, I told the girls that they could have a room apiece. However, they thought it would be more to their liking to share a room. One privilege I gave them was that of playing the radio, with the stipulation that it was not to be played loud. Latins seem naturally musical, and I think they appreciated that privilege more than anything else.

The girls got careless about some of their duties from time to time, and I tried in various ways to remind them without being too blunt. I worked out a list of duties and a schedule of days to take care of them, thinking that they might learn to check themselves. Heading Susana's list was to fight cockroaches. Beatriz was supposed to use insecticide on the blankets twice a week, but she would stop if I didn't complain about fleas occasionally. The fingerprints on the walls around the light switches and the cobwebs tended to accumulate, too, and I listed these on the schedule. The

girls put up with my schedules, but they were not very enthusiastic about them!

I thought perhaps I could help the muchachas by teaching them a little arithmetic. For several months we had a short class each day, making use of some workbooks which my sister had sent me. Beatriz became fairly good at multiplication, and both improved a great deal in addition and subtraction. But the main result was that I learned my Spanish numbers better.

I tried to get Susana to write out the list of purchases she made at the market each day, so that she would improve her writing. She was embarrassed because she did not write well and usually called on Beatriz to act as her secretary. When she did write something and I could read it, she was always surprised.

I softened my criticisms whenever possible by making jokes—a trick I picked up from my husband. We got to calling the pail of boiling soapy water in which Beatriz boiled the dishrags "dishrag soup." When I saw a dirty one still in use, I'd tell Susana I believed it was ready for the soup. Beatriz nicknamed the library the "police department" when I showed her the fingerprints that had collected there.

At the time Susana was planning on leaving for her honeymoon, she recommended that I hire her fifteen-year-old half-sister to help me while she was gone. Isabel had not been away from home before, and her wide-eyed wonder was amusing to behold.

Isabel couldn't understand us. She was so aghast when we started to say something that she would say, "Señor?" before we got it completed. We had a little trouble understanding her, too, and she got excited and all but shouted. Many people not used to talking with a foreigner tend to talk too loudly, as though the person were deaf, which makes understanding even harder.

Susana had no doubt told Isabel that she shouldn't ask too many questions, but Isabel's curiosity got the better of her.

"In this United States, señora, do all the people talk as you do?"

"Yes, Isabel, they all speak English." (I wasn't up to a detailed explanation about Pennsylvania Dutch and Louisiana French.)

"Even the children speak English, señora?"

"Yes, Isabel, even the children."

Isabel thought that over a while. "And are all Americans tall, like the mister and the señora?"

"No, Isabel, some of them are shorter than we are and some of them are taller."

We discovered that Isabel didn't know how to tell time. I started teaching her, but pretty soon I turned the task over to Tom. She learned in less than a week.

Tom and I took Isabel to see her first movie. It was "Arsenic and Old Lace" in English, so she probably got a peculiar idea about movies!

The Sunday morning of Susana's wedding, we decided to go up on Monserrate, one of the high mountains overlooking Bogotá. We had taken Isabel with us to the wedding and took her along to Monserrate. I tried to point out to her from the mountain the section of Bogotá in which we lived. I picked out landmarks she knew to make it easier for her—and for me. "The broad straight street yonder is Calle 57, Isabel," I said. "Can you see it?"

"Si, señora," she replied.

"And can you see the spire of that church? That is the Iglesia de Chapinero."

"Si, señora," she said.

"That section just north of Calle 57, Isabel, and west of the Iglesia de Chapinero, is where we live."

Isabel looked surprised. "I didn't know that we could see the United States from here, señora."

During two weeks just before we left Bogotá, I did the marketing, the cooking, cleaned the house, and washed out by hand all of the clothes. I was glad to find I could live in Bogotá without servants if I had to do it, but it was a full-time job.

Another household helper was a gardener, named Faustino López. He came each month to cut our small patch of grass with shears and to tidy up the flowers. I let Susana boss him, though I used to see him each time and pass on the work when he had finished.

My own efforts at gardening were rather discouraging. I planted vegetable and flower seeds in a wooden box in the back patio. A half hour later, the most severe aguacero I had seen up to that time set in. The hail came down so fast that the girls had to unplug the drains in the patios with brooms to keep the water from coming into the house. (Susana and Beatriz tried to skate on the hail, in imitation of Sonja Henie, and Susana wanted to

know if people didn't sometimes fall down when they tried to skate. I assured her that they did.)

Evidently the hail did no harm to the seeds, however, for they sprouted after some days. I had too much competition, though, from the insects and birds. Only the nasturtiums survived. The package said that they were the bunch variety, but before they stopped growing they were fifteen feet high. The vines which grew fastest were those nearest the chimney, so we decided that they liked the heat, too.

The favored method of getting a new stand of grass was pretty time-consuming. An American gardener usually plants grass seed or has a plot sodded. A Bogotá gardener first clears all of the grass off a plot. (If it has been growing for some time, large areas can be removed in one piece—a solid, spongy carpet of grass.) Then, his space cleared off, the gardener selects small grass plants and transplants them, one about every four inches. After some weeks, the plot is again covered with grass.

This method of planting grass attracted the notice of Mr. Henry A. Wallace, then Vice-President of the United States and Chairman of the Board of Economic Warfare, who was in South America on a trip related to cinchona and other matters. Mr. Wallace visited the National Institute of Health and was in Tom's laboratory for an hour or so. Before he left the Institute grounds, he noticed one of the employees setting out grass and stopped to inquire about it.

The muchachas sometimes employed a helper to carry in dirt for them—a small boy whose name I never learned. (He wasn't a very highly-paid employee—they'd give him five centavos for his work.) He had charge of three sheep which he pastured on vacant lots near our house. I made friends with him when I took a picture of his twin lambs. The little boy had a ready grin and an open manner, and we liked him. Susana sometimes gave him cookies, but he never asked for anything except a drink of water. We called him "the little sheep boy." Then one Sunday morning while the muchachas were at Mass the boy came to the door with a basket of green onions which he told me were from his garden. I bought two bunches. After that the muchachas called him "the little onion boy." Susana was greatly amused at my buying onions—it just didn't fit in with her idea of what a lady was supposed to do!

OUTSIDE THE HOUSE

XIII

FIVE CENTAVO TRANSPORTATION

A TROLLEY clanked by and my American friend grinned and said, "Some day I'm going to ride that streetcar from 20 de Julio to Pensilvania."

"Why?" I asked.

"Just to see what it's like to go from a date to a state!"

Traveling by streetcar from the Twentieth of July to Pennsylvania would be a long and bumpy five-centavo trip, but in the course of it my observant friend would have plenty of time to study her surroundings as the car jerked to a noisy halt at nearly every corner. She would probably have an opportunity to buy lottery tickets from a raucous-voiced vendor who jumped on, rode a few blocks, and then jumped off. She would mingle with cultured people of moderate means and humble people who owned little more than the clothes they wore. And she would usually return home with a flea or two to run down and dispose of. I thought a trolley much more interesting than a taxi!

Bogotá may be compared to a stage. The back drop is formed by the mountains—Monserrate, Guadalupe, and their lesser companions—which rise steeply to the east. As is fitting in Colombia, a part of the back drop is a church, perched atop Monserrate. The stage on which the 400,000 Bogotanos act out their roles is the level sabana, which was once the bottom of a great inland lake. The vast amphitheater is enclosed by other mountains, seen in the distance around the horizon.

To enjoy most fully the daily drama that is life in Bogotá—or in any city, for that matter—you must be a part of the cast, not a mere spectator. You must walk through the streets, ride in trolleys and buses and taxis, and take the cable railway up to Monserrate.

Bogotá has more than its share of quaint street names, preserved on markers affixed to buildings in the downtown section. In years past, streets changed names almost every block. The same street might be "Royal Street" for several blocks, then become the "Street of the Republic," the "Street of the Gipsies," the "Street of the Butchers," and so on. This system of multiple street names must

have become increasingly confusing in the course of the city's four hundred years, and in recent times it has given way to a plan which is beautifully logical and simple. (I have not read about how the change took place, but I would be willing to guess that at the time the poets protested.)

Streets running north and south are designated *Carreras,* and those running east and west are called *Calles.* (These directions are only approximate, as very few of the streets are concerned with compass points, but instead follow the lines set up by the mountains east of the city—perhaps in keeping with a Spanish practice of surveying from a base line set up arbitrarily.) Street numbers are plainly marked, and house numbers likewise are clearly indicated. Each house number represents the distance in meters from the corner. For instance, a house located at 58-84 Carrera 19 is eighty-four meters north of Calle 58. This is sometimes useful in finding a house in the dark. You can step it off from the corner. The term *Avenida* is most often applied to a principal thoroughfare, such as Jiménez de Quesada, Caracas, or Chile.

The stranger in Bogotá is apt to find confusing the use of the letter *A* in connection with streets, for instance, Carrera 8A as distinguished from Carrera 8a. Carrera 8A is a street appearing between Carrera 8 and Carrera 9; Carrera 8a is just another way of writing Carrera 8, or Eighth Street.

Principal forms of public transportation are streetcars, buses, and taxis. Horse-drawn carriages are used little except in funeral processions.

The streetcar system is operated by the municipality. It is similar to streetcar lines in the States, though some features are particularly characteristic of Bogotá. The trolleys run along the curb, next to the sidewalk, rather than in the middle of the street. There are some freight streetcars, with no seats whatsoever, which carry a motley assortment of cargo and the people accompanying it. I have seen on these flatcar-like trolleys coffins, sacks of potatoes, furniture, and sewing machines. During rush hours, there are special streetcars for workmen. These charge only two centavos, and are loaded to the absolute limit.

For regular passenger service, there are several types of trolleys. First, there are the open streetcars, which are entered from the side at the end of each row of seats. Passengers are supposed

to enter from the curb, but they get on from the street, too, by climbing over or under the pole which is intended to bar their way. In rush hours, people crowd in front of the seated passengers and cling to both sides of the open cars.

The older closed streetcars have only one door, at the front, and are quite difficult to enter and leave when crowded, which is their usual state. (Since nearly everyone goes home for lunch, there are four rush hours each day.) I once saw the conductor solve the problem of how to return from the rear to the front of a one-door car without shoving through the crowd of passengers—he opened a back window, climbed out, walked to the front of the car, and got on!

The most modern cars are streamlined, have both front and middle doors, and operate much more smoothly than the older cars.

Once in a while a streetcar is decorated with a huge wreath of flowers hanging on the front or back light—a passenger is delivering the flowers and that is a good place to carry them.

The streetcars do not have fare boxes. A passenger enters the car without paying, and the *cobrador* comes along later to collect. He sometimes tries to collect twice. Before riding the streetcars and buses, you should learn to say, *"Ya pagué!"* ("I've already paid!") The conductor's method of asking for fares is to jingle in his hand the five-centavo pieces he has already collected. If he fails to give the passenger change at the time of collecting the fare, he usually comes back with it later, but the passenger does well to remember to ask for his change if he does not get it. Transfers are not issued. You pay fare on each car boarded.

During our stay in Bogotá, an attempt was made to speed streetcar service by omitting certain stops. Another innovation was the posting of NO SMOKING signs on closed cars—it was fairly successful.

I observed on streetcars and buses a practice that I couldn't explain. A passenger leaves. A standee takes over the seat, but instead of sitting down at once he (or she) stands in front of it for several seconds, usually until the car or bus starts. Then the standee sits down. At length I learned the reason. Many Bogotanos believe that it is unhealthy to occupy a seat that is still warm, and the delay is to permit the seat to cool off.

While the trolleys are not vastly different from those elsewhere,

the buses have idiosyncrasies that set them apart. The difficulties besetting the chauffeurs fall into three classes: the equipment, the streets, and the passengers.

The buses are all old. It is rare to find any two alike, as they are thrown together locally, using a truck chassis. Many of them are built so low that even short people cannot stand erect in them. Their radiators leak, their spark plugs miss, their tires are patched with nuts and bolts, their springs are broken, water leaks in around the canvas flaps which are let down over the glassless windows when it rains, their upholstery is worn, they have sharp metal edges to tear the clothing of the unwary traveler, they are crawling with fleas, and the seats are close together, straight and uncomfortable.

Some of the drivers own the buses which they operate, others merely drive them for the owner. One day I saw a bus running along, fully loaded, with a sign on the windshield reading, "*SE VENDE ESTE BUS*" ("THIS BUS FOR SALE"). The buses are managed by an association composed, I suppose, of the owners. An attempt is made to have buses operate on schedule. At the end of each run, there is a checker who makes note of arrival and departure time. Checkers are stationed at two or three points along the run as well.

We lived near the end of a bus line, and we boarded the bus right by the small house which protected the checker from the rain. That house looked to be about three feet square. Susana declared that one rainy day ten people got in it. I "pulled her hair" (teased her) about this, but she wouldn't back down on her claim. I presume they were regular bus passengers and therefore somewhat compressible.

In spite of the shortcomings of their machines, bus drivers are almost invariably good-natured. Each chauffeur has a helper, who is usually a boy of from ten to eighteen years of age. Chauffeur and helper together are equal to nearly any emergency. If the radiator leaks badly, a can for filling it is carried in the bus. One day I noticed that the chauffeur was deviating from his regular route by two blocks. He stopped near a fountain in a small park. The helper jumped out, filled a can with water, emptied it into the radiator, jumped in, and away we went.

Almost standard equipment on a bus is an alarm clock fastened

somewhere near the steering wheel—they are cheaper than wrist watches. On the dashboard or above it is a picture of the Christ Child or of the Virgin, and perhaps a small votive lamp, lighted from the battery. Sometimes a small vase or can with real or artificial flowers appears by the picture.

The second difficulty, the streets, the chauffeurs usually accept without complaint. In the residential sections, streets are wide. But the downtown streets were built before the days of autos, and many of them are so narrow that buses have to ride partly on the sidewalk to pass anything as big as a push-cart. It is not uncommon for a bus to climb the curb in order to turn a corner, and some of the longer buses have to back up to make it. All over the city are open manholes. (I suppose someone stole the iron covers to sell them for scrap iron.) And buses have to compete not only with people who use the streets as sidewalks, but with cars, wagons, carts, and livestock—burros, horses, cows, sheep, and oxen. The city has no stock law.

The bus driver's troubles would be fewer if he could only run empty, but he has to pick up passengers. The chief contact-man with passengers is the chauffeur's helper. The *ayudante* wears a faded navy blue smock, a cap with a number on it, short pants, and anklets. (Lanky teen-age boys dressed in shorts ending just above the knees are a common sight.) The ayudante has to be small to travel back through the bus, collecting fares from the passengers. And he has to be tough!

The ayudante assists people in putting on and taking off packages and baskets, and he lends a helping hand to old people and children. He must also keep people from getting aboard after the bus has a load. Since there is no front door, this is sometimes a strenuous job. Part of his duty is to collect extra fare for large baskets and other cargo, and to direct where they shall be carried. Often empty baskets are hooked over the headlights or they are stacked on the floor near the front entrance. Some of the vehicles have a space in the back for cargo—these are known as "mixed" buses.

People transport many things by bus, but there are limits. I recall seeing one day an old woman who had two trunks, a mattress, and other household goods lined up on the sidewalk at the bus stop. She wanted the driver to load her and her possessions

on the bus. He told her that he would have to charge five pesos, which of course was his way of saying no. He laughed about it all the rest of the trip.

The chauffeur and his helper are accommodating. They wait for anyone they see coming, even a block away, and make three stops in one block to pick up passengers. Sometimes they accede to an unusual request, for instance, that of two small boys who shouted up to the driver, "*Dos por cinco?*" The driver agreed to take the two for five centavos, but said they'd have to sit on the back seat.

One of the duties of the helper is to see that all seats are filled. The last seat in the bus runs the width of the vehicle, and this seat is supposed to hold five people, regardless of their size. Frequently a passenger refuses to squeeze into the small space which the helper points out, preferring to stand. The place just to the left of the driver is out-of-bounds for women—I believe the idea is that the driver's attention might be distracted.

Another annoyance of bus travel that has to be charged against the passengers is fringe. Colombian blankets are fringed, tablecloths are fringed, towels are fringed, and shawls are fringed. A passenger seated in a bus next to the aisle is just at the right level to be tickled on the face by the long black fringe of some muchacha's shawl.

In spite of their discomforts, I often rode the buses because they made better time than the streetcars and brought me nearer our house. One day as I was coming home from downtown, the bus stopped at Las Nieves market to take on a señora who was accompanied by her friend and her muchacha. The helper assisted the muchacha in putting a sack of produce on board. When the boy asked for the fares, the señora gave him a twenty-centavo piece, to pay for herself, her friend, her muchacha, and for the sack. The helper said it would be twenty-five centavos, "The sack is ten; we are at war!" I didn't know what relation the war had to charging ten instead of five centavos, except that prices had risen all over Colombia by that time, and the helper had read that the war was the cause. At the next stop, the ayudante helped a muchacha put two big baskets aboard. Atop one of the baskets lay a rooster, which proceeded to crow at intervals along our bumpy journey. As I sat there holding tight to the arm of the seat to keep

from bouncing up and hitting my head on the roof of the bus, I philosophized that it was worth getting jolted and flea-bitten to get such a good cross section of Bogotá life.

After a number of such trips, I could appreciate a cartoon which appeared in one of the newspapers. The artist depicted a dilapidated, lopsided bus, bulging with people. The ayudante was pushing in a very fat woman, who carried a large basket. From inside the vehicle came a babel of phrases familiar to bus passengers: "Let's go; it's eight o'clock—Please hurry—Don't push—Don't sit on me—Pay or get off—I've already paid—Wait a minute, they're going to get off—Sit down, here comes a policeman—Take the chicken off me!"

Bogotá taxis are quite comparable to U. S. taxis. They are equipped with meters, and the chauffeur usually hands the passenger a stamped ticket indicating the fare. We appreciated not having to bargain with drivers. Taxi fare was reasonable and service was quite dependable. By the end of our stay, the tire shortage was so acute that it had become increasingly difficult to get taxis. The companies stopped sending out cabs in response to telephone calls, and we had to hail a taxi on the street or go to a stand.

Taxi drivers—and drivers of private cars—do one thing that makes it hard on pedestrians: they sometimes run at night without lights in order to save their batteries. Bus drivers aren't guilty of this practice—buses don't run at night.

The most unique transportation in Bogotá is the cable railway, the funicular, which carries people to the church atop Monserrate. If you are very energetic, you may walk up the mountain to the church, following the winding road which passes the Quinta de Bolívar. I'd recommend the funicular.

The funicular consists of two cars joined by a two-inch cable which passes over an energized pulley at the top. One car starts up and the other starts down at the same time, so that the pull of the downward-bound car helps lift the upward-bound car. Seven and one-half minutes later, their positions are reversed and the passengers have completed their journey. At the top of the railway, the mountain is less steep, and the 500-foot walk from the upper station to the church is not a hard climb.

A tablet in the lower station of the funicular gives data about the railway: It was put into operation in 1929, having been con-

structed by a Swiss engineer and financed by Colombian capital. The altitude at the lower station is 2,695 meters and the altitude at the upper station is 3,152 meters, a difference of about one-third of a mile. The length of the track is 818 meters, a little more than one-half mile. The average grade is 70 per cent, and the maximum grade is 80.5 per cent. That means that the cars are tilted at an angle of 53.6° at the steepest part of the tracks.

The funicular serves to carry throngs of worshipers to the church. On Sundays and holidays Monserrate is crowded with people, but otherwise its only inhabitants are a handful of very poor people.

I had not been up on Monserrate until a month before we returned to the States. To tell the truth, I wasn't very anxious to make the trip. I had frequently watched the cable cars making their steep journey, and I was always expecting the cable to break and send the cars plunging down into the city. I made the trip only because I was afraid I'd miss something if I didn't.

We greatly admired the beautiful stations of the cross along the road from the funicular station to the church. The church itself was disappointing at close view, perhaps because it seemed so impressive when we had looked up at it from the city.

We must have been near the hangout of Papá Fidel, the legendary bootlegger. Making of aguardiente has since colonial times been a Government monopoly, a source of revenue. Papá runs competition to the Government, and he is said to operate "the other side of Monserrate."

Before we came down the mountain, we walked a short distance beyond the church to look down on Bogotá, spread out at the foot of the mountains. A haze lay over the city, but through it we could see toward the west the volcanic peaks of El Ruiz, Tolima, and Santa Isabel—more than a hundred miles distant, long dead and now shrouded with mantles of eternal snow.

Looking toward the east, we saw that it was the same old Colombian story—you go to the trouble to get to the top of one mountain only to see other and higher mountains just beyond.

XIV

MOVIES AND MUSEUMS

BEATRIZ and I had a standing joke about Jorge Negrete, the Mexican movie star whom we both admired. The day following her attendance at the latest Jorge Negrete movie, I'd ask, *"Ganó a la muchacha,* Beatriz?" ("Did he get the girl?")

"Si, señora," she'd reply, "this movie had a happy ending." Or, "No, señora, his sweetheart died before they were married."

Beatriz liked movies, whether they were happy or sad, in English, French, or Spanish, in technicolor or in black and white. Susana liked movies, too, but Beatriz was the most ardent movie fan in our household. She never missed anything. She knew what a dial phone looked like, although there were none as yet in Bogotá; she also knew skyscrapers and ice from the movies. She probably thought all Americans rich, immoral, and somewhat crazy. She was sure that all Mexican men wore beautiful big sombreros, and that life was one round of fiestas in that country which Colombians admire so much.

Movies are a popular form of diversion in Bogotá. One or two pictures have been produced in Colombia, but most of those shown are from the States, Mexico, or Argentina. Shortly before we returned, some of the American-made movies were recorded in Spanish; prior to that, they were simply U. S. movies with Spanish subtitles. The change-over resulted in one startling experience for us. The actors in the movie were speaking Spanish; suddenly they began speaking English — I suppose a reel changed. Our Colombian friends expressed varied reactions to the Spanish soundtracks. Some of them were critical of the fact that the words they heard did not match the lip-movements of the players. Others were enthusiastic about the innovation. We were delighted to hear Gary Cooper say a few words in Spanish in a movie short advertising the change-over—he spoke Spanish just like we did! Mexican movies draw the largest crowds, especially the films starring such famous actors as Jorge Negrete, Tito Guizar, or Cantinflas.

Bogotanos are more expressive of their feelings than are we,

and they often applaud the hero and hiss the villain. They also call for the repetition of a particularly good part, and it is not uncommon for the movie to be stopped and a song to be repeated. This doesn't interfere with their schedule, as movies are not continuous, and theaters are emptied following each performance.

Ads appearing in the newspapers indicate the number of performances daily—usually three or four. They also indicate whether the film is approved for adults only, or for children as well. I never learned who censored the movies. The newspaper listings were a bit erratic: the same movie one week would be listed as approved for adults only, and the next week it would be approved for all—with no change made in the picture.

Smoking is permitted in theaters and has never proved a fire hazard. In that altitude, a dropped cigarette usually just goes out.

When I first reached Bogotá, there was a *popular* one night a week—a movie showing at a low admission price. Like other prices, theater admissions went up until our muchachas could not see so many as formerly. The popular was usually an old movie, but the girls preferred seeing again a movie which they liked very much rather than a new one they weren't sure about. Beatriz had seen one Mexican picture five times!

Although I once heard of someone's learning English by attending American movies, I would not recommend this method. Movies especially prepared for teaching a foreign language should be excellent, but the average film designed solely for entertainment may contain a confusing collection of slang and double talk. After a few months in Bogotá, I could understand Spanish conversation without difficulty, but I never learned to understand Spanish movies. The one exception was a Mexican version of "Pinocchio." Since this film was made for children, I classed myself as a linguistic ten-year-old.

When a movie is over, many of the moviegoers put handkerchiefs over their mouths as they approach the exit. A muchacha may simply pull her black shawl up over her nose. Outside air is believed to be unhealthy—particularly night air. The air is filtered somewhat and its coldness is tempered by the handkerchief or shawl.

Radio ranks high as popular entertainment in Colombia. Radio stations offer a number of variety programs, and you can hear

popular, classical, or semi-classical music. Much of the music is furnished by records, and listening for any length of time will result in your hearing songs in Spanish, English, and French.

Radio advertising is quite comparable to its American cousin, except that Colombian advertising is spoken incredibly fast. I could never keep up with the announcers when they were proclaiming the merits of some product. I gained the impression that the announcer was talking breathlessly fast in order to squeeze the last possible word into a given time. I never saw a listing of programs in any of the daily papers, though occasionally there was an advertisement of some commercial program.

American "culture" in the form of the funnies reached Bogotá some time ago. "Mutt and Jeff," "Bringing Up Father," "Tarzan," and others appeared daily. Probably due to wartime delays, the dates had gotten out of joint, so that "Mutt and Jeff" enjoyed Christmas in April. My favorite comic strip was "Tío Barbas." Since Uncle Whiskers never said anything, I could see the point without translating.

Though the cartoons were the same, the "balloons" were translated and the titles and names of characters were often changed. Ramona to me was a beautiful Indian girl from Helen Hunt Jackson's novel—prior to reading "Bringing Up Father" in Bogotá. Jiggs had become Pacho; well and good. But Maggie had become Ramona!

Selecciones, the Spanish edition of the *Readers' Digest,* has a wide sale. It furnishes readable, entertaining, and informative material in a cheap and convenient form. It should deserve some recognition, too, for furnishing a better picture of American life than is supplied by the comic strips and the movies.

Bogotá newspapers carry much world news, brought to them by the facilities of the wire services. I am told that their news comes through in English and that getting out each paper involves a great deal of translating. Bogotanos are much interested in what goes on elsewhere, particularly in the United States.

Colombian newspapers differ from ours in some respects. Ads and death notices appear on the front page, and doctors and lawyers sometimes advertise. Some ads are particularly Colombian—children playing bullfight, and people wearing ruanas. An ad offering 150 pesos for the return of a lost tire—and no questions asked—

was a sign of the times. Weddings are written up as though each one was going to be the last reported, and there was no need to save any laudatory phrases for the next one. Cartoonists display much skill: they see humor in a comparison of some of the city streets with those of much-bombed Warsaw, they depict citizens swimming around in the streets following a cloudburst, and they poke a bit of fun at politicians.

Among the popular sports are football, horse racing, wrestling, boxing, bullfighting, and cockfighting.

Futbol means soccer, and after I witnessed a game I decided it was no sport for sissies. Futbol is played by school teams and also by teams made up of men who work for the same company. Players coming from other parts ordinarily find themselves cold and short of breath. Not so the team from La Paz, Bolivia—the story goes. La Paz rises more than two miles into the air, and the Bolivian boys thought the Bogotá climate just too warm for comfort. They slept in the open.

Crowds pack the Hipódromo each Sunday afternoon for horse racing. The Hipódromo was not far from our house, and each day race horses passed our house in exercise walks. Apparently American race track terms have invaded in full force, for one cannot read about races without encountering *foto finish, doping,* and so on.

Wrestling matches attracted considerable interest among the boys who worked at the Institute where Tom's laboratory was located. Tom arrived at the gate one morning to find the men on duty there very disconsolate: a little dog called "Centavito" had eaten up the sports section of the morning paper, and the boys had not been able to find out about the wrestling match of the preceding night. Incidentally, wrestling is called *lucha libre* (free fight), and boxing is translated as *boxeo* and a boxer is a *boxeador.*

The traditionally Spanish sport, of course, is bullfighting. I did not expect to enjoy *corridas,* but I thought I should attend once. Bullfights are ordinarily held on Sunday afternoons, and only during a few months of each year. Tom had seen a bullfight in Mexico and one in Colombia, and he didn't want to see another. American friends of ours were going and were kind enough to offer to relieve him of the necessity of taking me.

Red and yellow flags were flying atop the Circo, the amphi-

theater where the corridas are held. In front of the building little boys were selling, at two for five centavos, cushions made of manila paper, filled with wood shavings and waste paper. We bought some and they proved quite useful, as the seats were wet from a morning rain. (The boys collected the cushions afterwards and resold them.) Near us was the box reserved for the President, but the President was not in attendance that afternoon.

Vendors of candy mints, chocolate bars, cracklings, popsicles, and soda water cried out their wares. The soft-drink, liquor, and cigarette companies seemed to have most of the ads appearing on the walls above the seats. Just before the affair started, four men came into the ring carrying a big sign attached to sticks, advertising a shaving cream that was recommended for washing silk stockings. They had the sign reversed, so that it had to be read backwards, but I don't suppose that mattered to anyone but the firm that paid for the ad.

Pretty soon there appeared in the seats beside us four little *chinos* (street waifs). They didn't bother us except that one lad asked me the time about every twenty minutes. Each time he went through the whole proceeding, "Señora, will you do me the favor of telling me what hour it is?" I suspected him of liking to hear my foreign accent. Finally a man chased the chinos off to other places, and, as they didn't protest, I imagine our surmise that they didn't have tickets was right.

Tom had told me that I should wear something red to be a well-dressed spectator. Men wore red ties, women wore red dresses, red hats, and red blouses. Vendors were selling red carnations, and some of the more boisterous young men pinned four or five of the flowers on their hats. A few women wore lace mantillas and big combs, and several of the women in the reserved section, the first row, had colorfully embroidered Spanish shawls that they spread out over the railing.

Music by the police band signalled the appearance of the participants, the Benavides Brothers from Spain. The *matadores* (killers), *picadores* (prickers), *banderilleros* (dart stickers), and *capeadores* (cape players) were dressed in the traditional costumes of the bullring, resplendent with silk and gold braid. They wore pink rayon hose and black hats which reminded me of the headgear worn by Napoleon Bonaparte.

The matadores, the star performers, were the most ornately dressed and wore little pigtails on the back of their hair. After encircling the arena to the applause of the spectators, they threw their capes up to the señoritas in the reserved section. The señoritas spread the capes over the railing alongside the Spanish shawls.

There were six *toros* that Sunday afternoon, two for each of the matadores. The killing of each bull followed the same pattern. The bull ran into the ring through a special door, a colored dart already stuck in his back. The capeadores dragged capes of red and yellow before the bull to get him to charge. After this, two picadores mounted on padded horses wounded the bull in his neck muscles with long pikes. Then two banderilleros put three or four darts covered with brightly colored ribbons in the bull's neck. Some of these darts had powder in them and exploded to frighten the animal.

The matador next took over for the final act. His equipment was a long sword and a *muleta* (a red cloth draped around a stick). He waved the muleta to infuriate the bull. After this had gone on for a while, the matador stuck his sword between the shoulder blades of the bull. Then he and the others kept moving their flags so that the bull turned around in circles until he dropped. Sometimes the sword had to be used a second time, and sometimes the matador had to use a special short sword and kill with a thrust behind the head.

After the bull had dropped to the ground, an attendant plunged a knife behind the head to finish the job, and gaily-bedecked horses with bells on their harness dragged out the bull (which would be butchered and sold for meat). When the applause was great, one or both ears were cut off the bull and presented to the matador. Then the matador passed around, bowing to the crowd, and there were thrown down to him flowers, hats, coats, overcoats, and other items of wearing apparel. (Incidentally, the clothing was thrown back.)

The skill of the matador, I am told, is determined by how narrowly he misses the animal's charge. He is judged also by the execution of certain traditional stances, for instance, the *Verónica,* which consists of awaiting the bull's charge with the cape held in his outstretched arms.

A man who sat near me reminded me of an ardent baseball fan. He yelled instructions at the participants and was vociferous in shouting his approval or disapproval. His favorite phrases to indicate disapproval were, *"Este toro no sirve!"* ("That bull won't do!") and *"Es que este muchacho no sabe torear!"* ("That boy doesn't know how to bullfight!") He was just as enthusiastic in praising what he considered good work.

The animals used in the bullring are bred for this purpose. The most desirable types are thin and wiry and bad tempered—no Ferdinands wanted.

It should not be assumed that all Latins like bullfights or that the sport can be seen in any Spanish-American country. In Costa Rica, for instance, it is outlawed.

Another sport fairly popular is cockfighting, but I never witnessed it. Although many women go to bullfights, I was told that few attend cockfights. Occasionally I saw a fighting cock tethered outside some small store.

In addition to these diversions, there are more sophisticated types of entertainment: polo, golf, night clubs, and, occasionally, opera performances. In the National Library you may sit in a comfortable lounge and listen to concerts of classical music, played from recordings. This idea of a "listening-room" impresses me as worthy of copying.

Something out of the ordinary was an exceedingly entertaining performance of *H. M. S. Pinafore,* put on by a group of British and Canadian residents.

Días de fiesta should probably be classed under the heading of diversion, too, since they result in holidays from work. Many of them are church holidays; others commemorate dates important in the history of the country. There are a lot of them! No calendar that I ever saw showed a complete list of Colombian holidays, but I counted sixteen. (Colombian calendars are just as apt to read from top to bottom as from left to right—a trick which confused me considerably.) We had to be careful not to get caught without money when the bank was closed because of a holiday.

When a holiday occurs on Friday or on Tuesday, the Saturday following it or the Monday preceding it may be declared non-working days, too. When this happens, the middle day of vacation

is a *puente* (bridge), so called because it links the two free days to make a three-day vacation.

I was introduced to my first holiday when I had been in Bogotá only a week. It was the anniversary of the Battle of Boyacá, which was the decisive battle of the revolution against Spain. Tom was working and had asked me to come out to the laboratory. I set out from downtown to find flags flying everywhere, the army being reviewed on the spot where I was supposed to catch my trolley, and all trolleys running in the opposite direction from where I wanted to go. I hadn't anticipated this, so I wasn't prepared to query the conductor. I managed to ask, *"Va a cincuenta y siete?"* ("Are you going to Fifty-seventh?") He indicated that he was, so I got on.

There are two Independence Days. One celebrates the declaration of independence in Bogotá; the other, the declaration of independence in Cartagena. Columbus Day is also a holiday. On these occasions, the flag is displayed from many offices and homes, and it soon became as familiar to us as the Stars and Stripes. The flag is of three horizontal stripes in gold, blue, and red, the gold being at the top and equal in width to the other two. The gold, it is said, is symbolic of the New World; the red, of Spain; and the blue, of the ocean that separates them. I have read that the flag was carried first by Francisco de Miranda, when he came in 1806 from Venezuela to aid Colombians in their fight for freedom. It was later carried by Bolívar in his campaigns and became the flag of Gran Colombia, a federation of Colombia, Venezuela, and Ecuador.

On December 8, the feast day in honor of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary, another banner flies from many homes, displaying the white and blue colors associated with the Virgin. This flag is often a small white banner. The blue may be a stripe across the top or a bow of ribbon tying the white cloth. Some of the banners are of fine white lace, and many are adorned with pink roses.

Colombians celebrate Christmas somewhat differently from us. Such gifts as the children receive are said to come from the Child Jesus, rather than from Santa Claus. Christmas Eve is a gala and noisy occasion, celebrated by parties and fireworks. But Christmas Eve is a time of prayer, too, and attendance at Midnight Mass is

so large that many of the churches require that worshipers obtain passes in advance.

More than anything else, Christmas is characterized by the *pesebre,* or manger. In all of the churches and in many homes are mangers, some of them representing hours of painstaking work. We stopped one Christmas afternoon at a large church on Avenida Chile to see a beautiful manger which occupied all of the space in front of the central altar. In addition to the figures of the Holy Family, there were around the stable a snake, a deer, an owl, and tropical birds. Looking at this manger, my first thought was that it was odd that wild animals appeared in it. Then I realized that Colombians merely followed their ideas of what animals properly might be in a stable, whereas we follow ours.

Christmas trees are uncommon and Christmas cards are sent only to a limited extent—I suspect that they were introduced by Americans and Germans residing in the capital.

January 6, the Day of the Kings, is regarded by Colombians as more properly the time to present gifts, since it commemorates the visit to the Christ Child of the three kings, bearing gifts.

November 1, All Saints' Day, is the day on which Bogotanos make trips to the cemeteries to decorate with flowers the graves of their dead. The principal cemetery is reminiscent of those in New Orleans—burial is for the most part in vaults above the ground.

In the section of the cemetery reserved for those who cannot afford vaults, burial is in the ground. In this section, the graves of adults are marked with black crosses, and those of children, with white crosses. Though the mourners visiting these graves are of humble circumstances, they, too, bring flowers on All Saints' Day. Or perhaps on this day they place a cross above an unmarked grave.

Often we saw a sad little procession on its way to the cemetery, a tiny casket of rough, unpainted boards carried on the shoulders of the friends and relatives. Dressed in ruanas and shawls, the mourners walk behind the casket, too poor to hire a conveyance for the funeral.

Holy Week is characterized by religious processions. In Bogotá, religious statues are set on platforms bedecked with flowers and carried from the churches through the streets and back again to the churches. The streets are crowded with devout spectators.

Other holidays are observed in varying ways: religious holidays,

by church services and ceremonies; national holidays, by proclamations, speeches, and review of the army.

Vacation time in Colombia is usually in December and January, and between-term school holidays occur in those months.

Bogotá has many attractive parks. The Parque Nacional, the largest, has a well-made relief map of Colombia, a modernistic Children's Theater, and acres of grass, trees, and flowers. Adjoining this park is the Ciudad de Hierro, an amusement park with ferris wheel, merry-go-round, and scenic railway. In the Lago de Chapinero are similar attractions and also an artificial lake on which you may ride in rented boats.

In the Parque de Independencia, which adjoins the beautiful National Library, are two of the stone figures brought to Bogotá from San Agustín. Archeologists are still uncovering in the San Agustín region reminders of the Indians who once lived there: tombs containing skeletal material, pottery, and so on.

In addition to the larger parks, there are many small ones, with flowers that bloom all year round, benches to rest upon, and soft springy turf that is rarely marked DO NOT STEP ON THE GRASS. In all of the parks, on sunny days, there are children playing and adults sitting or lying in the sunshine.

Museums include the Casa Colonial, the Museo de Arqueolojía, the Quinta de Bolívar, and the Museo de Oro.

The Casa Colonial, a charming old house of Spanish colonial style, displays items of historical and artistic interest. The rooms of the two-story house are built around a patio—a patio where colorful flowers and a fountain add beauty. In the Casa Colonial are paintings by Gregorio Vásquez Arce y Ceballos, Colombia's most famous colonial painter. Among historical items are letters signed by the Virreys who ruled Colombia; wooden chests, with fascinating hand-made iron locks, formerly used in the mint to store coins; furniture, china, and other articles used in colonial times. The china piece of most interest to me was a vase which had a part in precipitating the war for independence. The story goes that a commissioner from the king, Antonio Villavicencio, was arriving in Bogotá. He was in sympathy with the creoles, the people of Spanish stock born in Colombia. A group of creoles

went to a Spanish merchant to borrow some things to be used at a banquet welcoming the commissioner, among them this vase. The Spanish merchant refused, making insulting remarks about the creoles. This led to a fight and precipitated rioting against the king's government in Colombia and later against the crown itself. Although the rioting lasted for several days, July 20, 1810, is regarded as the most important day and its anniversary is the Colombian "Fourth of July."

The Museo de Arqueolojía, in the National Library, contains a collection of articles used by pre-Colombian Indians. These were found a few years ago in two caves in the region of Los Santos, Cundinamarca. There are several mummies dating back more than four hundred years, most of them in a sitting position. At times cremation was practiced, and there were many funeral urns in the findings. Of the ceramics, there are vases, pitchers, and water jugs. Some of them are painted in red and yellow, and a number of them were originally decorated in gold. There is one Chibcha Indian jug which—to me—looks much like a "Toby Jug." There are, too, fragments of textiles, some with woven designs and some with printed designs, and a large number of the carved wooden and stone tools used in printing designs on cloth. In this collection there are no iron or other metal things; the hunting devices, dart throwers, are made of wood. For adornment, there are necklaces of shells, and others made of the teeth and bones of animals.

The Quinta de Bolívar is an estate along the road to Monserrate which once served as the home of Simón Bolívar. It is now preserved as a museum. I noticed a number of practical details about the house: water was supplied from a mountain stream; the walls were some three feet thick; the dining-room table would seat about forty persons; and the Liberator's bed was very short. The kitchen was evidently apart from the house, and is not on exhibit. The Liberator must have had a time getting out there in a carriage or on horseback, as it's quite a distance from the capitol building, and the road even now is none too good. But to a man who had blazed many trails across the Andes in leading five countries to freedom, it probably seemed like no trip at all.

There is an outdoor swimming pool near the house. Although the Liberator was very fond of swimming, it is said he used this pool rarely, because the water was so cold. There is, too, the

mirador typical of some of the older houses. In this instance, it is a three-story tower, one room to each story, and the top floor commands a view of the estate. The grounds of the Quinta boast geraniums several feet high, large trees, and vine-covered walks. On the walls of one room of the Quinta hang paintings of Bolívar and his contemporaries. This room also houses small boxes containing dirt from the various battlefields in Colombia where the Liberator fought.

Bolívar crowded so much activity into his forty-seven years that he rarely settled down at any one place. Perhaps that is why the Quinta does have a certain air about it—it was his home for a few of the less turbulent years.

The most noteworthy museum was during our stay in Colombia open to the public only at infrequent intervals. It is the Museo de Oro, housed in the Bank of the Republic. It is tremendously interesting, and our visit was made more enjoyable by the graciousness of Don Luis Barriga, who showed us the exhibits and answered our questions about them. This museum contains the largest collection of golden things of an archeological nature in the world. Practically all of the more than eight thousand articles were made for adornment by the Chibcha and Quimbaya Indians, who lived in the region now comprising the Departments of Cundinamarca, Boyacá, Caldas, and Valle.

In the collection are vases, tiny animals, necklaces, golden hairpins, fish hooks, and many other articles. There was not as yet sufficient room to exhibit them all, but those which were on display were artistically arranged against a dark velvet background, and we viewed them through the plate glass doors of cases affixed to the walls of a conference room at the Bank. Some of the articles are crudely made; others are beautifully designed. We visited the Museo after we had made our trip to the Lake of Guatavita, which I'll tell about later. As we observed the ornaments recovered from that lake, we thought again of its shimmering, mysterious waters.

You have only to see the display in the Bank to realize that the Spanish conquistadores must indeed have been dazzled to find such wealth among primitive people. The conquerors, however, had more interest in gold as bullion than as art, and thousands of pounds of intricately-designed ornaments were melted into bars and shipped to Spain.

XV

THE POLICE

UPON entering Colombia and upon leaving it, you have business with the *Policía Nacional, Sección de Extranjeros*—a section of the National Police charged with registration of aliens. Every few months there are permits to be renewed. This necessitates trips to the police office, purchase of tax stamps, and preparation of documents on the inevitable sealed paper. Like death and taxes, the police cannot be ignored. Failure to notify them of a changed address meant a ten peso fine, as American friends of ours learned the hard way. I cynically concluded that the function of the police was not to further national security, but to collect revenue.

Busy as Tom was, he took time to escort me on my first visit to the police. He was afraid my limited Spanish would not see me through the registration. We reached the building at 11:05, and found that hours were 9:00 to 11:00, 2:00 to 5:00. We returned later and filed my application for a cedula, and from then on Tom let me visit the police alone. I heard a rumor that the fellow to whom I made my application knew English well, but he gave no evidence of it. I was stumped by such questions as, *"Soltera?"* I would have answered no, for I knew it meant "old maid." It also means "maiden name."

No doubt my questioner was a kind husband and devoted father, but once behind his desk, he looked rather sinister. I let him know that I was married, a housewife, could read and write, and was born in the U. S. A. on a certain date. He deduced for himself how tall I was, that I had white skin, brown hair, brown eyes, no beard, a straight nose of a particular description, a medium mouth, and ears of certain angles and lobes. He wrote a while, then looked at me, and then wrote some more. He finished all that, said I could get the cedula mañana, and sent me to be fingerprinted. I had been fingerprinted before, but never with such thoroughness. I counted five sets.

I returned the next day for my cedula and presented a letter from the American Consulate requesting that I be granted a permit to take photographs and to travel in Colombia. I was again told

that the cedula would be ready mañana, but I got my permit to travel. On the following day I was given the cedula and the day after that a permit to take pictures. That made five trips to the police for that session. The steps in that building were worn until they were rounded out. A few months later, when the section of the National Police dealing with foreigners was moved to another building, I assumed that the reason for the move was that the stairs gave out altogether.

Upon the termination of my first six months in Bogotá, I called on the police to have my cedula renewed. It was quite a struggle, but I finally won. My activities included ten visits to the police on my part, two visits for me by Beatriz, one phone call, the expenditure of one peso for the cedula, the purchase of three tax stamps (worth twenty-five, forty, and fifty centavos each), one letter from me on sealed paper (costing twenty centavos a sheet), one letter from the Consulate, and one letter from Tom's office. Such experiences caused me to have a keen appreciation of the problems of a foreigner, particularly those of one Genevieve H. Bellis, presently an alien.

On two or three occasions I had to show my permit to take pictures. This document was written on nine-by-thirteen-inch paper, and I had to fold it several times to get it in my purse. By the time I had fished it out and unfolded it, the police were duly impressed. Unfortunately, the permit conveys only permission and does not improve the skill of the photographer. I took just as many "duds" with the official blessing of the Colombian Government as I had taken in the States where a permit is not required.

We saw in operation another division of the police when, only a few months before leaving Bogotá, we had a brand new experience—a burglary. The Cinchona Mission had rented a small house across the street from Tom's laboratory to serve as storage space for bark samples and as a laboratory office. Upon Tom's recommendation, a boy had been employed to sleep in the little house, which was called the Sample House. After six or seven months, the boy got another job and Tom's recommendation that a successor be hired was not acted upon.

In Bogotá it is regarded as unwise to leave houses unguarded. However, for a year all went well. During that time the work done in the Sample House had greatly increased and there were in use

two typewriters, a calculating machine, a laboratory balance, and other equipment.

One Sunday afternoon Tom and I stopped by the Sample House, expecting to do a little work there. The house was set back from the sidewalk some nine feet, and the space between sidewalk and house was a tile-floored patio, enclosed by a high brick wall built along the sidewalk. Tom unlocked the door in the brick wall and we entered the patio. We saw at once that something was wrong. The door to the house was open and the light inside turned on. Further inspection showed that the hasp holding the padlock to the front door had been pried off, the door leading to the small office (which closed with a Yale lock) had been jimmied, and the two filing cabinets had been forced open.

After I recovered a little from the stunned, sickish feeling I had, I picked up a paper and pencil and made a list of missing items as Tom called them off: two typewriters, a calculating machine, two numbering machines, an electric hot plate, a balance, a clock, Tom's brief case, and some smaller things. The place was rather a mess—boxes of bark samples had been opened and then thrown aside, drawers had been opened and ransacked, a box of microscopic slides of bark sections had been taken down and lay scattered over a table, of no further use.

Tom reported the burglary to his chief and the next day two members of the police force came out to investigate. One was a fingerprint expert; the other was a specialist in burglaries—he knew the mode of operation of various men and where they would be likely to dispose of things. The fingerprint man dusted furniture and woodwork to bring out prints and photographed many of them. Then he made fingerprint records of Sample House employees. He tactfully explained that this was for the purpose of eliminating them from consideration.

Tom had found an additional clue, a note lying just inside the patio door, scribbled in pencil on a leaf of paper torn from a small memo book. It indicated that more than one person had a part in the burglary, for it was a warning to work more quietly because someone was coming along the street.

In spite of the tension that morning, everyone laughed over another clue. When the police were almost through with their work, someone noticed a footprint on the leather seat of a chair—a man

had evidently stood on this chair to reach the high shelf where the brief case was. As the chair was taken to the patio for a better light in which to photograph it, Trujillo in his quiet way said he guessed they'd have to photograph the seat of his pants. He'd been sitting on that chair earlier in the morning! It was an interesting footprint, by the way, very broad and short.

The police appeared to be doing a thorough job, but Tom was afraid to be hopeful of recovering anything. However, in about ten days he was asked to come down and identify some property. The police had apprehended the two burglars, one of whom was known as Patón (Big-foot). They had recovered the typewriters, the calculators, and the balance. In a day or so the property was returned to the Cinchona Mission. Tom had to appear in court in connection with the case, but he never saw the burglars. We were told that they drew twelve-year sentences, based in part on a long record of burglaries.

We felt that the police had done excellent work in recovering the stolen property. We were a little amused at the newspaper account of the burglary, in which the value of the things stolen skyrocketed amazingly. That happens elsewhere than in Bogotá, though, I believe!

XVI

EL INSTITUTO NACIONAL DE HIGIENE SAMPER-MARTINEZ

THERE are in Bogotá a number of institutions which look toward the betterment of public health. The accomplishments of these institutions are little known to the general public. In Colombia, as in the States, public health work is little publicized. We learned of the work of the Instituto Nacional de Higiene Samper-Martínez (National Institute of Health Samper-Martínez) because Tom established his cinchona laboratory in one of the Instituto buildings.

The quarters of the Instituto are not pretentious, and the amount of money spent in its work is not great. But it produces fine scientific accomplishments. A casual visitor notices that the grass and flowers are perfectly kept and that the floors and windows are spotlessly clean. These are small indications that even among the custodial help there is pride in being a part of the organization.

The Instituto was founded as a private laboratory in 1917 by Dr. Bernardo Samper and Dr. Jorge Martínez, two young physicians whose purpose was the advancement of public health in their country. Later, the laboratory became the property of the Government of Colombia, but Dr. Samper was retained as its director. His work merits a more careful review than I am qualified to give it. A quiet, unassuming, kindly man, he has in his lifetime accomplished miracles. One of his first interests was rabies, which at the time of the founding of the Instituto was killing many Colombians every year. Dr. Samper began making rabies treatment about 1917, and today the treatment is available, free, to any person in need of it. (In co-operation with the Colombian Army, the treatment is flown to regions not otherwise accessible.) Early in this century, persons bitten by rabid animals were buried in the ground, up to their armpits, as a "treatment." Today no Colombian need die of rabies.

Under the direction of Dr. Andrés Soriano Lleras, treatment for diphtheria is produced at the Instituto, a treatment of vast importance to the health of Colombian children. Dr. Soriano is seeking to improve laboratory techniques, and toward that end he has

studied methods employed in public health laboratories in our country and in Canada. His most recent studies were sponsored by the Pan American Sanitary Bureau, a division of the Pan American Union.

The preparation of snake anti-venom is also under the direction of Dr. Soriano's department. (The snakes used in this work were several years ago moved from Bogotá to the little town of Mariquita. They were inactive in the cold climate and produced too little venom.)

The chemistry department of the Instituto is headed by Dr. Antonio María Barriga Villalba. Since Tom's laboratory was located in a room of that department, he often discussed chemical problems with Dr. Barriga. Though primarily a chemist, Dr. Barriga's scientific curiosity has led him into many related fields. His catholic interests make him an interesting conversationalist, particularly for a fellow chemist. We were able to translate into English for Dr. Barriga a study which he had made of the working of the heart at high altitudes. Dr. A. J. Carlson of the University of Chicago reviewed the paper and commented favorably on the work.

Dr. Barriga has supervision of the totaquina factory of the Instituto, which since 1936 has been making this anti-malarial product and distributing it in Colombia. (Totaquina—"all of the *quina*"—is a more-or-less crude extract of cinchona bark. It has been called "the poor man's quinine.") Malaria is a grave problem in the lowlands of Colombia. In some regions, the incidence of infection amounts to 100 per cent of the population. Totaquina thus provides a Colombian-produced remedy for a Colombian health problem.

Dr. Barriga divides his time between the Instituto and another government office—he is director of the mint in Bogotá. (When we visited the mint we found it a fascinating blend of the old and the new. As we entered the building, we noted above the door an inscription indicating that it was constructed during the reign of Virrey Solís, 1753-1760. Dr. Barriga showed us records dating back much earlier, bound ledgers in which are recorded in fine handwriting and old-style Spanish such routine matters as the daily output of the mint. And there are preserved as relics tools used in the days when coins were hammered out by hand. But only a

few yards from the office where we saw these reminders of long ago, workmen were assembling a huge made-in-America machine which would soon be turning out coins with clock-like efficiency.)

The work of the late Dr. Jorge Lleras Parra in producing smallpox vaccine is noteworthy. Smallpox, brought to South America by the Spaniards, wiped out entire populations. It is a still a threat to health. Shortly before 1900, Dr. Lleras began the production of smallpox vaccine, and since his death the work has been carried on by Dr. Ernesto Wills, an associate of Dr. Lleras. Dr. Lleras was not easily discouraged by lack of the equipment which he needed. He did not wait months for it to come from Europe, but learned to work with metals and made much of his own equipment. An improved technique for production of the vaccine, involving the use of female burros, brought him international recognition. Shortly before leaving Colombia, we visited the Parque de Vacunación, the division of the Instituto where smallpox vaccine is made. It was a rare experience to learn from Dr. Wills something of the various steps in making this vaccine.

Dr. Jorge Lleras died in Bogotá in August, 1945, following a long life of service to his fellow men. During the same week that this beloved scientist passed from the national scene, a younger man bearing the same surname took the oath of office as President of Colombia. This younger man, a kinsman of Dr. Jorge Lleras, was Dr. Alberto Lleras Camargo, who now heads the Pan American Union, the organization of twenty-one American republics whose purpose is the furtherance of hemispheric harmony.

The men mentioned are only a few of the scientists working at the Instituto toward the improvement of public health. I wish I were able to tell about them all. There are other scientific workers: physicians, bacteriologists, veterinarians, chemists, and nurses. There is the administrative staff, under the capable direction of Sr. Cesar Barragán S. And there are other employees, the helpers, who are important, too. I shall tell something of the two helpers we came to know best.

Ernestina and Trujillo were employees of the National Institute of Health. Through an arrangement made between Dr. Samper and the Cinchona Mission, they were assigned to Tom's laboratory to assist in routine work.

There are many things that happened during our stay in Colom-

bia that I cannot adequately describe; there are many personalities that I cannot accurately portray. In attempting to do justice to Ernestina and Trujillo, I truly find myself at a loss for words. The small salaries that they earned were no measure of what they contributed to the work that Tom was doing during those three years in Bogotá. Theirs was a loyalty that money cannot buy. They would watch carefully while Tom showed them how to perform some duty, and thereafter they would do it exactly as he had taught them. Certainly they had in full measure that quality Colombians call *voluntad*—willingness and eagerness to be of help.

The spirit of these two helpers was manifested in many small ways. One Sunday I walked over to the laboratory to take Tom some lunch and see if I could help—I'm no chemist, but I can wash dishes. Trujillo was one of the *internos;* that is, he slept in a small room in the chemistry building to help protect the building from theft or fire. He often came into the laboratory on Sunday when Tom was there. He got no extra compensation for this, but there was work to be done and he knew how to do it. It was a rainy day, and Tom had worn his ruana. As we were leaving, he began to put it on and I, jokingly, said, "I need a ruana, too." Trujillo left and came back in a few minutes with his ruana. Of course I told him that I was joking and that I didn't really need it. Later Tom told me that the ruana not only served as Trujillo's overcoat, but it was his blanket as well.

Trujillo and Ernestina had noted that Tom worked right through without going home for lunch. The Instituto employees were entitled to two hours for lunch. The helpers decided that they could each take only one hour (which meant Ernestina could not go home for lunch as she was used to doing) and this would make it possible for Tom to take time off—he felt it was unwise to leave the laboratory unattended while samples were working, because of the fire hazard. While he did not feel that he could accept their offer, he was touched by the expression of their desire to help.

They had no time for loafing, but that did not keep them from making the most of every humorous situation. Ernestina called a separatory funnel "José" because she held it like a baby and shook it gently. If something cooked too fast and splattered, it made a "turkey egg." One of the Colombian chemists labeled non-cinchona bark "Bellis quina," because when Tom first began analyzing

Colombian barks, he extracted out samples even though all preliminary tests indicated they would be negative. This "Bellis quina" was said to contain the alkaloid "*sin quinina*"—meaning "without quinine."

Then there were the vacuum tanks, which were reported as "full" of vacuum. And someone wanted to make a chemist of Puno, the Colombian monkey whose house was just outside the chemistry building. Puno would make a good chemist, since he used his tail and his hind paws just as readily as his front paws—this gave him five hands instead of just two!

Another Instituto story was one Tom told on himself. On the grounds near the chemistry building is a snake house. It is built like a greenhouse, with glass roof and sides. Although the snakes used in preparing anti-venom have been moved to Mariquita, several snakes remain in Bogotá, among them a large boa-constrictor and some rattlesnakes. Usually the snakes lie coiled up, apparently asleep. But on warm days they become active. One sunny day Tom stopped to look at the snakes. He stood outside the glass house, holding his hands behind him, looking intently at first one and then another. Suddenly he felt something cold and moist touch his hand, and he all but jumped through the glass walls into the snake house. No, it wasn't a snake—it was the nose of "Freetz," a friendly big German police dog who lived in the Instituto grounds!

Tom had two other helpers, employed by the Cinchona Mission to work in the Sample House. One was Lucila, who helped take care of samples. Though only fifteen, Lucila had completed a commercial course and did a fair job of typing. Lucila particularly liked to use the calculator (nicknamed "the machine that mills numbers"), and she learned to use it very well. Lucila was our quietest helper, rarely speaking and then in a low voice. She all but cried, though, when she learned that the calculator had been stolen, and she was a very happy young lady when it was recovered.

The other Sample House employee was far from quiet. He was a seventeen-year-old boy named Guillermo, whom we called "Beel." He was employed to do small tasks, such as sharpening pencils and running errands, and to sleep in the house. Bill worked for

the Cinchona Mission only a few months, but we were chuckling about him for a long time afterwards.

Bill decided to clean up the floors and used too much water. He tried to improve on the wiring and burned out a meter. He knocked a hole in the little storage tank for water, because it didn't have a drain. He labeled boxes in English instead of in Spanish, but since he acted first and asked afterward, we had "corpulent powder" rather than "coarse powder," and "slender powder" rather than "fine powder."

But we didn't chuckle about Bill's adventure with Puno, the monkey.

Puno was chained, and people passing by did not have to go near his little house. He and Tom were good friends. (I think Tom bribed him—he would put a small piece of panela in his trouser cuff and let the little monkey find it. And he fed Puno some of Susana's cookies.)

One day Tom handed Bill several bags of bark and said, "Bill, have the kindness to take these samples across the street to Trujillo."

Bill rushed off as cheerfully as usual, but when he returned he came in so quietly that Tom sensed something was wrong even before Bill spoke. "Doctor, may I have a *curación?*" (A curación is a ready-made bandage.)

"Why do you need a curación, Bill?" Tom noticed that Bill was holding his hand behind his back. "Let me see your hand." Bill held it out. "What happened to your fingers, man? A curación won't stop that bleeding."

"It was Puno, Doctor. He grabbed one of the bags of bark away from me. Then when I tried to take it away from him, he became *bravo* and bit me."

Tom suspected that Bill had teased Puno and that was why the little monkey had bitten him. "Come along, Bill. Let's go over to the Instituto and get a *médico* to take care of that hand. He might also want to give you injections for rabies."

It wasn't necessary to treat Bill for rabies. Nor was it necessary to lecture him about leaving Puno alone in the future!

The National Institute of Health became familiar ground to us, and particularly to Tom. He worked within its walls for more than

three years. During that period he learned of the history of the Instituto and something of the problems of public health work in Colombia. And he became acquainted with men and women who are contributing much to their country. When it was time to close the laboratory and return to the States, it was with regret that we said goodbye to the friends we had made at the Instituto.

BOUNCING AROUND COLOMBIA

XVII

OVER THE HILLS IS FAR AWAY

WE MADE several journeys away from Bogotá: we traveled on the Río Magdalena; we went on Sundays to Chiquinquirá, Zipaquirá, the Falls of Tequendama, Fusagasugá, Cachipay, and the Lake of El Dorado; on week ends we visited Barbosa, Villavicencio, and Honda; and we made one-day expeditions into the mountains where quinine trees grow. Most of our trips were made by regular public transportation. We traveled the way most Colombians do, by train, by bus, and by river boat—it might be called seeing the country the hard way. In Colombia, over the hills is far away, unless you fly.

You can travel by air in Colombia rapidly, safely, and comfortably—but expensively. The last Pan American Airways timetable to be issued before we left Bogotá devoted an entire page to domestic service in Colombia, and plans were afoot at that time to extend the network of Colombian routes even more.

Colombians who own cars do not drive them extensively from one part of the country to another. In the level sabana, there are good roads. But the mountain roads are rough, and they are often blocked by landslides, especially in rainy weather. However, if you are hardy and do not mind subjecting your expensive car to bad treatment, you may drive the sixty-five miles from Bogotá to Villavicencio, on the edge of the llanos. In dry weather, you may go on much farther over the level plains, charting your way by compass. But you should not expect to find filling stations or stores along the way—you will have to carry your supplies with you. You may drive, too, from Bogotá north through Bucaramanga, on to Cúcuta, and over to Caracas, Venezuela. This is considered a hard trip even by the toughened traveler. It takes about a week. You may likewise start out from Bogotá and drive south to Quito, Ecuador. But to make these two latter trips you need plenty of patience, time, and luck, as most of the roads are rough and mountainous.

You cannot yet drive from Bogotá to either Colombian seacoast, as there are long sections of the roads which exist only as mule trails or projected highways.

Our Bogotá friends who own cars rarely drive them on trips more distant than sixty or seventy miles. Within this limit, they go down the hill to Fusagasugá, Villeta, or Apulo to lands of warm days and cool nights. They can drive on to Girardot or Honda, where it is always hot. Being able to change climates in a few hours is one of the charms of living in a mountainous country near the Equator. For long trips, one affluent enough to own a car can fly and will usually do so.

There are bus and truck lines over most of the highways of Colombia. Tom wrote me his impression of Colombian buses shortly after he reached the country: "Here in Colombia, highway buses are simply converted trucks. They are mighty uncomfortable, but they make up for that by being accommodating. They are crowded worse than the buses in Washington. Your inclination will be to say 'impossible,' but here we are not required to restrict the load to a number which will make it possible to close the doors. They can always pile on or hang on a few more. An incident which happened Sunday illustrates the accommodating nature of the chauffeurs. At one village the bus stopped and a young man dressed in dirty work clothes climbed out and went down a side street. We remained stopped at the corner. After some five minutes the driver blew his horn. From inside a dwelling three or four houses down, the young man yelled back, and after another five minutes he returned, wearing a complete new outfit. He climbed in, and we proceeded."

Colombia has 2,046 miles of railroad lines, the statistics say. More than half of the railroad mileage is owned by the National Government; about a fourth is owned by departmental governments; the rest is owned by private companies, including oil companies, sugar refineries, and an English concern. (Colombian rail gauges are narrower than United States standard. The rails on some lines are a yard apart; on others, they are a meter apart. Incidentally, some Colombian railroad ties are made of steel, in Pittsburgh.)

The streamliners of the railroads are the autoferros. These are diesel-powered trains which burn a thin, kerosene-like fuel. They are one- or two-coach trains, with comfortable reclining seats and big windows. The autoferros make better time than do the steam trains, and the fares are higher than first-class train fare. (It is

rather hard to give an idea of Colombian train fares, since the rate per mile is in part determined by the distance traveled. For some of the longer trips, autoferro rates compute at less than two cents U. S. per mile. First-class fare on the steam trains computes at less than one cent U. S. per mile.) Seats on the autoferros are reserved; standees ordinarily are not taken. Unfortunately, the motors break down all too often, and the mechanics are not yet expert in putting them back in running order. A part of the plan to improve railroad service includes the purchase of more diesel equipment and the training of repairmen in its upkeep.

The regular steam trains carry a great load of passengers and freight. The timetables list first-, second-, and third-class fares, but most trains have only first- and third-class coaches. ("First-class" in Colombia means travel in the best coach. The trains do not travel through the night, so there is no necessity for pullman cars.) Except for the autoferros, almost every passenger train hauls some freight cars also. Trains often leave and arrive late, and once in a while one leaves early. Track maintenance is made difficult by landslides, which interrupt service in some sections for as long as a month at a time. Building railroads and keeping them going is heart-breakingly hard in a land that stands on end and refuses to remain static indefinitely as well-behaved terra firma should. The mountain either slides down on the track or slips out from under it.

Atop a concrete pedestal at the Villa Station in Medellín rests the first engine of the Antioquia Railroad, retired to this place of honor following its role as the leader, in 1875, of the parade of sturdy little engines that have led many trains up and down the steep grades from Puerto Berrío to Medellín. In Manizales (Medellín's rival in the neighboring Department of Caldas) there is a similar monument bearing the first engine of the Caldas Railroad; and in Bogotá the first engine of the Cundinamarca Railroad is likewise honored. As these memorials indicate, these little engines represented tremendous advances in Colombian transportation. The role played by railroads in the history of Colombia, however, is quite different from that of the railroads in the history of the United States.

From 1860 to 1900, railroad trackage in the United States increased from 30,000 to 240,000 miles. Since that period we have

not done extensive railroad construction. Thus our great period of railroad building ended some twenty to thirty years before highways and air lines offered alternative means of transportation. Colombian railroad construction began at a later date than ours, and before the little engines and their larger successors could chug clear across the country to the seacoast, they were overtaken by the day of the airplane—in 1919 in Colombia the first commercial air line in the world was established. It now appears doubtful that Colombia will ever have a great network of railroads spanning it, the urgency of their need having been lessened by wings that fly over the Andes.

There's another way of travel in Colombia which we never had an opportunity to try, the cable car that goes from Gamarra to Ocaña. Friends who rode the cableway described the trip as a unique experience, affording a close-range aerial view of the country. The cars swing across space from hill to hill in covering the thirty miles from the river to Ocaña, in the Department of Norte de Santander. Had we gone to Ocaña, we would have been in a region rich in oil. And we would have been near the territory of the Motilones.

The anthropologists refer to the Motilón Indians as an "untouched" group. For more than four centuries, they have resisted the advances of civilization, preferring to live in the forests without such trappings as clothing. Motilones do not like for outsiders to molest them, and they have a habit of expressing their feelings by shooting a long arrow at an intruder, usually an oil worker. I suspect the number of white men to end their lives with a Motilón arrow through them is very small. But it has happened and someone photographed the dead man, arrow and all, and copies of the picture have been circulated widely. Such is their fame for ferocity that the mention of the word Motilón brings on a certain shivery feeling, even when you are not in Motilón country. Actually—the experts say—there are only a few hundred of these unsociable Indians, and they do not go out of their way to harass people. They simply want to be left alone. They usually are.

If you are in a hurry in Colombia, you should fly. There it is not a choice between a three-hour plane trip or a nineteen-hour rail trip, as it is in some instances in this country. In Colombia your choice may be between a comfortable two-hour trip by plane

or an uncomfortable seven-day trip by an assortment of other carriers. An example is the trip from Barranquilla to Bogotá, little more than two hours by air. To go by other means, the traveler leaves Barranquilla for Puerto Salgar by Magdalena River boat. The river trip takes six days (if the river is not low and the boat does not get stuck on a sandbar and stay there for a week or so). At Puerto Salgar, the traveler leaves the boat and rides the train to Bogotá. He can make that trip in a day (if the railroad is not out of service for several weeks due to landslides).

One of our Colombian friends has a favorite story, about an American who came to his country before the day of the air lines, and before the day of the Bogotá-Puerto Salgar Railroad. The *yanqui* didn't like to travel, and he protested loudly when his company announced its intention of sending him to Bogotá. But he booked passage on a steamer leaving New York for Barranquilla and packed his trunks with an assortment of things he thought he might need. If he listened to enough people, he probably included seasick remedies, a Spanish grammar, a rifle, mosquito netting, canned goods, and trinkets to trade to the Indians. Sailing day arrived, and his reluctant feet took him aboard the ship. Friends and family bade him farewell, hoping—but only half expecting—to see him again some day.

The ship weighed anchor and slowly made its way south to the Colombian shore. Our hero, having had time between bouts of seasickness to learn a few Spanish phrases while on the boat, put them to good use in Barranquilla, which was then a dirty, unhealthy town in which no one would want to linger. "How far is it to Bogotá?" he falteringly asked.

"Some days," was the reply.

"How do I get there?" he next asked. He was told that he would have to go by boat up the Río Magdalena. Then where was this boat and when did it leave?

To both questions there was but one answer, "*Quién sabe?*" ("Who knows?") God willing, the boat would arrive mañana. The yanqui steamed in the heat of Barranquilla, wishing he was back home and beginning to realize that mañana means not tomorrow but some indefinite time in the future.

But sure enough there was a boat. One day it came in and the traveler bargained for passage. He hastened aboard, crowded his

baggage into his quarters, and began to look forward to his departure. But the boat had to load freight for several days; finally it started its journey. It paddled slowly up the Magdalena, stopping to load and unload freight and passengers at every river port. The river was low, and the boat was stuck on a sandbar for several days. The traveler sweltered and fought off mosquitos. The boat got free and continued as far as Honda, where there are rapids in the river. Seeing everyone leaving the boat, the yanqui asked, "Is this Bogotá?"

"No, señor, now you must ride the railroad."

He left the boat and rode on the train from Honda to Girardot. Everyone left the train and again the yanqui asked, "Is this Bogotá?"

"No, señor, you must again ride the railroad."

He caught another train. This train has rather a hard time climbing the mountain. At one place the grade is so steep and the space so inadequate for curves that the train climbs in a roundabout way. It goes forward, then switches and backs up the grade for a mile or so, goes forward, and then switches and backs up the grade some more. Each time the train started backing, the yanqui became concerned that he was losing ground instead of gaining, and he tried to find out from his fellow passengers what was going on, but his Spanish wasn't equal to the task. At last the train reached Facatativá and everyone began to leave, so again the traveler asked, "Is this Bogotá?"

"No, señor, here you take another train to Bogotá."

The railroad from Faca to Bogotá used a different gauge track, which was the reason for this change, but the yanqui did not know this. "How far is it to Bogotá?" he asked.

"Only a little time, señor," he was assured. Had it been a clear day, perhaps he could have seen the mountains above the capital —it was only twenty-five miles. But he had reached the end of his patience. He refused to believe that there was such a place as Bogotá. So he got back on the train to return to Girardot and begin the laborious trip back to Barranquilla and the States.

That mode of travel, though not distant in years, is no more necessary in Colombia today than is travel by covered wagon in the United States.

We left Colombia more than two years after my first trip out

from Bogotá. During that time, the Tourist Bureau of the Colombian Government was attempting to encourage travel among Colombians and foreigners. A part of their program was the setting up of specific requirements for hotels recommended for tourists; for instance, the approved hotels must have certain standards of cleanliness, and they must charge fixed rates. The traveler may know in advance, by inquiry at the Tourist Bureau, what rates he should pay; and if he likes, he may wire ahead for reservations. (Contrary to the general practice in the States, Colombian hotel rates include meals.) Before we left Colombia, Medellín had completed its luxurious Hotel Nutibara and Cartagena and Girardot were to have new hotels shortly. Even Bogotá, long in need of additional hotel space, was planning one, but it may be some time before this hotel is out of the blueprint stage.

Air service expanded during that period, but rates were still much higher than train and bus fares. Bus and railroad service grew worse rather than better, but the return of normal international trade was expected to permit the importation of bus and railroad equipment, as well as additional machinery for building and maintaining highways and roadbeds.

The American expecting to visit Colombia should be warned not to be trustful of travel folders which paint a glowing picture of the ease of travel there, or he will be disappointed. Some of the bulletins put out by the Colombian Tourist Bureau should be regarded as advertisements rather than as statements of fact. In their eagerness to tell the reader what he wants to know, they sometimes give misinformation. I refer to one which states that the traveler will have no difficulties in bringing his car to Colombia and using it there; the folder does not bother to explain that to get his car to the interior of the country the traveler will have to load it on a boat or on a train to haul it part of the distance. And the four-lane concrete highway depicted in the folder just hasn't been built as yet! Another section of this same folder states that, with the idea of encouraging the tourist trade, the National Railways now give discounts for round-trip tickets; for a party of four persons, this discount is listed as 35 per cent. Folder in hand, I attempted to buy the round-trip tickets described for a party of four. I was told that I could neither buy round-trip tickets nor secure the discount. This, too, made us distrustful of the accuracy of the bulletin.

A number of our week end trips we made with various American friends, but I have omitted their names from the accounts of the trips. I at first included them. Then I realized that courtesy would demand that I get their approval of the section if I did so. To do that for all was too big a job. Two of them are in India; one is somewhere in the Pacific Ocean, scouting around Micronesia; others are scattered elsewhere about the world. I resolved the problem by deleting the names of all. However, if my account of our jaunts overtakes them, here's a *muchas gracias* to them from Tom and me for adding to the pleasure of our little excursions.

Another person contributed to the enjoyment of our trips, an American woman whom we have never met. She is Kathleen Romoli, author of *Colombia, Gateway to South America.* Before making a trip to a new region, we liked to reread what Mrs. Romoli had to say about it. She has seen much of Colombia and her book is accurate yet fascinating.

XVIII

CHIQUINQUIRA

CHIQUINQUIRA, the largest city in the Department of Boyacá, does not have a great deal of attraction for sightseers. Its attraction is, rather, for the devout, who come from all parts of Colombia and from other South American countries to do homage to the Virgin of Chiquinquirá, the Patron Saint of Colombia. It all began long ago with a painting of the Virgin, owned by a poor woman of the village. The canvas was destroyed; then suddenly it was miraculously restored. It now rests in a place of honor in the Cathedral of Chiquinquirá. Pilgrims come to implore the aid of the Virgin in helping someone who is ill or in trouble. And they come in fulfillment of promises made to the Virgin in their prayers. Some make the trip on foot, but more travel on the crowded trains that fill Chiquinquirá to overflowing at fiesta time.

We went to Chiquinquirá neither as sightseers nor as pilgrims, but as shoppers. We thought it would be fun to go to the region where blankets were made and buy some for use in our newly-rented house. I had been in Colombia not quite two weeks when we made the trip, and everything I saw was new and interesting: stone fence posts, tethered pigs, adobe fences—even the sign on the train which I translated, "Don't stick your head out of the windows while the train is in motion."

Chiquinquirá is more than ninety miles north of the capital and can be reached either by highway or by rail. The highway is rich in history. Much of it has become more interesting—if less accurate—by admixture with legend. There is the story of Puente Común, for instance, the stone bridge near Chía over which the highway passes. I heard accounts of the bridge that gave its age as something like four hundred years. I was told that it had been built by Indian slaves laboring under the lash of the conquistadores. I liked the bridge none the less after reading that it was in truth built in 1792. Even at that "late" date, it has been trod by history-making feet: Bolívar's ragged armies, the King's well-trained troops, and many devout pilgrims. It still appears remarkably solid and is in daily use for motor vehicles undreamed of at

the time of its construction. Were the highway which crosses it located in the State of Virginia rather than in the Department of Cundinamarca, I should expect to find a marker reading, "Simón Bolívar traveled this road."

The people of Boyacá (Boyacenses) are noted for being both artistic and musical. Many of them possess marked ability in the handicrafts. In their homes they weave woolens and cottons on foot-power looms; they carve small articles of tagua, the ivory nut; they make pottery and weave baskets. From Boyacá come the Hernández Brothers, three native sons who have delighted audiences in Latin America and in New York. The Hernández boys play the *tiple*, the banjo, and the guitar, and one of them also manipulates a musical saw. They sing in an unaffected manner, and their rather homely faces are so expressive that they make even foreign hearers feel that they're listening to the boys next door. In Bogotá their audience grows most enthusiastic when *Los Hermanos Hernández* entertain with songs from their native department.

Boyacá is Colombia's largest department in area, but it is not very prosperous. Boyacenses consume more *chicha* per capita than do the inhabitants of other departments, I am told—consumption of this undistilled, fermented corn mash seems to go with poverty. Boyacá has poverty, but it has fabulous wealth, too. The emerald mines at Muzo, Coscuéz, and Somondoco are the world's richest. Boyacá has practically a monopoly of emerald mining in the world. Years ago, death came to many who sought the green gems—death from an illness called *fiebre de Muzo* (Muzo fever). Modern medical knowledge reveals that it was yellow fever, once prevalent near the mines, which was the killer.

On the day before our trip to Chiquinquirá, I went to the railroad ticket office in downtown Bogotá to buy four tickets on the autoferro which passes through that town en route to Barbosa—Tom and I were to make the trip with the friends whose apartment we were sharing. Sunday morning at six-thirty we started our journey. We had clean, comfortable seats and big windows which framed the passing countryside. It was cold and rainy when we left, but the sun came out later and then it was much warmer.

The autoferro at first went along the level sabana lying between two ridges of the Eastern Cordillera. Later on, the sabana narrowed, and the tracks began to wind around mountain curves.

From the windows I saw corn and wheat fields, and pasture land on which grazed cattle and sheep. Around Rabanal there were many healthy-looking dairy cows—this region furnishes much of Bogotá's milk supply, an early train each day bringing milk into the city. For almost ten miles, the tracks followed the shores of Lake Fúquene. A few log dugouts floated over the placid waters, and motor launches ferried people across the lake. This beautiful region looks like fine resort country, but it is cold, and Bogotanos want to vacation where it is warm. I saw the meandering Bogotá River—in this region it is hardly big enough to be called a river at all.

At ten o'clock we reached Chiquinquirá. The station had the aspect of a town to which pilgrims come: there were vendors selling, along with candies and fruit, small pictures of the Virgin. Some of the candies had pictures of the Virgin on them; and there were small pins with the red, yellow, and blue of the Colombian flag and the likeness of the Virgin pasted over the colors.

A few blocks from the station we found the beautiful church that so many pilgrims enter. We, too, entered to look at the miraculous picture of the Virgin.

Market was being held in the plaza in front of the church, so we decided to "make market." We bargained for tangerines and a red and yellow net bag to carry them in. We purchased a few small things made of pottery: crudely-made green candlesticks, little white horses, a realistic little brown armadillo with two of her young. The jugs and plates of the most attractive shapes are made of red unglazed clay. The disappointing thing about them is that they are not strong and will break in your hands. The glazed pieces, which are stronger, are not so pleasing in appearance—they are often lacking in symmetry.

That the people of Boyacá are able artisans can readily be seen from their tagua. In Chiquinquirá there is a small industry in tagua, vegetable ivory. This nut, the fruit of the tagua palm, is important commercially, being used for the manufacture of buttons. The articles made in Chiquinquirá are novelties of interest to the throngs who visit the village: small tea sets, tiny vases, figures of men and women, skulls, and tagua candles only half an inch high set in tiny tagua candlesticks. Much of the work is quite

ordinary, turned out by machine and then painted by hand, but some pieces are carved artistically.

Chiquinquirá craftsmen work also in wood, carving miniature men and women that are typical of the Boyacá country people. We have small figures of *campesinos*, carved from wood and set on tagua bases, that we cherish both because they are accurately made and because they were given to us by Ernestina. In Chiquinquirá are made, too, sets of tiny wooden musical instruments and full-size tiples, the 14-string guitar-type instruments that are strummed by many Colombians.

We did not see many blankets offered for sale, either in the market or in the shops near it. After we had looked around, we bought two from a man in the market.

We decided to return to a small park near the station to eat our lunch. As we passed through the streets we heard the clatter of hoofs and turned to admire fine saddle horses and chap-clad riders. Reaching the park, we noticed that an artistic caretaker had cut some of the hedge-like shrubs in the shape of men and had trimmed initials in others. In the station we found a rest room. It was exceedingly dirty, but in smaller Colombian cities the traveler is grateful to find any toilet at all.

It was fortunate that we were near the station, for the train got in early and left some ten minutes ahead of schedule. The seats on the coach were not so comfortable as those on the autoferro, and the windows were too low for us to see from well. The windows had wooden shutters which operated from the top. Half of the catches had been removed and every few miles one of those shutters clanked down. I was always expecting someone to lose a hand or a head!

At three-thirty we got off the train at Lenguazaque. We planned to visit the market there and buy a few more blankets; then we would board the same autoferro we had come out on that morning, on its return trip from Barbosa to Bogotá.

We walked from the station to the main plaza and were disappointed to find that market was over for the day and everyone had gone home. Upon inquiry, we learned that there were several people in Lenguazaque who had blankets for sale in their homes. The first woman we called on had rooms off a large patio, through which we passed in reaching her quarters. She had only two blan-

kets, not very attractive ones; we thanked her for showing them, but did not buy. She directed us to another house where we would find more blankets.

We went on to the second place, entering another patio to find the blanket-maker. She treated us most graciously. She invited us into her room; she spread blankets on stools and beds and asked us all to sit down; and then she assembled all of her blankets that were finished. (Later on, she served us *arepas*, a type of corn pone.) We looked over the blankets and selected three of them. Tom did not bargain very hard, and I saw a very pleased look on the woman's face as she counted the money handed to her after the negotiation was completed. Most of her output she sold to Bogotá merchants who came out to Lenguazaque on market day, and they no doubt drove a hard bargain.

Most of our time was spent in watching Tom buy a ruana. A ruana is to the Colombian what the poncho is to the Mexican—a blanket with a slit in the middle for the head. I have heard the ruana called a "four-cornered overcoat." In Colombian cities, the ruana indicates a man of humble station, too poor to buy an overcoat. Outside the cities, the ruana is worn just as much by the wealthy landowner as by his workmen. Supposedly this garment originated with the South American Indian and was adopted by the Spaniard, who found is especially useful when riding.

Tom wanted a hand-woven wool ruana, and our hostess had a very nice gray one which she had just completed. He bargained for it, paid her, and took the garment. At this moment a young woman entered the room. *"Buenas tardes, señores,"* she greeted us. Then she noticed the ruana which Tom was holding. *"Mamá,* have you sold this ruana to the Americano? I had promised to sell it to Don Antonio."

"But, María, I did not know of your promise. How embarrassed I am! What can we do?"

Tom tried to help out. "If Don Antonio lives here in the village, señora, perhaps you could get his permission to sell this ruana and make another for him promptly."

The woman looked relieved. "You are right señor." Turning to her daughter she said, "María, have the kindness to find Don Antonio and explain to him what has happened. Tell him that the Americano is just passing through Lenguazaque and will not re-

turn, and that tomorrow I can begin weaving another ruana exactly like this one."

María left, but when she returned she looked rather disconsolate. "I am sorry, mamá, that I could not talk with Don Antonio. They say that he is quite inebriated and in no state to talk about ruanas."

Our hostess sadly counted out the money and gave it to Tom, and he as sadly returned the ruana. I got rather confused as to what was going on, as I could not understand much of the conversation and had to guess from the exchanges being made. I began to realize how deaf people feel!

Finally it was concluded that if Tom wished to pay fifty centavos more, peace could be made with Don Antonio. (We have never learned how Don Antonio reacted to all of this. Anyway, Tom got his ruana.)

We picked up our purchases, said goodbye to the lady and her family, and started to leave. The blanket-maker, however, said that she would go with us and carry part of our purchases. We had been interested in one other blanket in a particularly nice red, but it was not yet finished. At the station, the woman pointed out to us a girl who had a blanket like the unfinished one we had admired. We then took leave of our new friend a second time. A small crowd gathered around to see Tom negotiate for the blanket.

We were now the owners of six blankets, made entirely by hand, from shearing the sheep, spinning the wool on a hand spindle (I never saw a spinning wheel in Colombia), dyeing the yarn, and weaving on small looms in the home. The patterns are plaid designs, and they do not date back to the pre-Spanish period. In finishing the wool, the workman does not always get the cockleburs out and does not remove all of the grease. However, there was no danger of the blankets' being less than 100 per cent virgin wool and they were closely woven. Good dyes had been used and the blankets were prettier after washing, perhaps partly because it removed the rest of the grease. We slept under all six blankets each night of our stay in Bogotá and valued most the three we had purchased from the woman who had treated us so kindly.

We set our blankets and ourselves down on a pile of railroad ties to wait for the autoferro. Soon the muchacha who had sold us the last blanket came over to where we were sitting. "Señores,

I regret to inform you that there has been an accident and that the autoferro will be late."

"*Muchas gracias,* señorita, for your kindness," Tom replied. Then he walked to the office of the stationmaster to get more information.

"Señor, they tell me that the autoferro will be late."

"*Oui,*" responded the stationmaster, who thought that Tom was speaking French. (This bears out our observation that Colombians are so agreeable that they say yes in response to anything, whether they understand it or not.)

"Can you tell me what has happened and when you expect the autoferro?" Tom continued.

The stationmaster recognized it as Spanish and replied in that tongue. "Here is what happened, señor. The autoferro has broken down in Chiquinquirá. Another will be sent out from Bogotá, and it will probably not be through Lenguazaque on its return trip until about nine." It was then six.

Rather than sit on those railroad ties during our three-hour wait, we decided to walk up the mountain trail back of town, make a fire, and watch the moon come up. I think Tom suggested the fire. He'd tried making fires before at that altitude and knew of no surer way to kill an hour or so. When we found a big stone to serve as a reflector for the fire, we picked that as the site. Finally the men got a fire going.

After a little, two men came by and stopped at a distance watching us. A little later a horseman stopped to ask who we were and what we were doing. We decided that we were getting too popular, so we started down the mountain. The horseman followed us, and a man accompanying him on foot threw an occasional rock in our general direction.

When we got back to town there was another horseman waiting for us. He appeared to be someone important, as he was called *patrón* (boss) by the three policemen and by the four rifle-bearing men who surrounded him. The patrón wanted the police to take a look at our cedulas, and one of them asked us to go to the police station. When we reached the station, I noted with apprehension that there were four cots in it. (I was told afterwards that the police slept there—and that the tremendous rifles on the wall were probably souvenirs of the revolution and not intended for shoot-

ing foreigners.) The officer in charge looked at the men's papers and decided that we were harmless, but the patrón wanted the names and cedula numbers written down, so this was done.

Having had enough adventures in Lenguazaque, we returned to the station to finish our wait for the autoferro. The stationmaster had returned to his office, and he let us in. (How we would have welcomed a pot-bellied railroad station stove!) He did all he could to make us comfortable. He got extra chairs, and soon a woman came in with a tray of dainty little china cups of black coffee. That stationmaster I shall always remember with special gratitude. He had a steady line of talk and the kind of wit that keeps people laughing without hurting anyone's feelings. The station telephone, a railroad party line from Bogotá to Barbosa, rang constantly. Our new friend joked with agents all along the line and finally got word that the autoferro was on its way.

Colombians are not inclined to complain about delays, and everyone was in good humor in spite of the long wait for the train. At nine-thirty, the autoferro came, and after much hand-shaking and many farewells, we were off. Half an hour out of Lenguazaque, the machine stopped again. I had visions of the cold dawn's finding us on the autoferro miles from home, but after an hour we started once more.

We reached Bogotá at one-thirty, became alive enough to race from the train to get one of the none-too-plentiful taxis, and went home to bed—to dream that we were being pursued by the patrón and his rifle-bearing men, the police, and drunken Don Antonio seeking to recover his ruana!

XIX

ZIPAQUIRA'S MOUNTAIN OF SALT

SOME thirty miles north of the capital is the town of Zipaquirá. When the conquistadores came to the sabana in 1538, this town was the home of the Zipa, ruler of the northern part of the Chibcha realm. The Spaniards recorded that the Chibchas were taking salt from mines in Zipaquirá and trading it to the Indians of other regions for gold. The mines have been worked continuously since that time, and the salt remaining is so great that geologists who have visited the mines decline to make an estimate of the quantity. No doubt there is an interesting explanation of how such a great quantity of salt came to be in the heart of a mountain, more than two hundred miles inland and a mile and a half upward from the nearest seashore—a story that goes back long before the time of the Spaniards to the era when the sabana was the floor of a great lake.

Today Zipaquirá is a clean, quiet town of some eleven thousand inhabitants. It has paved streets and an air of prosperity. The mines and the factories processing salt give employment to many of the residents. Although Zipaquirá has the same altitude as Bogotá, it seems warmer—perhaps it rains less. The climate has good repute, and sufferers from tuberculosis have gone to the town hoping to benefit from the change.

We took Susana and Beatriz with us one Sunday on a trip to the salt mines. They were always most enthusiastic listeners to our tall tales about the places we visited, and we thought it would be fun to let them see for themselves a new part of Colombia. Zipaquirá was near enough that we could get back before dark, so we wouldn't have to worry about leaving the house unguarded. They bustled around on Saturday getting their clothes in order, baking cookies, and roasting a chicken. From the activity in the house that day, you would have thought we were going on a two weeks' trip!

Early Sunday morning, our train pulled out of the station in Bogotá. Its leisurely rate gave us a good view of the passing countryside. Along the highway, which runs parallel to the railroad tracks, are a number of beautiful homes. One in particular at-

tracted our notice. It is built of white concrete in modernistic style, with numerous large windows. Another interesting home is a typical Swiss chalet, clinging to the side of the mountain. The steep slope around the house is terraced in stair-step manner, each step a yard wide and each one rising about a yard—no doubt the Swiss owner almost feels himself back in his native Alps. There are less pretentious homes, too, made of brick and roofed with tile. The most humble dwellings are of adobe, with thatched roofs. We saw several homes with signs indicating that they are model farmhouses built with the aid of some agency of the Department of Cundinamarca. They are small and neat, of brick and tile.

Fences are of two kinds: of adobe, and of barbed wire strung through posts made of stone or of concrete. The adobe walls which serve as fences are built in eight- to ten-foot sections, ten to twenty inches thick and five to eight feet high. Some are topped with roofing tile. In places these walls have washed down to nothing at all and have not been rebuilt. Here and there nasturtiums grow atop the adobe walls, displaying their orange and red blossoms against the mud-like background.

The stone fence posts are about ten inches wide, six inches thick, and four feet high. Each has three holes approximately two inches in diameter. The posts are spaced some ten feet apart. Chiseled out by hand, each represents countless hours of hard labor. I remember with amusement our efforts to find out the Spanish name for these posts. Trujillo went with us on several trips. Though he knew only a few words of English, he was exceedingly clever at understanding us and figuring out what information we wanted. One day on the train we asked Trujillo, "What are those things—they're of stone with holes in them for wire," and so on, in an effort to let him know what we were pointing out from the window. *"Postes?"* he asked. Spanish had apparently borrowed this word from the English.

From the train we saw a few windmills, installed to pump water for the cattle. In spite of the fact that level farm land in the inhabited parts of Colombia is not plentiful, much of the sabana is grazed. The soil has been farmed for more than four hundred years, and its fertility is badly depleted. We noted a few cornfields with scrubby corn, but mainly we saw pasture land for cattle, sheep, goats, pigs, and horses. (The animals are usually

fed only from pasture.) Pigs are tethered, most often with a cord attached to a front leg. We saw one man working his field with oxen. Another field had a straw-stack, piled on the ground, two or three feet deep, over about an acre. (The grain is flailed from the plant by hand.)

The train jerked to a stop five times before reaching Zipaquirá. Usually at the little towns there were people waiting to meet travelers. Near the station were hitched the horses they had ridden into town and extra mounts for the people arriving. Often the men left their chaps hanging over the horses' backs. Each horse had a tethering rope made of rawhide—this material is also used for reins and halter.

In almost every town, there is an outdoor shrine to some saint. Near brick factories are crude crosses of wood or of branches; atop the mountain overlooking Zipaquirá there are many crosses. They do not necessarily indicate the site of a death or of a burial. They're just visible expressions of religion from Colombia's Catholic people.

Arriving in Zipaquirá, we left the train and walked to the principal plaza. The plaza follows the regular formula: a square with fountain, flowers, and benches; surrounding the square, a church, a municipal building, and a number of stores with balconies. The lamp posts in the park are designed with Chibcha figures and the fountain also has a Chibcha motif. A band was playing in the park —this, too, is typical of a Latin American plaza on Sunday morning. The beautiful church, we noted, was built in 1805.

A small shrine set in the wall near the door of the church attracted our attention because the figure of the saint was surrounded by models of farm animals. I asked Susana about this, and she said that the shrine honored the patron saint of farmers, St. Isidore. She remembered a petition to the saint which she had learned when she was a little girl: *"San Isidro, labrador, quite el agua y ponga el sol."* ("St. Isidore, farmer, take away the water and bring out the sun.")

Before we set out for the mines, we stopped by the bus station and Tom bought tickets for our return to Bogotá on the afternoon bus.

On our walk to the salt mines, perhaps a half-mile from the plaza, we were approached by men and small boys wanting to sell

pieces of pyrite as souvenirs. Some of these were just chunks of mineral; others were glued together to form crosses.

We followed a street leading up the mountain and came to the lower entrance to the mines. Here we saw on guard an officer of the National Police, a reminder that the mines are owned and operated by the Government of Colombia. (Although the mines are Government property, the land over them is owned by private individuals, whose claim runs only to a depth of one meter.)

The entrance leads into a horizontal tunnel which goes straight into the mountain, and we followed the rails of small cars used to carry salt from the mines. Some distance in, passages lead in many directions. There are several miles of tunnels, some fifty feet wide by fifty feet high. Mine props are used only occasionally—instead, the openings are so cut as to leave immense pillars of salt to support the overhead. The passageways in the mines, the ceilings, and the walls are about 90 per cent salt. In some places, the salt is quite dark; in others, it is white. There are mixed with it dirt, coal, occasionally a trace of iron, and pyrites.

There are three levels to the mines. We entered the lower level, and in passing from it to the middle one, we counted 110 steps, each rising about six inches. We were told that the upper level of the mines is more extensive than the two levels we visited. It is newer, and the salt is pure enough to use as it comes from the mines. People formerly visited it and carried out several pounds as souvenirs, so no visiting is permitted there now.

Deep in the mines we came to a large room with desks and benches. Once classes were held there regularly; now this room serves for the use of students visiting the mines. Throughout the mines are shrines with religious pictures, flowers, and lighted candles. Many of these mark spots where men have died in accidents. Occasionally blasting opens pockets of firedamp (methane gas), and this has caused the loss of many lives. For this reason, the mine ventilators are always attended. The temperature inside the mines is cool and constant. There is a slight sulphur odor, but it is not disagreeable.

Tom had made a previous visit to the salt mines, and he was especially interested in them because they represented a problem in applied chemistry. Following his first visit, he had talked with his Colombian associates at the Instituto concerning the mines

and learned more about the mode of operation. He was therefore well-qualified to explain what happened to the salt during its journey from inside the mountain to our kitchen.

Our "guide" told us that the chunks of salt are loosened from the walls and ceilings with pneumatic hammers. A workman then shovels these chunks into small cars, and when he has a load he pushes it out. The rails run up a slight grade coming in, when the cars are empty, and down a grade coming out, when they are full. When the salt reaches the mouth of the mines, it is dumped into concrete tanks, and water is added to make brine. One of these tanks we noticed has a capacity of two million liters (more than a half-million gallons).

Employees of the mines are paid by piece work, their earnings depending on how many cars they put out each day and how far they are working from the entrance. They receive bonuses for additional loads, and usually earn about the equivalent of six or seven dollars a week. At least two mining engineers are employed to direct the work.

We learned that shortly before we visited the mines the management had rewarded old employees by giving each a plot of land and a home in a small model community a mile from Zipaquirá. Electricity and water are furnished for seventy-five cents per month, from the plants which serve the mines.

The brine produced at the mines is sold to factories which convert it into salt. It is priced by the density or degree of saturation, which varies from possibly 23.1 per cent to 25 per cent. There are two pipe-lines carrying the brine to factories down in the town. The largest line goes to the Salinas de Los Andes, a modern plant—equipped with machinery from Manistee, Michigan—which makes granulated salt by the vacuum-pan process. The other line goes to an operator of three smaller establishments. Small processors buy brine at the mines, transporting it to their factories in wooden tank-carts drawn by oxen or mules.

The oldest method of processing salt turns out a product called *sal compactada,* or compacted salt. The first step in this process is to install over a furnace large cone-shaped clay pots, about two yards deep and a yard in diameter at the top. The factory that we visited had thirty-two pots, each turning out every eighteen days three thousand pounds or more of rock salt. These clay pots are

filled with brine and heated slowly to the boiling point. As water evaporates, more brine is added with a long-handled dipper. After eighteen days, each pot contains a solid block of salt, and the fire is allowed to go out and the pots to cool. Then the pots are broken and the salt knocked into pieces weighing from ten to twenty-five pounds each. These chunks are hard as stone and can be carried over the mountain roads on the back of a burro, in the rain, without much loss. Susana told us that this is the kind of salt the country people use. She had often seen her father break sal compactada into smaller pieces with a stone, so that it could be used for cooking and for the stock.

The *caldero* method produces a coarse salt similar to, but coarser than, the bulk salt sold in the States. It is called *sal de caldero,* or kettle salt. We visited a second factory to see this process. The brine is emptied into hemispherical iron kettles located above a furnace, each vessel a yard in diameter and a half-yard deep. As the water evaporates, more brine is added with a hose. Salt accumulates in the bottom of the kettle, and from time to time it is dipped out with a long-handled shovel and stacked in bowl-shaped baskets. When one basket is full, another is put on top of the first one, and sometimes as many as five or six stack up. These drain a bit, and then are moved to one side to make room for others. This salt is usually shipped in fique sacks and the stores which sell it repackage it in paper bags of one pound or one-half pound sizes. Much food is prepared in the calderos: potatoes float on top of the brine and meat is cooked just to one side of the iron kettles.

The furnaces at the salt factories are fired with coal which is mined near Zipaquirá. Not far away is a small gold mine, which can be seen from the town. (I do not know whether or not the Chibchas of pre-Colombian times knew that they had a source of the yellow metal in their own realm.)

We left the factories to return to the plaza, and noted along our route a large oak tree in a yard. (Oaks are comparatively rare in the sabana.) Down a side street, near the mountain, we saw a church with a figure of Christ with arms outstretched atop it.

We boarded our bus a little before three, and it left on time. It was the most comfortable bus I encountered in Colombia, and the hard-surfaced two-lane highway made for a pleasant trip. We

crossed Puente Común, the historic stone bridge over the Río Bogotá. When we reached Bogotá, the chauffeur obligingly let us off the bus a short distance from our house.

We all brought back souvenirs of Zipaquirá, in the form of pyrites and tiny chunks of salt. I put mine on the shelf with our other Colombian souvenirs, and one rainy day I found that the salt had melted. The best souvenir was a kodachrome transparency that Tom made in the park where we ate our lunch. There were red geraniums in the park, and Beatriz picked a blossom and put it in her hair. Tom asked her to stand beside the geraniums while he made her picture. Her cheeks and lips were almost as red as the flowers, especially when she was excited.

Some months later, the roll of kodachrome was sent on its long trip to the States to be processed. At length it was returned to us, and we as usual had forgotten what pictures we'd made. When we came across the one of Beatriz, we called her and Susana into the library to show it to them. When Susana looked at it, she said with a grin that they certainly were pretty flowers.

Beatriz didn't get a chance to even the score until later, when we took a color picture of Susana, dressed in her red suit and standing in front of the nasturtiums which had climbed up the wall of our house. When the roll of film came back, Susana was in the picture, and the nasturtiums were in the picture—but so was the garage door. So Beatriz said that it certainly was a pretty garage door!

XX

TEQUENDAMA

THE timetable put out by the National Railroads of Colombia begins its listings of schedules with that of the Ferrocarril del Sur, a railroad built to carry coal into Bogotá from the mines some eighteen miles southeast of the capital. The passenger trains which run along this route take many visitors to the Salto de Tequendama, the roaring waterfall which legend links to a white-bearded Chibcha god, Bochica. The sabana was flooded, says the legend, and the people had fled to the mountains. Their crops and their homes destroyed, the Indians were hungry and cold. Bochica saw their plight, so he waved his golden wand and the rocks opened to let the waters out. Thus began the Falls of Tequendama.

On the Sunday afternoon of our trip to the falls, we had comfortable reclining seats in a modern railway coach. Through big windows we noted interesting cargo along the loading platforms. We saw hides on their way to factories in Bogotá for curing. They were still soft and wet-looking; each was tied into a flattened ball with a strip cut from the hide itself. There was charcoal packed in fique sacks lined with green leaves to keep the finer pieces from sifting out. And there were stacks of bags made from hides, the hair left on the outside—these are used to ship molasses.

The landscape between Bogotá and the falls is rather depressing, as everywhere evidence of soil erosion is visible, and a land of abundant rainfall is turning into desert. Trees and shrubs have been cut away from the mountains and great patches of dirt have washed down, leaving the bare rock exposed. Gullies are cut through the land, and a few cattle and sheep pasture where once it was possible to produce crops.

In the villages of Soacha and Charquito, shawl-clad women were at the station selling *almojábanas,* unsalted bread made of clabber and corn flour. Almojábanas were much in demand with the passengers. We tried them and agreed that they were quite good, but we thought they would have been better seasoned with salt.

Near Charquito, Tom pointed out the hydro-electric plant which

harnesses a part of the water-power for use in Bogotá. Colombia has many small water-falls, offering a promise of cheap electrical power some day.

We reached the end of the railroad and left the train to walk down the steps leading to the Hotel El Salto. (This hotel was built by the National Railroads, on the assumption that people would go to the falls to spend the night. It has never been very popular. The region seems even colder than Bogotá, as spray from the falls fills the air with a fine mist, as though it were always raining.)

We followed the highway toward the falls. Leaving the road, we had some difficulty getting down the steps approaching the overlook. There were a few stepping stones, very slippery from the rains, and the mud around them was even slicker. We managed to reach the overlook without sliding down in the mud.

Across from where we stood, a statue of the Virgin overlooked the falls. The quiet little Virgin is in noisy company—the river leaps off the rocks to enter the boiling stream 450 feet below, with a constant load roaring noise which drowns out less important voices.

The story is told that Bolívar visited the falls, and with his usual daring climbed down to a rock below them to get a better view. Tequendama is almost three times as high as Niagara and the stream below it runs through a gorge lined with nearly vertical walls. Descent into this would be quite a task, but the Liberator performed deeds much more spectacular. It is also said that he made a speech there. If he did, I am sure that no one heard a word of it above the roar of the waters.

As we watched, we had a chance to get our pictures taken by a photographer who was getting some trade from the country people. Near by a *campesino* was selling green corn which he had boiled and roasted on an open fire.

Tom had been to Tequendama before and he had planned our trip carefully. We would take the two o'clock train to the falls and return by the four o'clock train. That would give us an hour in which to see the falls. As we left the train, Tom asked the conductor what time the train would leave and checked his watch with the conductor's. After we had seen the falls, we struggled back up the incline, only to see our train pulling out before we

could reach it. For some reason the conductor decided to leave ten or fifteen minutes early. There was nothing to do but wait for the next train, more than three hours later.

Tequendama is at the end of the railroad; it offers no diversion except looking at the falls. We found it hard to be awed at the grandeur of nature for four hours running, especially in a drizzling rain. We thought of returning by bus, but the buses that went by had people jammed to the doors and even on top of the vehicles. They didn't slow down for fear they'd get another passenger. Our train was already there, but we couldn't sit down in it to wait, as it was locked up; and the hotel unlocked its doors only for guests. At last it was train time, and we got aboard. By the time we reached Bogotá, our train had picked up so many passengers that I halfway expected them to be loaded on the roof, as they had been on the buses.

XXI

LAND OF THE QUININE TREE

SHORTLY after his arrival in Colombia, Tom decided that he wanted to see some quinine trees. The site for the laboratory had been selected; he had assembled a few hard-to-find reagents and pieces of apparatus; he had analyzed the samples he had brought with him from Washington and others that had been submitted to the office of the Cinchona Mission. He wanted some authentic Colombian cinchona, and the survey parties had not yet begun their work, so he decided to get it himself.

In company with one of the technicians employed at the National Institute of Health, Tom set out by bus to go to a region where he thought he might find cinchona, along the highway to Fusagasugá. When they were approaching the altitude at which Tom thought cinchona might grow, at about the one-mile level, he asked his friend to arrange for the driver to let them off at the next town and to pick them up there on his return trip.

There was a Sunday market at the place where they left the bus, the village of La Aguadita. Tom suggested to his companion that they seek a guide in the little town, and since cinchona had been harvested in Colombia in the last century, Tom specified "the oldest man around here." Soon they found him, a slightly-built, bearded old fellow, wearing a black ruana. He was questioned about cinchona—quina, as it is called in Colombia. Yes, he said, he could take them to where they could see quina. In fact, he could see a tree from where they were standing—and he pointed it out. They walked to it, and Tom cut off some leaves, seed clusters, and bark. Then they talked further with their guide and he informed them that there was better quina on up the mountain, perhaps a half-hour's walk. The old man, barefooted and past seventy, led the way, and the two well-shod young men panted along the steep trail behind him. In a half hour or so they came to the other tree, and Tom recognized it from the pictures he had studied as another variety of cinchona. He cut leaves, seed clusters, and bark from this tree, too, and made a picture of it. During the following ten days he got the bark dried out and analyzed it, preserving the leaves, seed clusters, and part of the bark for future reference.

I did not see cinchona trees until I had been in Colombia for eight months. Tom was working every day of the week, including Sundays, and he thought his assignment was more important than my education! Finally my chance came. Tom wanted to collect some bark for an experiment, and one of the Mission's procurement men had to make a trip to a near-by stand of trees to supervise the installation of bark driers, so it looked like a good opportunity for Tom to educate some of his helpers without using much time for it. The party consisted of seven of us: the procurement man and another, the American woman who was Tom's botanical aide, the señorita who was part-owner of the Hacienda San José where the trees were located, Trujillo, Tom, and I.

The hacienda was only an hour's drive from Bogotá. The first part of the trip was over a level highway. Then we left the highway and followed a road winding up the mountains in a decidedly corkscrew fashion. The señorita told us that this road, about five miles long, had been built by her family. We met people driving burros, horses, and mules down the mountain. Their loads were principally charcoal, firewood, and lumber. Our driver breathed easier each time an animal carrying long pieces of lumber lashed to its sides went by. He was fearful a mule or horse might get frightened and ram its cargo straight into the radiator or through the windshield.

We reached the hacienda and found it practically alive with bark—we walked on top of a pile of it to get into the house. The laborers had started harvesting bark two weeks previously, and none of it had as yet been shipped out. In addition to the bark we had seen on the porches, there was more of it stored in the attic.

Soon we started up the mountain. At first, we were guided along the trail by a boy who was taking up two horses to bring back loads of bark. The horses and mules we saw around the finca were well cared for and they were tough. I was greatly envious of the mules when we were climbing the mountain. Someone suggested they could climb better because they had four feet; however, I noticed that the señorita and Trujillo took the climb as easily as the animals. (People living in high altitudes for a long time develop larger hearts and larger lung capacity.)

After an hour's climb along dusty paths, we reached the end

of the mule trail. Along our route we had seen several trees of Cinchona pubescens, a common variety low in alkaloids. I began to feel my self-esteem rising a bit, for we had reached a place where the horses couldn't continue, and we went on. Oxygen is scarce at that altitude, it's hard work climbing the grades, and I was gasping for breath and my heart was pounding hard. We noticed along the trail the stumps of huge trees, and the señorita told us that the hacienda house had been built by her parents twenty-three years before from the wood of a single tree.

The part of the mountains we then entered was like something from movies of "darkest Africa." There were a few large trees, but for the most part they were possibly eight inches in diameter and quite tall. The leaves were high above the ground and so commingled with the leaves of other trees that I could see why it is sometimes necessary to cut down a tree to identify it correctly. In contrast to the dusty trail we had at first followed, here it was damp. The ground was covered with a mat of vines and plants, so that we walked on a spongy, humid mass from a foot to three feet above the soil, typical of the regions where good cinchona grows.

We reached a spot where the men had been cutting trees, and we found some leaves that Tom could identify as Cinchona officinalis, a variety fairly rich in alkaloids. We found some areas where there were four of these trees within a radius of about ten feet. (This is not typical—in some Colombian cinchona regions, a person has to walk two hours between trees.) The workmen had stripped the bark and carried it on their backs, in fique sacks, to the trail where the horses and mules could transport it to the hacienda. We began to have an understanding of what the work involved, for it was hard enough climbing up there without having to work.

At the end of the trail made by the *quineros* (bark gatherers), the growth was so thick that we could hardly see the sky. It rained a bit but the overhead growth filtered it through as a fine mist. Climbing bamboo and vines were the biggest barrier to walking—they were like wires strung across from tree to tree. Tom and Trujillo cut our path with machetes. (The machete, made in the United States, is used throughout Latin America. Every Colombian *campesino* has this tool, a broad-bladed knife about

twenty inches long. It is usually hanging in a scabbard from his belt. Trees are cut down with machetes, even very large trees. I once made a snapshot of Tom's hat on the stump of a tree which had been cut with a machete. The tree was not less than thirty inches in diameter. The men become surprisingly skilful with these knives, upon which they sometimes may be dependent for defense. I have read of men in the back country who, armed with only a machete, have fought and killed marauding *tigres.* Axes are used much less, and those employed have an eye like a grubbing hoe, are very small, and have thick, short handles.)

After Tom and Trujillo had cut off the bark needed and dug up two young trees to see if they would grow in Bogotá, we started down. By the time we reached the house I felt rather exhausted. The señorita, however, looked as fresh as when she started out, and she hurried out to the kitchen to help the cook prepare something to eat.

We talked on the way home about cinchona. I had learned that much bark thought by the country people to be quinine bark was actually worthless. I wanted to know how the quineros are told which trees to strip, after a survey of a region, supported by laboratory analyses, has shown that certain trees are worth harvesting. I learned that for each six or eight workmen there is a foreman who is shown the type of tree that is wanted and how to strip the bark. This foreman goes through the forest and locates the trees, cutting a trail with his machete to each one so that the quinero can get to it and as a means of indicating it. Then the quineros come in, cut the trees, strip the bark, pack it into sacks, and carry it out on their backs to load on mules.

Almost a year later, I accompanied the same Cinchona Mission procurement man and Tom's botanical assistant on another trip into a cinchona region. Tom wanted bark from trees which had been killed a year before to check for loss of quinine, and the botanist wanted to get some baby trees and some soil needed in connection with her work. Trujillo went along to help with the digging. These trees obligingly grew right along a country road some forty miles east of Bogotá.

While my companion was supervising the collection of the soil and young trees, I pretended I was a quinera and peeled some bark from a felled tree. I cut myself, of course! I might add that we

kept those trees alive for a year and that they grew very, very slowly. If one of them lives long enough to be full grown, it will be the only cinchona tree in the capital of Colombia.

While we were on this trip we noted men sawing wood, a Colombian process always of interest to Americans. A site is selected on the sloping side of a mountain or hill, and a platform is built out from this. Then the boards are sawed out by hand with a two-man rip-saw, one man working underneath and another on top. Boards of course do not run uniform in size, and lumber is very expensive. Rafters are not made from sawed lumber, but from saplings in the round. Lathes are made of bamboo that has been split into strips—they aren't very satisfactory, which is probably one reason plaster has a habit of falling. (If you know Spanish, by all means read *"Que pase el aserrador"* by Jesús del Corral. It is a delightfully humorous story laid in the Colombian Department of Antioquia. It describes the trials of a novice woodsawer. The story is included in *Cuentos Criollos* by Gertrude M. Walsh.)

On the return trip we passed through the town of Guasca. The technician told us that in Guasca is made whole wheat bread which is widely known for its delicious flavor. The people who make it grind their own wheat and employ a recipe which originated in Spain hundreds of years ago. Just as he had us mouth-wateringly hungry for some of that bread, we reached Guasca and learned that there wasn't any for sale that day.

Trujillo, I know, will always remember that trip. He cut off a sample of bark after he had finished digging the dirt. He brought his sample back to the laboratory, dried it, and later Tom analyzed it. The analysis placed it among the richest samples of Colombian cinchona bark to be analyzed. Trujillo was as proud as if he had personally supervised the growing of the tree!

The story of quinine is a fascinating one and I regretted that the nature of Tom's work was such that I could not describe my trips into the cinchona forests in letters home—we never mentioned either quinine or cinchona in personal letters. I remarked to Tom that if I did write a story about quinine, it would have to begin as all the others did, with the old Peruvian legend of the Indian who cured his fever by drinking from a spring at whose edge a certain tree was growing. And of course it would include the

Countess of Chinchón, whose life was saved by a tonic made by soaking in water the bark of this same tree. (Incidentally, the tree was named for the countess, but her name was misspelled and this error has persisted through the centuries.) I was teasing my husband, for he'd told me before that he had a grudge against whoever first started spreading that particular story. "You could soak cinchona bark in water forever, Gen, and not get any quinine out of it," Tom said. "You've got to dissolve the quinine out with acid or a solvent like alcohol, ether, chloroform, or benzene. Furthermore, to get it all out you have to extract it for hours with a hot solvent—it just isn't so easy as that legend implies."

After we heard Dr. Wilson Popenoe's story of an experience in his early days as a plant explorer for the Department of Agriculture, Tom began to wonder if the water used by the Peruvian Indian might not have been "firewater"—aguardiente. (Aguardiente is a highly alcoholic distilled liquor, similar to gin, used throughout Spanish America.) Dr. Popenoe's story, as I recall it, went something like this.

Some years ago Dr. Popenoe was in the Ecuadorian forests on a plant exploration trip. He observed a shrub which he wished to photograph, and while he was setting up his camera, an old Indian approached to find out what the white man was doing. Dr. Popenoe greeted the Indian and after making the picture he began to talk with the old fellow. The scientist explained that he was interested in plants, particularly those which had medicinal value. A flash of understanding crossed the Indian's immobile face. "I am happy to inform the doctor," he said, "that there are many such plants in this forest. If it please the doctor, this humble person will be glad to guide him." Dr. Popenoe assented, and the old man led the way through the forest.

Soon the Indian stopped beside a plant with small white flowers. He picked some of the blooms and handed them to the explorer. "From these flowers the Indians prepare a cure for rheumatism." Dr. Popenoe questioned the old man further—how was the remedy prepared and how was it administered? "The flowers are placed in aguardiente. After a short time the aguardiente is drunk, and the rheumatism soon disappears."

They continued their trek through the forest and soon they reached a large tree. Again the Indian stopped, and this time he

plucked some of the leaves. "From these leaves the Indians prepare a remedy for bad colds." How was the remedy prepared and how was it administered? "The leaves are placed in aguardiente. After a short time the aguardiente is drunk, and the bad cold soon disappears."

The search continued, and some distance away the Indian stopped again. This time he cut bark from a small shrub and handed it to the scientist. "From this bark the Indians prepare a remedy for pain in the liver." How was the remedy prepared and how was it administered? "The bark is placed in aguardiente. After a short time the aguardiente is drunk, and the hurting in the liver soon disappears."

And so the exploration continued until Dr. Popenoe became convinced that it was something more than mere coincidence that in each of his informant's remedies there was one common ingredient. Knowing Dr. Popenoe's generosity, we assume that he rewarded the old Indian with a bottle of the common ingredient.

Tom met at the Instituto an interesting Colombian who called on him one day to talk quinine—Father Enrique Pérez Arbelaez. Father Pérez is well known in Colombia as the author of many botanical treatises. While he was in the laboratory, Father Pérez sketched Tom's profile on a piece of blotting paper and cut it out. It took him less than five minutes, and I found the likeness very amusing. I remember Father Pérez not so much because he has ridden muleback into remote regions in search of Colombian plants, but because he took time to make a silhouette of my husband!

XXII

COLOMBIA'S "MISSISSIPPI" FLOWS NORTH

TO THOSE of us who have lived in the Mississippi River basin, down is synonymous with south. We had to change that notion in Colombia, for the great Magdalena River flows "down north." Its headwaters are near the slopes of the dead volcano Puracé, in southern Colombia, and its mouth is at Barranquilla on the Atlantic Coast.

When we traveled on the Río Magdalena, we were to learn that it differs from the Mississippi in many other respects: the ever-present mountains which hem it in, never very far in the background; the tiny thatched huts along the shore; the umbrella-like ceiba trees, tall palms, and banana trees; and the log dugout canoes which take the Magdalena fishermen along their muddy "highway."

We made the acquaintance of the Magdalena on our only real vacation in Colombia, a fifteen-day trip away from Bogotá. We planned to stop in Villeta, spend three days on the Magdalena, visit Medellín, Manizales, and Cali, and then return to Bogotá.

We set out one Friday morning in June by the Cundinamarca Railroad to Villeta. We reached the station early and got ourselves settled in the first-class coach. We then turned our attention to what was going on outside the windows, observing our fellow passengers, and shivering. It was a cold, rainy morning, which prompted Tom to say that he had arrived in Bogotá in such weather and endured it for many months thereafter.

The travelers were a varied group. Through our train window we saw an officer dressed in the green uniform of the Colombian Army. He was followed by a little boy who carried on his head the officer's traveling bag. There were country men wearing ruanas, straw hats, and alpargatas; and their women with black shawls, straw hats, and alpargatas—all looking a little bewildered by the strangeness of Bogotá. A prosperous-looking man wore a ruana over his suit. He carried saddlebags and was obviously on his way to his farm. An old man shuffled along, bent nearly double from the heavy trunk on his back. A telephone worker with climbers and machete walked briskly by. We saw some less fortunate

people—a man whose face was blotched with pink patches (the result of some disease), a one-armed man, and a one-legged boy.

There were inside the train the somewhat noisy fellows who were selling lottery tickets, newspapers, and magazines. An RAF Regimental Officer went through our coach, looking for seats for himself and his family. Across the aisle from us, dressed in round black hat and long black coat, sat a padre reading a gilt-edged Bible, his lips moving as he read. Facing us, two seats ahead, was a middle-aged man with a very expressive face. As he talked, he moved his hands and shoulders in typical Colombian fashion. Sitting opposite him were two attractive women and a very pretty little girl. The child wore tiny gold earrings, set with emeralds.

Railroad workmen were a part of the scene. A trainman entered our coach to string through the signal rope. (One of the metal hangers was missing, and consequently the cord was not taut, which meant that passengers had to dodge it and push it out of the way to close the door throughout the trip.) Outside the train, we saw a worker with a handkerchief tied over his mouth and nose, looking like a movie version of a hold-up man. He was only trying to shut out the bad air resulting from the rain. A sleepy-eyed individual did his morning ablutions, squatting at a water faucet on the platform just outside our window. His hands served as his washcloth and towel, and he used one finger for a tooth brush.

Baggage was as varied as passengers. In the overhead racks there were saddlebags, cartons, *mochilas* (net bags), paper shopping bags, and luggage made of reddish-tan leather, which expands like an accordian to become very fat and heavy.

Susana had baked a chicken, cut half of it from the bones, and wrapped it in wax paper. The chicken traveled very comfortably in my raincoat pocket, but Tom lamented that we didn't have our lunch in a shoe box, which he said his mother always took along when they made visits back to Indiana when he was very young.

Our train got out on time, and we settled back and watched the countryside roll by. We passed flooded, sour-smelling fields. We saw carloads of cattle being shipped into Bogotá for slaughter because their pastures had been flooded. In some of the fields were standing pieces of palm which had been blessed in the churches on Palm Sunday. Laundry hung on barbed wire fences. Tall, regularly-spaced eucalyptus trees stood at attention along the bor-

der of roads. (One eucalyptus fence post was growing.) Near the tracks were dock, wild sunflowers, daisies, dandelions, cannas, ragweed, smartweed, calla lilies, and nasturtiums. I saw one nasturtium leaf that was seven inches across.

The first stop was Fontibón, which Tom said reminded him of Puxico, Missouri. This amused me not a little, and I told him that he was reacting like another midwesterner, Mr. Wendell Willkie, who had compared parts of Russia to his native Indiana in *One World.* In Fontibón we saw school children carrying their books in leather satchels slung over their shoulders, as do the children of Bogotá.

Between Fontibón and Facatativá, we passed stands of tall, spindly corn and fields of potatoes. We saw many sheep pasturing in fields near the tracks. We also noted Tropco Oil Company tank cars, which settled our discussion as to whether there were tank cars in Colombia. A trouble-car, for repairing the telephone line, waited on a siding for us to pass.

The boy who sold sandwiches and drinks came in with a baby's bottle. We caught his eye and asked him to bring us coffee. He was a bright-looking lad dressed in a new green and red uniform and "overseas" cap. He wore his uniform with some dash and did his job well.

When a Colombian wishes people to move aside and let him by, he generally says, *"Con su permiso."* ("With your permission.") This phrase is frequently heard, also, from one who is leaving a room full of people—he addresses his remark to the person nearest the door, even though he does not know the person. So much is *"Con su permiso"* used that it is sometimes shortened to *"Permiso."* At the stop in Faca, a man leaving the train delighted us with a new version of the familiar phrase: *"Permisito."* This is the diminutive form, and might be translated—if anyone is foolish enough to try to translate it—as "A little permission" or "Pardon me a little bit."

In Faca, there were women at the station selling foods of various sorts—yuca bread, corn bread, fried chicken, cheese, and boiled potatoes with salt on their skins. We liked the bread made in Faca and bought some to eat with our chicken. We were in Faca for several minutes, and a boy got on the train with two little baskets of small apples which he wanted to sell by the basket. The man

across the aisle from us wanted to buy only two or three apples, but not a whole basket. They negotiated volubly for some minutes but never reached an agreement, and at last the boy left with his apples.

As the train was leaving Faca, we passed the big Fleischmann plant that makes yeast for Colombia and, in fact, for all of the northern part of South America.

Facatativá is almost as high as Bogotá, whereas Villeta is less than a half-mile above sea-level, so within a distance of forty miles, we were to lose more than a mile in altitude. Frequently we could see the engine of our train as it led us around a sharp curve. A trainman was assigned to each car to hold on to the hand brakes. On the freight cars, the man was stationed on top; on the passenger cars, he stood on the platform between cars. We hadn't traveled on such steep grades previously, and at one time it caused us some concern. The train had stopped, we could smell something burning, and smoke began coming into the car. None of the other passengers seemed concerned about it, but Tom got off the train to see what was happening. He saw that the brakes were so hot that they gave a dull red glow. I don't know how anyone knows whether or not the train catches fire!

But the steepness of the grade was only one indication that we were reaching a lower altitude. Other tokens were the changing temperature and the vegetation. When we left Bogotá, it was cold enough for winter clothes. As we reached a lower level, we began shedding coats and jackets. After a while we saw orange trees laden with fruit, a profusion of red and orange wild flowers, coffee trees, sugarcane, bamboo, and papaya trees. We hoped to see tropical birds, but there were few. There is little animal life in this part of Cundinamarca, for the reason that the country people, who have little meat to eat, have killed the rabbits, squirrels, and most of the birds, even those as small as sparrows.

Of interest to us along the slowly-unfolding scene were an outdoor oven, women washing clothes on rocks in a stream, and *trapiches,* the mills where sugarcane is made into panela. We saw in use the brass stirrups which always arouse the collecting instinct of Americans. These stirrups resemble shoes with the back part open. (In more common use nowadays are stirrups made of iron or of wood and leather.)

Water in Colombia always seems to be in a hurry, and there were many small waterfalls which tumbled down the mountains not far from the right-of-way, sometimes splashing on the tracks.

We reached Villeta about two o'clock in the afternoon, having spent more than five hours making a sixty-five mile train trip. Perhaps that is a little slow, but the mountains got there first and seem bent on offering the railroad all the opposition they can.

Villeta is in warm country and is a resort town popular with Bogotanos. There are several hotels. We were not particularly pleased with the one we had chosen. It had its good features: the area was very quiet, and as we sat on the porch outside our room late that afternoon, we found no fault with the view. Jagged mountains rose into the air to remind us that we had not left them behind us; a rainbow started in mid-air and ended just as abruptly; a profusion of red, yellow, green, and blue birds sang and flew from tree to tree; red and purple bougainvillea were a riot of color. Our room, however, was not comfortable. It had only cold water, a smelly bathroom, many ants, and beds that sagged down in the middle. It was cold enough at night to be uncomfortable with the one thin blanket allotted each of us, and we saw why seasoned Colombian travelers carry their own covers. The windows of our room were screened with cheesecloth, but the kitchen, built like a summerhouse, had no screening. We considered the food only fair.

That afternoon we walked to the principal square, where market was to be held the following day. A ceiba tree spreads its branches over much of the plaza—Villeta is famous for this tree. The church across from the plaza was notable mainly for the sign on the door prohibiting dogs and pajamas. Probably some of the women vacationists had offended the padre by entering the church in slacks. (I never saw a Colombian woman wearing slacks, though they are advertised by some of the Bogotá shops as being the very latest thing from the United States. I considered *briches* more sensible than a skirt for mountain-climbing, but I followed Colombian custom and wore a skirt.)

Near the plaza, we saw a strange tree. A woman who was passing by told us that it was the totumo. We were already familiar with the non-edible, gourd-like fruit, which is used to make dippers and salt containers. The most beautiful tree, I thought, was the

papaya. The leaves are exceedingly graceful, and the markings on the erect trunk are so regularly spaced as to give the appearance of hand carving. We passed a shop where a cobbler was making shoes of fine leather. A few doors beyond, a blacksmith was working on some sort of tool. We picked our way over the rounded stones of an old camino that led up a side street. On our way back to the hotel, we saw several swimming pools. Another sight was soon to become a familiar one—coffee beans drying in the sun.

The most active part of the Saturday market was the section where panela was being bought and sold wholesale. Merchants from Bogotá go to Villeta to buy the panela produced extensively in that region. On the previous day, we had seen fields of sugarcane (the raw material) and trapiches (the small factories). Now we saw the burros, mules, and horses which had brought the panela to Villeta, and at one side of the plaza were trucks to take it to markets elsewhere for resale. The purchasers carried large quantities of one-peso bills in brief cases or satchels, for all negotiations were in cash. As each transaction was completed, a workman hoisted to his back the heavy bag of panela and carried it to a truck for loading. In another part of the plaza, producers bargained for used fique bags in which to pack their next batch of panela.

At the opposite end of the plaza was a corn market, but it was less active. Scattered between these two were fruits, vegetables, and a wide assortment of other things. We made only one purchase—five centavos' worth of *betiver*, a sweet-smelling root to perfume one's linens.

We noticed that in Villeta the men wore cotton *muleras* rather than wool ruanas. A mulera is rectangular instead of square, and it is usually fringed. The name comes from the lowly mule. The owner of the mulera often puts the garment over the animal's head when he leaves him standing. Thus blinded, the mule doesn't run away. The mule doesn't seem to mind, but sleeps peacefully under his owner's erstwhile topcoat. When the man is ready to leave, he shifts the mulera from the mule's head to his own shoulders.

On our walk back to the hotel, we saw red flags at the doors of shops, indicating that they had fresh meat. Refrigeration is not used and in hot country meat must be sold soon after it is butchered. We saw, too, "parking lots" where horses, mules, and

burros were tied in the shade awaiting the return of their owners. A cashier at a table collected the few centavos charged.

A few blocks from the main plaza, where a creek gurgles over the rocks, a woman was washing clothes. Along this creek Tom found a stone which he decided had probably been a tool used by the Indians of long ago. It had peculiar markings which looked like fossilized footprints. Since the stone weighed at least three pounds, I kidded him about the type of thing he was collecting to send back to the States. It does make a good paper weight! The prettiest picture that I saw was a boy driving cattle through a stone arch—of course, I snapped the archway after the cattle and boy had gone too far to get them in it.

That afternoon we assembled our luggage and left for the train. The railroad station was crowded with travelers returning home after market. There was one man with a *carriel*, the type of shoulderstrap bag with many pockets used by the country men of the Department of Antioquia. We soon learned that he was indeed from Antioquia. A Cundinamarca friend was kidding him, and both were enjoying it greatly. The principal allegations made by the man from Cundinamarca was that Antioqueños are too parsimonious to buy salt, which is a monopoly-priced product of Cundinamarca. He said that Antioqueños eat bread without salt, beans without salt, rice without salt, soup without salt—everything without salt! There was good-humored laughter from the crowd in the station, and the Antioqueño laughed heartiest of all.

Shortly before the train arrived, the ticket window opened, and Tom got in line. (We had asked Antonio, the porter at the hotel, if we couldn't buy tickets early. He told us that we couldn't, and explained that it wasn't a very good idea, anyway—perhaps the train wouldn't come.) We noted that the rate per mile from Villeta to Puerto Salgar was more than double the rate from Bogotá to Villeta—we never learned why.

Our last glimpse of Villeta included the green and white of the cemetery, tall palm trees standing as sentinels watching over the city of the dead.

In searching through the railroad timetable for some explanation of the difference in rates between this part of our trip and the trip made the previous day, I found other more-or-less interesting data, and I shortly informed Tom that we would go up

considerably after leaving Villeta and then come down suddenly before reaching Puerto Salgar. However, the train followed along the bank of the Río Negro, and as we went on and on, from an altitude of 1,500 feet to one of 4,450 feet—so the timetable said—we still followed the river. I had heard that my Uncle Bob of the Platte River country in Nebraska asserts that mountain water will run up hill. Never before had I seen this happen! Finally I became a little doubtful of the statistics. A sign at a station indicated that the timetable was wrong by some 3,050 feet, and actually the train goes downhill all the way from Villeta to Salgar—Salgar is only 600 feet above sea-level. I was forced to conclude that in Colombia mountain water runs downhill.

From the train window we saw crops of cotton, yuca, and rice. (We felt very smug when we recognized as cotton what the fellow behind us mistakenly called yuca.) A home-made grinding-stone, used for sharpening tools, also attracted our notice. At the station in Utica, people were selling hats, bags, and cigarette cases made of "Panama" hat straw.

At five o'clock we reached Puerto Salgar, where we were to board the *Santander*, a Río Magdalena boat. The *Santander* is one of the many stern-wheelers in operation along the river. It is not in any sense an excursion boat, but a combination passenger and freight carrier. Although some river boats do not carry passengers, all carry cargo. Our boat pushed a barge ahead of it. Every boat that we saw was either pushing a barge, pulling a barge, or had one lashed alongside.

The bulk of Colombia's exports and imports travel over the river. The river also is a link in transportation between inland points in Colombia—a shipment traveling from Bogotá to Medellín, for instance, would probably travel by rail from Bogotá to the river at Puerto Salgar, thence by boat down the river to Puerto Berrío, and by another railroad from Puerto Berrío to Medellín.

Traffic on the Magdalena is, in many ways, comparable to traffic on the Mississippi in Mark Twain's day. The steamboats are of the type in use in that era. The river goes its wilful way, its hazards unmarked by buoys or lights and its channels unaltered by engineers. And the Magdalena has the importance which the Mississippi had in the days before the Illinois Central, the Frisco, and other railroads replaced it as the main carrier of freight.

After leaving our bags in our staterooms on the upper deck, we came down the gangplank to watch the skirt-clad stevedores load cargo. They were loading bags of cinchona bark for transportation to Barranquilla and from there to the States—Tom would be getting a sample from the shipment after it reached Barranquilla. Bags of salt were put on board, perhaps on their way to Antioquia, where they do, to a sparing degree, use salt! Next, bags of mail were carried aboard. We heard a woman negotiating for the transportation of her household possessions, and they were loaded. She was especially concerned that her sewing machine should be handled carefully.

We interrupted our supervisory duties long enough to go in to dinner, a meal which gave us a forewarning that the trip was not quite so luxurious as advertised. We had soup made of corn meal and beans, spaghetti, tough beef, tomato gravy, cake with syrup over it, coffee, and water sprinkled with soot. We did not have plátanos at that meal, but we had them for every meal thereafter, including breakfast. I groaned that I knew that the hold was bursting with rice and plátanos. The beef was supplied by animals carried in pens loaded on the barge. One had been butchered before we left Salgar and others were to be butchered as needed.

Following dinner, we watched the loading from the railing of the boat. The *Santander* got up steam and began to move, but it started up the river. It was crossing to the other bank, to the port of La Dorada, to take on cargo from there. Loading continued until ten o'clock that night. At La Dorada, coffee was the principal cargo taken aboard. It was labeled "Product of Colombia" in English, and was on its way to the States. We estimated the weight of one stack as twenty tons (arrived at by counting bags and multiplying); there was another stack of equal size; and many more bags were loaded down inside the barge.

At last loading was completed, the coffee was covered with tarpaulins, the *Santander* turned around, and we started on our river trip.

Years before going to Colombia, I had read of the Río Magdalena, and I had been told that the visitor to the country just had to travel on it. It is indeed an interesting journey, but comfort should not be expected. Ours was not a restful trip, even though we were on one of the better boats. We were disappointed with

the poor food. We were also disappointed when we found out that the "adjoining" staterooms we had in lieu of a double were adjacent only in number—they were back to back instead of side by side. There was no door between. They were at the end of the boat, on opposite sides. In order to go from one to the other, we either passed through the dining-room (which was locked when not in use), or walked half the length of the boat to a passageway, and then half the length of the boat back.

That first night on the boat I didn't sleep much. The noise and vibration of the motor disturbed me. At first it was hot. Then it rained hard and turned uncomfortably cold. Rain came in through the ventilator and got our topcoats wet. And I discovered that the insects biting me were bedbugs! (The next day I asked the maid to use "Fleet"—a name Colombian servants apply to almost any insecticide—and I saw no more of the bugs.) It wasn't until I took a look later at the quarters of the folks traveling third-class that I decided we were comparatively well off. They had hammocks slung above benches.

The next morning we watched the scenery glide by. It was then that we saw the Magdalena of the travelogues, and we concluded that it was worth putting up with discomforts for a few days.

Small towns are scattered sparsely along the banks of the river. Between these towns, the only habitations are those of fishermen. We saw these men in their small dugout canoes (each canoe made from a single log), traveling near the river banks where the water is shallow. The boats are generally propelled by two boatsmen, each with a pole some twelve to fifteen feet long, not unlike those used by pole vaulters. One man stands at the prow of the boat and places his pole against either the bank of the river or the river bottom alongside the boat. Then he walks to the stern, pushing the boat forward beneath his feet. When he reaches the stern, his companion is in position at the prow to repeat the performance. Often there is a third man in the stern, steering the boat with a paddle. (Many of the fishermen, like the stevedores, wear short skirts rather than trousers.)

The trees which dominate the vegetation along the river are the ceibas, tall, straight, and white-trunked, with umbrella tops. We later asked a botanist friend why the ceiba trees along the river differ so much in aspect from the one in Villeta. The tree in the

central plaza in Villeta is some eight feet in diameter, branches at about seven feet from the ground, and shades an area of perhaps a quarter-block. Along the river, the lowest branches of the trees are some eighty to one hundred feet from the ground. Our friend told us that the ceibas along the Magdalena once formed part of jungle forests, so they didn't have room to spread out. The other trees have now been burned away. The ceibas are hard to destroy and the wood is not very usable, so they have been left. Kapok, used in pillows and mattresses, comes from the ceiba—it is a cottony fiber which covers the seeds. I believe that the ceibas of Colombia are not extensively exploited for kapok.

We docked at Puerto Berrío at noon Sunday, and the captain said that we'd be there two hours, so we left the boat to see the town. The sun was beaming down, and I attribute to that tour of Berrío the most beautifully tomato-red sunburn I ever got in my life—I made the mistake of going bareheaded and wearing short sleeves. Puerto Berrío has a lovely brick church in front of which grow tall palms whose leaves fan the face of the clock in the steeple, and the attractive tree-shaded hotel on the hill seems coolly aloof from the muddy, hot town.

The *Santander* was in Berrío until five in the afternoon, loading coffee and other cargo. (We loaded a little cargo of our own, a fine big pineapple that we ate the next morning before breakfast.) There within four degrees of the Equator, near the longest day of the year, traveling that evening we had only a little more than an hour of light.

About nine o'clock the captain ran the boat up against the bank of the river and attached a line from the barge to a tree on the shore. He said that we would stay there for the night. We were practically atop a swamp, and it looked to us like a sorry place to spend the night. We went to our staterooms to escape the mosquitos, because the rooms had screening and the deck didn't, but it was too hot to sleep well. During the night I thought that I heard the boat moving, but it wasn't making so much noise as it had been the night before, so I assumed I was mistaken.

I awoke early Monday morning and walked the half-mile to Tom's cabin. Together we went to the prow of the boat to see what had happened. For some reason the captain had changed his mind and untied the boat soon after he had tied it up. We had passed

Barranca Bermeja and were approaching Puerto Wilches, which we had not expected to reach until afternoon.

As we sat on the deck in the semi-darkness that morning and listened to the cries of the monkeys in the jungle along the shore, our teeth chattered from the cold. A few hours later, it was hard to believe we had ever felt chilly. The sun was scorchingly bright and the humidity was 90 per cent—it was the hottest day of our trip.

The *Santander* docked in Puerto Wilches at six, and Tom approached the captain to inquire about passage up the river. He was told that a boat would probably be through that afternoon, going back to Berrío. For further information, he should see the Puerto Wilches' representative of the steamboat company, who would be in his office around eight.

From the upper deck of the *Santander* we surveyed the early morning activities—on the barge in front of our boat, on the river, and on the shore.

On the barge, a cow was being butchered, and we observed the process with some qualms. At the time we began looking men were cutting up the carcass. Pieces of meat were dropped on the barge from time to time; the meat was washed with muddy river water; and then it was put in a dirty fique bag and carried inside, presumably to the kitchen. I said that I never wanted to see another piece of beef, but I ate some at breakfast.

Near the middle of the river, a cattle boat slowly made its way upstream, black smoke pouring from its smokestacks. The animals were carried on the boat itself and on two cattle barges. One of the barges had three decks, each deck crowded with cattle.

A shipment of heavy machinery was being unloaded from the *Santander* and set on a waiting flatcar. We had seen the machinery loaded in La Dorada and noticed that the owner was traveling with it to make sure it didn't get misplaced somewhere before it reached its destination, Bucaramanga—it is not an uncommon practice in Colombia for a man to accompany a shipment. The owner looked immensely relieved when he had checked on his list the last piece as it was removed from the boat. We suspected that he had persuaded the captain to make better time during the night so as to arrive in Wilches early in the day, which would explain the captain's changed plans about leaving the boat tied up for the night.

After breakfast, Tom left the *Santander* and hunted up the agent of the boat company, a courteous but rather excitable and fast-talking Antioqueño. Yes, a boat was due that afternoon, but it might not come. And if it did come it might not have space. There was no way of knowing until it reached Puerto Wilches. Tom asked if we might leave our baggage at the agent's office until the boat came in, but the agent suggested that we leave it at the hotel, and he said that he would send a man to carry it there from the *Santander.*

The porter, a gray-headed, slow-moving colored man, was quite a contrast to his employer—he appeared as if he never got excited. He fastened the two bags together with a strap through their handles, hoisted them to his shoulder, one in front and one behind, and shuffled off. When we reached the hotel, we learned that the shipping agent had told the clerk that we wanted a room, which had been assigned. Tom explained to the clerk that we expected to stay in Wilches only if we couldn't go back by boat that day, and that while we would like to have lunch at the hotel, we did not wish a room. We were a little put out with the agent for his well-meant but unauthorized action, but it caused us no great difficulty—the clerk was quite pleasant and he simply canceled the room assignment.

It didn't take us long to explore Wilches. It is neither picturesquely old nor progressively modern. It is a young town that grew up following the completion of the railroad from Bucaramanga to the river, and it is hot and rather dirty. We looked at the railroad station, which was new and clean. We stopped in the small church, which was cool, clean, and quiet. We walked out dusty streets to the edge of the town, seeing little of interest except the pipe-line which carries oil through this section.

We sat for a while on a bench in the plaza, near the meat market, which had been cleaned up and closed for the day. In Wilches, as in other towns in hot country, animals are butchered before daylight and by law no meat may be sold after 8:00 A. M., as no refrigeration is used. Just before eight, there is a rush to dispose of the pieces remaining.

There was a drowsy slowness in the activities of the people we saw in Wilches, in keeping with the steamy heat. A milk man distributed his wares by burro, one can loaded each side of the

animal's back. A clean little Negro boy carried workmen's lunches in portacomidas. An idiot shuffled by, joked with, but not treated unkindly, by the people he met. Negro women ambled along smoking cigars. Burros jogged by loaded with enormous green plátanos and big yellow pineapples. Shiny-leafed magnolias furnished welcome shade. Against one tree leaned a bundle of stalks of yuca, cut in lengths for planting—yuca is a crop of the hot country.

Our lunch at the hotel was neither outstandingly good nor bad. Even despite the following precautions, there were ants in the sugar bowl: the table legs were set in cans of water, a bit of oil atop the water in each can; the sugar bowl was set on a water glass; and the bowl was covered. There were many ants in Puerto Wilches and they were evidently very persistent!

After lunch we sat around the hotel café and tried to keep cool by drinking ice cold soda water—the café had a kerosene-burning refrigerator.

At two o'clock that afternoon the river boat, the *Marvásquez,* arrived, and the shipping agent came by the hotel to tell us that there was a stateroom for us. In an hour, we were again traveling on the Río Magdalena, but this time we were headed "up south."

The *Santander* had been a new boat, but the *Marvásquez* was old. Whereas we had had private baths on the other boat, on the *Marvásquez* the bathroom was just off the dining-room, on the deck below our stateroom, and it had to be unlocked by an attendant each time anyone cared to enter. But the food might have been prepared by the same cook from the same larder. The deck of the *Marvásquez* slanted up toward the outer edge and the railing was high, so that we couldn't sit comfortably and look out at the river in the rockers which served as deck chairs. The much-advertised orchestra consisted of four Negro boys who slept on the deck and whose salary was a contribution collected from the passengers. Their music was made by a tiple, a drum, a cornet, and maracas. The *Santander* had carried a similar orchestra.

Our boat pushed a barge ahead of it, the cargo made up largely of imports. Cans of lard from Argentina reflected the rays of the tropical sun; seeing it, I thought, "No wonder it's rancid by the time it gets to Bogotá!" There were bags of flour stamped with a familiar U. S. label, a used Pontiac fastened in place at one end

of the barge, and two cows left to furnish beef for the rest of the trip.

The other passengers had been traveling for four days and four nights, and all seemed tired—including the wilted flowers on the dining tables, which had no doubt been fresh in Barranquilla.

From the railing, we watched the boat get under way. The gangplank was taken up and the *Marvásquez* eased away from the dock and headed across the river to the opposite shore. The pilot kept the boat fairly near the bank of the river during most of this trip. Since we were going upstream, he wanted to travel where there was less current. (The *Santander,* traveling downstream, had kept to the middle of the river.) I was pleased with the change, since we had a better view of the shore.

I remarked to Tom, "I surely would like to see one of those monkeys we heard this morning." In less than five minutes he excitedly pointed to one high up in a tree near the shore. We saw several others and even took a picture of one, but it's one of those snapshots that requires a guide to point out which is monkey and which is tree, since we didn't have a telephoto lens and the little animals scampered to cover as the boat came near them.

Tom said that if we could see anything as small as a monkey, we should be able to see some alligators. Captain Amarís, a weather-beaten, kindly man who looked as if he had been on the river many years, was sitting near us, and Tom asked him where we should expect to find alligators. He told us they were usually lying in the sun on sand bars or along the sandy river bank. His sharp eyes followed the shore and soon he pointed out an alligator. We saw a number of large ones that afternoon; some we estimated to be as much as fifteen feet long. From a distance they were hard to distinguish from logs, but as the boat drew nearer to them, our doubts were dispelled—they suddenly came to life and jumped into the water with a big splash.

About seven, we reached Barranca Bermeja, where the Tropical Oil Company refineries are located. The captain said that we'd be there for an hour and perhaps all night, so we left the boat to see the city. Barranca looked prosperous and clean, and stores were stocked with more American-made goods than we were accustomed to seeing.

When we returned to the boat, we learned that we were to spend the night tied up at Barranca. It looked like rain, so we hoped for cooler weather and a good night's rest. Our stateroom had two doors, opening out on opposite sides of the boat, and we propped them open to let the wind blow through and cool the room. Then we shut them and crawled into our double-decker bunks. We didn't stay in them long. The rain came, and water began to drip into the room through numerous leaks in the roof. (The Colombian attitude toward leaks was expressed by the maid on the *Marvásquez.* I told her that water had leaked in on the bed. "But, señora," she said, "there was an *aguacero!*")

We closed our traveling bags and moved them to drier spots. Since there was a leak directly over the bunk, we both crowded into the lower one, using the upper one as a roof. The springs sagged down until the bunk was like a hammock. In addition, the iron rail at the edge of the bunk and the straw mat under the thin mattress scratched us. It was cold by this time, so we spread Tom's topcoat and my housecoat over us. The following morning we discovered that the housecoat and topcoat had slipped to the floor and were stained with the tar which, in half-melted state, covered the floor. I was ready to conclude that it was impossible to spend a restful night on a river boat!

By that time, thatched huts, ceiba trees, and fishing boats were becoming a little monotonous, but we were still interested in seeing alligators. We went from one side of the top deck to the other, depending upon which bank the boat followed, looking for alligators. The pilot saw us, and he began pointing them out to us. The boys who worked around the boat, the captain, and the other passengers all hunted alligators, and we took pictures of several. We also saw along the shore large white herons and small green parrakeets.

Again a cow was butchered on the barge pushed ahead of the boat, and for breakfast we had beef, pineapple, rice, and unsalted bread. Our waiter, Roberto, volunteered that I could have tea for breakfast. I was quite pleased, as I'm not a confirmed coffee drinker and the chocolate served was so sweet I didn't care for it. The tea arrived, several shades darker than the coffee, and so bitter that I couldn't drink it, even though Roberto looked very disappointed. Later that day, I tried the drink called *avena,* which

is made from raw oatmeal, water, and lots of sugar. I tried panela water, too, which I at first thought might be iced tea.

Roberto had been victor in one of the numerous contests among the help to see who would gain the privilege of performing for passengers the services which might lead to tips. The waiters evidently depended upon tips for most of their remuneration, and we no sooner got on board than we were approached by two of the boys, each of whom wanted to be chosen to wait on our table—a decision we did not like to have to make. The competition between porters was so great that some of them jumped across several feet of water to get on the boat before it docked and raced one another to the upper deck to ask for the privilege of carrying baggage.

Having been forewarned by the scramble on our first stop at Puerto Berrío, we had avoided it at Puerto Wilches. We sought to avoid it when leaving the boat in Puerto Berrío by leaving our bags in the stateroom and giving no indication to the porters that we were ending our trip there. The boat was to be in port for some time, and Tom said that he would go ashore to the Hotel Magdalena and ask the clerk to send a man for our luggage. This would give the fight over baggage a chance to subside and would also insure our getting a reliable man. Our plans saved us the annoyance caused by the noisy pleas of a dozen anxious porters.

When we arrived in Puerto Berrío late that afternoon, Tom went ashore to the hotel and arranged for a room and soon returned for me. We then bid "Adiós" to Captain Amarís, to the *Marvásquez,* and to our journey on the Magdalena.

The Hotel Magdalena, shaded by graceful green palms and by senna trees topped with red flowers, stands on an elevation which lifts it above most of the little river town. It proved worthy of this eminence—it is an exceptionally nice tropical hotel. It is owned by the Antioquia Railroad, and most of its guests are travelers making an overnight stay before going on by rail to Medellín, or traveling from Medellín to Bogotá, Barranquilla, or Bucaramanga.

Though Puerto Berrío is hot, we did not feel uncomfortable while in the hotel. Our room had a fifteen-foot ceiling and a large fan, and both windows and doors were screened. The beds were comfortable, everything was clean and attractive, and the food was quite tasty. We particularly enjoyed the fish. A disagreeable fea-

ture of the hotel was the proximity of the railroad tracks, where trains switched noisily all night.

We had learned that there were two trains out for Medellín on Wednesdays, one at six in the morning and one at two in the afternoon. We decided to take the afternoon train. Following breakfast on the pleasant porch of the hotel, we went up to the second-floor balcony to get a better view of the palm-filled patio. We then made our way to the roof, where through the leafy tops of the palms and sennas we caught glimpses of the Magdalena. A coconut palm, so near that we could almost touch it, guarded its huge fruit high above the ground and up against its trunk.

As we came out of the hotel, we saw near the entrance a plaque stating that Enrique Olaya Herrera had been nominated for the presidency there in 1930—he was the first Liberal Party candidate to be elected president of Colombia in some fifty years.

Tom had decided that he wanted to own one of the broad paddles that he had seen the fishermen using, and he thought that Puerto Berrío would be a good place to get one. We went into many small stores searching for a paddle, but found none. In one of the stores we saw a large scoop made from cow horn, and Tom bargained for this.

Since we hadn't found a paddle in the stores, we waded through the muddy streets along the river front, hoping to find a fisherman who was willing to sell his paddle. Tied up along the shore were many small boats, and Tom pointed out to me that boats are not licensed in Colombia as they are in the States. Near the docks, mules hitched to two-wheeled carts patiently waited while their owners disposed of cargo.

At last we came to a likely looking place—four dugout canoes were tied up near a house which now, since the river was high, had its long, stilt-like supports in the water. A large fish net was stretched near by to dry. After a lengthy negotiation, Tom bought from a friendly fisherman a paddle which had been whittled out of a piece of mahogany. Clutching the paddle in one hand, Tom led the way back to the hotel.

That paddle caused us a little bother and much amusement. We got it just before noon, and we didn't want to carry it with us on our trip, so we decided to send it to Bogotá by air. The Avianca office was closed for the lunch hour and would not reopen until

two, when our train was due to leave. We asked the clerk at the hotel if he could have a hotel employee take the paddle to Avianca that afternoon. He called a boy to take care of it, and Tom gave the boy the paddle, written instructions regarding it, and a liberal tip.

When we got home, some ten days later, the paddle had not arrived. We wrote the management of the hotel to inquire about it, and in a few days the paddle came. There came, too, a letter apologizing for the laxness on the part of the hotel employee—the paddle had been left in the hotel bar and forgotten. We stood it in a corner of our library and shipped it to the States with our other possessions when we left Colombia. Its eventual destiny is supposed to be as an adornment on the wall of our rumpus-room—when we get a rumpus-room!

After lunch we left for the railroad station to begin the next stage of our journey, the trip to Medellín. We had no sooner settled ourselves on the train when there entered our coach two Cinchona Mission botanists, who were returning to Medellín following a field trip. One of the men was concerned over my badly sunburned face and arms and gave me a tube of ointment which helped a great deal. I was beginning to peel, and Tom had told me that my skin reminded him of the alligators we had seen. (At the time, I made a resolution never to start on another trip into a hot country without a long-sleeved cotton jacket and a hat with a brim.)

Two rather unusual passengers traveled in the luggage rack—small green parrakeets. A traveler had bought the birds from someone near the station and entered the train carrying them on a stick, which he put in the rack above the bags stacked at one end of the car. The luggage rack also held six saddle bags; a much-traveled portable typewriter, judging by the labels from hotels and transport companies which had been pasted on the case; and a week-end bag made out of rabbit hides, the fur turned out.

The scenery from Puerto Berrío to Medellín is very pretty. White cattle graze on green hillsides; near the tracks grow a variety of tropical trees—cacaos, the "Pride of Barbados," with orange and yellow flowers, breadfruits, and mangos. An occasional tree plays host to an orchid growing high up in its branches. A succession of rivers wind their crooked and rapid ways down to the Magdalena—the Río Nus, the Río Porce, and numerous smaller streams,

known as *quebradas.* In several places the rivers are spanned by iron or wooden bridges. I saw one covered bridge with a Colombian touch, a tile roof. The Department of Antioquia is rich in gold, and we observed with interest the streams where gold was being panned and placered. As in other parts of Colombia, forests have been destroyed and not replaced, and we saw many barren hillsides. Near the town of Carácoli, a cemetery is laid out on a slope, orderly white crosses marching up the hill to a white statue of Christ on the cross at the top.

The largest town along the route is Cisneros, named for the engineer who built the Antioquia Railroad. Our train stopped near the plaza, which was paved entirely with big stones. We saw Cisneros many times before we reached it, as the railroad wound back and forth in climbing the mountains—at one point we could see the tracks zigzagging ahead of us five separate times.

It was growing dark when we reached Limón, and we caught only blurred images of the beautiful resort homes and hotels in the region, favored by wealthy Antioqueños as a vacation spot. Near Limón the train passed through a two and one-half mile tunnel. We regretted that night soon blotted out our view of the countryside, and that we could not see the roaring waterfall our friends described to us.

As we approached Medellín, scenic beauty changed to industrial wonders—one modern factory building after another reminded us that Colombia's second city in population is her first city in industry. Medellín is a restless, growing metropolis, where life moves to the rhythmic beat of carpenters' hammers, as twentieth-century buildings rise where once stood structures dating back to the 1600's. It has the bustle and energy of a boom town—a boom town built upon a concrete base and strengthened with steel girders.

In Medellín, say the statistics, are factories making textiles, matches, cigars and cigarettes, candles, beer, soda water, chocolate, shirts, shoes, glass, pottery, tiles, and soap. You cannot live in Colombia and be unaware of things produced in Medellín.

Our visit predated by several months the completion of the Hotel Nutibara, the tall structure whose well-padded skeleton we saw as our taxi approached the downtown area. The busy city had outgrown its hotel facilities, and we found that all rooms in the best hotel were taken. The room we secured at another hotel had

lumpy mattresses and the bath down the hall was dirty. The next day a room with bath was available, and we discovered to our great surprise both a tub and really hot water. I halfway expected Tom to announce that he wanted to spend the remainder of his vacation there, just soaking in tub after tub of hot water. In our stay in Colombia, that was the only time we occupied a hotel room that had either hot water or a tub. We thought that meals at our hotel were very good. We especially liked the Antioqueñan red beans and the pineapple.

Our hotel, even though its beauty was marred by exposed pipes, wires, and dirt, did have an interesting history. It was built for use as the private home of a gentleman who had gone to great expense to make it luxurious. He imported marble from Italy for the wide stairways—marble which traveled from seaboard by river boat and then was loaded on the back of mules for the long journey up the mountain. We could readily imagine that dark-eyed señoritas had once passed through the big double doors of finely-carved wood, perhaps to pause on a balcony and listen to a serenade from caballeros in the street beneath the balcony. In the courtyard below the second-floor veranda which served as the hotel dining-room were a fountain, a statue of the son of the man who built the house, an orange tree, and a palm taller than the three-story house. The courtyard, like the house, was just a thing that could have been beautiful, for the fountain no longer worked and near it stood garbage pails.

Our first day in Medellín was a church holiday, Corpus Christi. Uniformed school children marched through the streets to the music of numerous bands, ending their procession in the beautiful Cathedral. We later learned that this Cathedral is the largest brick building in the world. Antioqueños have the reputation of trying to outdo everyone else, and the Cathedral carried out the tradition —14,500,000 bricks, each one eight times the size of a standard U. S. brick, went into its construction.

It rained a little that morning, but was not cold—the city is only a mile above sea-level and has a pleasant climate.

In the residential districts of Medellín, flowers and trees add to the charm of pastel tinted houses whose windows are covered with iron grillwork. Some window-boxes display orchids as casually as

though they were geraniums, and whole avenues of palms rear their haughty heads above paved streets and shiny automobiles.

We inquired about getting out to Cali and learned that there was a landslide and that the trains weren't running. We could go to Cali by Avianca, but not before Monday. There was a bus; but perhaps the train would be running in a day or so. We didn't want to ride the bus, so we cut Cali off our itinerary, and decided that we'd wait for the train to continue our trip to Manizales.

The next day we visited the market. Like the rest of the city, the market looks prosperous. It has a concrete floor, and all the stands are inside, under a roof. We shopped for *carrieles*, the many-sectioned purses made of cow-hide with the hair left on. Buying anything is ordinarily a lengthy process in Colombia, and this purchase was no exception. Carrieles are used by the country men of Antioquia and Caldas, are made around Medellín, and are for sale in the markets. But you don't just walk in, select a carriel, and have it wrapped up. Tom finally concluded a negotiation and bought a carriel, but we spent an hour making our purchase.

Not far from Medellín are made attractive tiles and pottery. They are decorated by hand with designs showing Antioqueños engaged in various activities: fishing, making bread, panning gold, watching cockfights, and cutting down trees. (Of course the artists take a little liberty. Many of the men and women on the tiles are fat, whereas Colombians are usually thin.) We had seen the tiles for sale in Bogotá, but we hoped to visit the factory and make our purchases there. We were told that the factory was not easy to reach, so Tom suggested that I select the tiles in a Medellín store while he called upon the directors of the chemistry departments in the two universities. Later we visited leather goods shops, but we didn't make any purchases. I was fascinated by a hand-tooled sidesaddle, but I couldn't think of any very practical use I had for one—not even as a decoration for a rumpus-room.

Early Sunday morning we were to leave by train for Arauca, and there catch a bus to Manizales. We were told that railroad service had been restored as far as Arauca; however, at the station we could buy tickets only as far as Pintada, about half way. (Pintada is one of the many Colombian towns which have two names; it is also called Alejandro López. The name has been changed, and not everyone has accepted the new name as yet.) As

we left the hotel, we got another example of Antioqueñan thriftiness: the taxi driver backed into our one-way street and then backed on out of it, in order to save a block or two.

Before our train pulled out, I heard a vendor of cracklings call out his wares, *"Chicharrones Bogotanos!"* These cracklings are made from the fat just under the animal's skin. They are in such large pieces that the *chicharrón* usually sticks out of the basket in which it is carried.

The train began its winding trip down the hill to the valley of the Río Cauca. Near the right-of-way grew coffee, yuca, and bananas. The stalks of the banana trees which were heavy with fruit were propped up with bamboo poles to prevent their falling and damaging the bananas.

All along the route there are tiny white cascades of water falling almost on the tracks. Many short tunnels cut through the mountains and the tracks wind eternally around curves in getting down to the valley. The Cauca, like the Magdalena, is hemmed in by the Andes—the foothills of the Western Cordillera rise sharply on one side, and the foothills of the Central Cordillera on the other.

When we reached Pintada at noon, we learned that the track beyond had not been repaired. (Service was not resumed until a month later.) We were disappointed that the railroad employees in the station in Medellín had not told us this. Tom had made it clear that we wished to go on through to Arauca. We learned that we could continue by a bus which would make the run if it got a load. Tom bargained with the bus owner for passage to Anserma, where we could catch another bus to Manizales. The other train passengers wanting to go on were, like us, somewhat aggravated, and the arrogance of the bus owner didn't cool their tempers. One independent Antioqueño got so mad about it that he got back on the train and returned to Medellín.

It was hot, we were crowded, the seats were too close together for leg comfort, and the seats were so hard that my back aches every time I look at the picture of that bus. We had bruised spots for several days afterwards, and I expected to find the tooled designs of the leather covering of the seats permanently stamped on my back.

We crossed the Río Cauca at Pintada by a ferry which made use of an overhead cable to keep the current from carrying it down-

stream. (There is now a bridge across the river at this point.) We soon left the valley for a winding mountain road. We didn't reach Anserma until ten that night, hungry and achingly tired. My morale was lowest, I think, in the town of Río Sucio (Dirty River). The streets were muddy and the ruts were so deep that I was sure the bus would either upset as it sank into them or settle into them for keeps. We traveled fourteen hours that day in covering less than a hundred miles.

In Anserma we stiffly crawled out of the bus and Tom went across the street to the Hotel Majéstic, located in rooms above a store building. He stepped inside the door, saw a little boy sleeping by the entrance, took a look at the stairs leading up to the hotel, and almost backed out. However, when we got upstairs, we were pleasantly surprised. The beds, though hard (the mattresses were stuffed with straw), were smooth and clean; the room was quiet; and the roof did not leak, even though it rained all night. Our only "window" was a skylight. The hand-sawed boards of the floor, some eighteen inches wide, were scrubbed clean. All we had dared hope for was a quiet, clean place, and the little hotel exceeded our expectations.

Not many foreigners get to the little town of Anserma, and the next morning we noticed that we were the only ones from the United States who had signed the guest book at the hotel. When we left the hotel to look over the town, we aroused the curiosity of the children.

We soon saw that Anserma is a town of few streets. It is built atop a mountain, a mountain of the type known in Colombia as a *cuchillo* (knife). It is as though the knife were lying with the sharp edge pointed upward and the main street of Anserma lay exactly along this edge. The main street is comparatively level. The few streets which cross it leading toward valleys on either side are like inverted *V's*. They are too steep for autos and almost too steep for passage afoot by non-mountaineer people.

Through a door opening on a patio, we saw two girls pounding corn in a tall stone mortar. Each girl had a long wooden pestle, shaped somewhat like a double-ended baseball bat, but fully twice as large. They rhythmically raised these pestles and alternately they pounded the corn until it was sufficiently fine. I asked if I might take their picture, and they graciously assented.

Working near the open doorway of his little shop, a friendly man wove fique cinches and pads for pack animals. Farther down the street was a *trillador*, a plant where coffee is threshed, dried, cleaned, sorted, and packed in fique bags for shipment. The manager showed us the mode of operation and told us about the work done in the plant.

Early that morning we had learned that a car would make the thirty-mile trip to Manizales when it got a load, five passengers. The chauffeur had a good car, and it was a pleasant two-hour trip. We could stretch our legs to our hearts' content and look through the car windows at the prosperous little farms of the Department of Caldas. A typical farm has a small white house with red tile roof, a plot of coffee trees, a few white cattle, and well-kept fences. We saw many such farms and gained the impression that in Caldas there are many people making a fair living, rather than a few rich and many poor. Later conversation with well-informed people confirmed our impression.

We realized more than ever while in the Department of Caldas the importance of coffee to the Colombian economy. (Caldas, about the size of Connecticut, produces more coffee than any other Colombian department.) During our trip, we had seen coffee plantations, coffee being picked, coffee spread out to dry, the small stores which buy coffee from the producers, a trillador in operation, and coffee being loaded on river barges for its trip to a Colombian port and from there to its foreign market.

On the road from Anserma to Manizales we noted extensive use of the tall bamboo which grows in Caldas: telephone poles, fences, a merry-go-round, roofs—bamboo was used for all these purposes. Risaralda, through which we passed, was another town clinging to the backbone of the mountain. We came to Arauca after crossing the Río Cauca on a suspension bridge. (Had the landslide been cleared away, we would have reached Arauca the previous day by train.)

We reached Manizales before five, checked into the Hotel Escorial, and walked around a bit before dark. Manizales, like Medellín, looks prosperous. In our walk we passed a small factory where men were weaving on footpower looms the fique bags used in shipping coffee. We caught a glimpse of the snow-covered peaks only twenty miles or so from Manizales; they are indescribably beautiful.

We had been told at the hotel desk that we'd have hot water between six and nine in the mornings and that failed to materialize; nevertheless, we were well pleased with the hotel. It was quiet, comfortably and attractively furnished, and the food was excellent.

Tuesday morning we set out to explore the city. Even the most loyal inhabitant of Manizales admits that it is usually rainy and cold, but the sun shone all that day and it was lovely. We walked from the hotel to the huge Cathedral whose principal spire rises 345 feet into the air. Then we went several blocks away from the main street and found a spot for a perfect view of the nevados, with no wires or buildings to interfere with our attempts to photograph them. A man who lived near the hill from which we took our pictures brought out a chair for me and stood and talked with us. We had taken several pictures before the shadow of the first cloud fell on El Ruiz.

We looked up Don Alfonso, a friend of one of our Colombian friends, and he agreed to meet us after lunch to take us to see Don Santiago Vélez, of whom we had heard.

Don Santiago has for many years collected pottery, cloth, and metal articles made by the Indians, and things used in colonial times. He has the real collector's interest in the things he has assembled, and he was most gracious in showing them to us and telling us about them. He told us that most of his collection of gold articles is now owned by the Bank of the Republic. Among the pieces that he saved out of his collection are ceremonial masks and golden earpieces, hammered paper thin. We admired the beauty of tiny gold figures representing animals, and a delicately-worked nose ornament. Don Santiago has very old pottery from Peru; pieces of cloth more than five hundred years old; much pottery made by the Indians of Colombia, particularly those of the Valle region; and articles of silver, brass, and copper in use at the time of the conquistadores—cups, mugs, stirrups, and plates. In addition to his material possessions, he has a world of knowledge gained through his life-long interest in the Indians of pre-Colombian South America. We considered it a rare privilege to visit with Don Santiago and his señora.

We left the home of Don Santiago and our friend returned to his work, leaving us to explore Manizales on our own. Tom ob-

served in a doorway an unglazed tile showing the nevado El Ruiz. We made inquiry as to where these tiles were made and learned that the factory was in the next block. We found the small establishment and the man who ran it showed us how the tiles are made. I noticed that they were "dried" in water. He sent an employee to hunt up some of the tiles and insisted on making us a present of four of them. (Again we were collecting heavy souvenirs!)

Late in the day, we again met Don Alfonso, who took us out to the edge of the city to show us the club where cockfights are held. We observed the cable cars swinging out into space on their fifty-mile journey to Mariquita, over the valleys it would take so long to traverse by car or train. (We had hoped to go to Mariquita by cable car, but they are now used only for freight.) As we drove back to the city, the three spires of the Cathedral were outlined against a golden-red sunset, and the lights of the city sparkled along the mountain top where Manizales rests.

It's less than fifty miles from Manizales to Ibagué as the crow flies, providing the bird could make it over the 18,000-foot snow-covered peaks in his route. We had to go around them. We rode the train from Manizales to Pereira and there we changed to another train. We saw in Pereira the glass factory whose products we had used—tumblers, vases, and lemon squeezers. Pereira is a coffee center and has in addition several small factories. The town's prosperity is evidenced by many blocks of well-kept parkway, parallel with the railroad tracks. And Pereira, like Bogotá and Medellín, has streetcars—no other Colombian cities have that distinction.

In Manizales we had been told that there were buses from Armenia to Ibagué. When we reached Armenia at noon, we learned that there were no buses, but autos which regularly made the trip only when the train came in; that is, the train from Cali. We reached Armenia about an hour late for the morning trip, and the next car was due to leave at seven in the evening. The man at the office of the association operating the cars said he would leave earlier if he got a load. At two o'clock we learned that a load had been made up, and soon we left.

The trip through the Quindío Pass, described by Humboldt and others, was not particularly pleasant. The region is sparsely settled; the mountains are barren or covered with scrubby vegeta-

tion; and it is cold, especially at the Caldas-Tolima line, on the summit of the mountain. (It is somewhat more than two miles above sea-level at this point.) The road west of the summit is good, but the road on the eastern slope is very rough—the eastern slope has much more rainfall and it is harder to maintain the highway in good repair. The road is on a ledge cut in the mountain, and numerous landslides have made it narrow and bumpy. Over this highway must move all traffic between the Pacific port of Buenaventura and Bogotá, passenger and freight. It is the busiest road in Colombia. We met many large trucks, operated by the National Railroads, carrying freight across from Ibagué to reload on the railroad in Armenia. Completion of this break in Colombia's railways has been discussed for a long time, and someone is always suggesting tunneling under the mountain. The project is a tremendous engineering job, and the closing of the thirty-mile gap in the rails does not appear very likely in the near future.

When we reached Ibagué it was almost eight. We went to the Hotel Lusitania, had dinner, and then went out to see the town in the company of Don Eduardo, a Bogotá friend whom we had managed to overtake in Ibagué. In front of the hotel there were so many people that we thought something special had happened, but we were told that it is the custom for people to gather in the streets in the evening.

The fifty-mile autoferro trip from Ibagué to Girardot took only an hour and a half, and the level roadbed offered a strong contrast to the mountain highway of the previous day. Though the trip was a comfortable one, the scenery was not especially interesting.

As we crossed the Río Magdalena at Girardot on the railroad bridge, we had a preview of wide paved streets, colorful senna trees, and palm-filled parks. We thought Girardot attractive, and we liked the climate. It is one of the hottest cities in Colombia, but it was not uncomfortable during our stay there. It was just hot enough to suit us.

We did not like the hotel. The beds sagged, meals were only fair, mice ran in and out of our room, and screens were broken in many places. I was fascinated by the collection of pictures around the lobby, dining-room, and bar, particularly the huge painting of Bolívar astride a horse of peculiar proportions. The Liberator

was atop a cloud (according to Tom) or atop a snow-covered mountain (according to me), with his right hand pointed toward the ocean. I classified as the most artistic lithograph the soda water ad hanging in the bar: a blonde girl sitting on a blue blanket, wearing a white bathing suit, drinking a bottle of soda water, and saying, *"Que exquisita!"* ("How exquisite!")

Girardot has attractive sidewalk cafés, and we patronized several of them. At one we got delicious chicken sandwiches; at another we had ice cream. (The first place did not serve ice cream, and the second did not serve sandwiches.) At many places in Girardot, you can buy really cold carbonated drinks. This impressed us at the time, because in Bogotá carbonated drinks are usually served *al clima,* that is, at room temperature.

On our walk down the main street, we saw a sign on the American Drug Store, *NO HAY CEMENTO* (NO CEMENT). I decided that the store was correctly named, since Colombian drug stores ordinarily handle only drugs, cosmetics, and related items. There were many colorful and interesting sights: yellow flowers around the swimming pool, coffee drying in the wide paved streets (and burros and people walking over it), an old medicine man selling roots and herbs.

We found Saturday morning a busy time in Girardot, for produce was arriving for Sunday's market. Down by the river we stood near the wharf and watched plátanos being unloaded. The plátanos, looking like bunches of big green bananas, are brought down the river on bamboo rafts and in dugout canoes. (We saw many paddles like the one we had bought in Berrío.) The plátanos are thrown from the boats and rafts to the muddy ground, washed with river water, and then packed in fique bags before being carried up to the market on the backs of muscular stevedores.

A few women were at the wharf buying plátanos for their own use, but most of these would be sold to dealers. This starchy member of the banana family is a staple item in Colombia, as much so as rice, potatoes, and spaghetti. They are boiled, fried, baked, and used in soup.

In the market we saw a boy with four pups for sale, but otherwise it was a typical market. After visiting the market, we walked toward the railroad bridge. Nearly every house that we passed seemed to have at least one foot-treadle sewing machine. There

is a small local industry of making shirts and dresses in Girardot, and most of the work is done in homes. We met a little boy delivering some of the finished shirts, carrying them in a flat basket atop his head.

We crossed the bridge to the village of Flandes, and soon finished our "tour" of the little town. We returned by the highway bridge and stood for a time watching men and boys fish driftwood out of the Magdalena. Each man used a pulley-bone shaped piece of wood, to one fork of which was fastened a weight such as a heavy iron nut and to the other fork of which was tied a long strong cord. The cord was looped and usually the "fisherman" held it in his left hand. When he saw a piece of wood that he wanted, he threw his wooden hook beyond the driftwood, and then pulled in the cord to bring it in. Our favorite fisherman could throw some forty yards, nearly half-way across the river. Some of the little boys were rather skilful, too. A small girl stood in the shallow water near the shore, picking up pieces of wood by hand.

It was pleasant in the parks, and one afternoon we were sitting on a park bench when a boy approached and asked to shine our shoes. He was an alert-looking lad, clean and polite, and Tom took him up on it. As the boy did his work, we talked with him. "What do you call yourself, *amigo*?" Tom asked.

"I am called Juan, doctor," was the response. A little later Juan asked, "The señora and the doctor are no doubt enjoying a vacation in Girardot?"

"Si, Juan, we are spending a few days here, and we find it very pleasant. What a delightful climate!"

"No doubt the señora and the doctor are from Bogotá," Juan surmised.

"Si, Juan, we live in Bogotá. Have you ever been in the capital?"

"That I have, doctor! And how different it is from Girardot. What cold!"

"When were you in Bogotá, Juan?"

"It was several years ago, doctor. A friend of mine told me that I could get a job at one of the hotels in Bogotá and that I could earn more than I could in Girardot. So I went by bus to the capital.

"I did get a job at the hotel. I earned a small salary, my meals, and a place to sleep. But what cold it makes! It was so cold at

night that I couldn't sleep, even though the kind woman who had charge of the blankets let me have two extra ones.

"I stayed in Bogotá only three days and then I could stand it no longer. I returned to Girardot, and I never wish to go back to Bogotá."

We could sympathize with Juan, for we usually felt cold in Bogotá. But we thought we'd prefer a constantly cold place to a constantly hot one, at that.

We sent Susana a wire on Saturday morning, so that she'd have dinner for us that evening. We returned by the two o'clock train, rather than wait for the autoferro. The scenery from our train window was pretty, though we'd gotten so used to seeing coffee growing that the novelty had worn off. In Anolaima, an odd sight impressed us—a horse in a café! But the horse hadn't come in at the door Wild West style. It was a sidewalk café, and the owner sat at a table with three companions, holding his beer glass with one hand and the horse's reins with the other.

As we approached Bogotá, a trainman came through and removed the paper from the toilet. (On the train from Medellín to Pintada, something was wrong with the toilet door, and it took as many as two men to get the door open to let me in and the same number to let me out. I don't think anyone got trapped in there for keeps, though.)

We reached Bogotá a little after eight and caught a taxi to the house. Susana and Beatriz ran out to meet us when the taxi stopped, and I gave them both a big hug—they were as glad to see us as we were to see them. Susana had baked a chicken, made cheese cake, prepared vegetable soup, and had practically everything else that the two of them together decided we especially liked. Beatriz had the house shiningly clean.

It was clammy cold, and the sheets felt like ice when we finally interrupted our account of our trip to go upstairs. Coming from Girardot to Bogotá is coming from summer to winter, but there's no place like home. Thanks to the muchachas, we had hot water, a comfortable bed, good clean food, and a quiet clean house. The nicest part of traveling is being welcomed home!

XXIII

IF AT FIRST YOU DON'T SUCCEED

Ride, boldly ride,
The shade replied,—
If you seek for Eldorado.

THE shade had probably been to Eldorado in his mortal days, for his advice was sound. We three Americans lacked his experience, and though we walked up and down the Andes for seven hours that sunny Sunday we found

No spot of ground
That looked like Eldorado.

But we had one advantage over Poe's "gallant knight." We knew that there was such a place hidden away in the mountains. We tried again, and we did find El Dorado.

Our elusive goal was, to be more exact, the Lake of El Dorado. It is officially called La Laguna de Guatavita, and the country people living near it shorten this to "La Laguna."

We could derive some consolation from our failure to reach La Laguna that first time. It linked us, just a little, to the gallant, if somewhat greedy, caballeros who over a period of two centuries searched futilely for El Dorado. This remote little spot in the Colombian Andes was sought by Jiménez de Quesada and many more gentlemen, Spanish and otherwise, who thought to come upon untold riches when they reached it.

For in the middle of this fabulous lake a Chibcha chief, says the legend, washed from his body the gold dust which clung to the resin with which he was anointed. Then El Dorado, the Gilded Man, tossed into the lake the mound of gold and emerald ornaments which lay on the raft that had carried him to the spot.

There are nearly as many stories as to the reasons for this ceremony as there are storytellers, and the reader may choose the one he likes best. One legend relates that El Dorado was a new ruler, and that this was part of the ritual related to his taking office.

Along the shore stood his subjects, their bodies clad in fine garments and their heads covered with headdresses of gorgeous feathers. Countless bonfires were reflected in the waters of the lake, and the mountains echoed and re-echoed the beat of drums.

Another story relates that this ceremony occurred several times a year, and that the chief was beseeching the gods of the lake to give back his beautiful but faithless wife, who in her self-reproach had thrown herself into the waters.

While to the Chibchas the lake was sacred, those who have sought it have been interested in its treasure. Since the days of the conquest, some of the treasure cast into the waters has been recovered, but the gods demanded a dear ransom for the release of their cherished gifts.

Just as you have your choice as to which of the legends to believe, so, too, you can speculate as to the beauty and value of the gold and emeralds that still lie beneath the waters. To help spur your imagination, you may view some of the recovered treasures in the Museo de Oro in Bogotá.

Early one Sunday we left Bogotá to visit La Laguna. We thought that we knew how to reach it. "Don't go to the town of Guatavita," said a friend who had been to the lake some time before. "Go to Sesquilé; it's the town nearest the lake." That was good advice. But we didn't know that the lake was some four hours distant from the railroad station in Sesquilé. It's just as well we didn't, for we had a wonderful time strolling along the road, stopping to take pictures of the many things that interested us. A lad rode on one side of his little burro, sitting on the wooden loading rack; on the other side was a hide-bag of molasses. This gave us the formula of one boy equals one bag of molasses. We saw some beautiful specimens of the shrub *borrachero*, in which the drug scopolamine is found. (The Indians have used this plant as a drug to make themselves "drunk," hence the name, which might be translated "drunk-maker.") We stopped to admire an old stone bridge which the road crosses; we observed fields separated by adobe fences; we looked in on salt refineries in the little town of San José; we were impressed by the symmetry of the conical-shaped stacks of grain in the fields along the road; and we saw a cow with a crumpled horn. But we didn't see La Laguna—not that day.

We left the train at Sesquilé and walked from the station into the town, a half hour's walk. In the town we made inquiry, "Will you have the kindness, señor, to direct us to La Laguna de Guatavita?"

"Surely, señores. Follow this road to beyond the town of San José. Then take the mountain trail."

"Muchas gracias, señor. Can you tell me how far it is to La Laguna?"

"Half an hour, no more."

We reached San José and went beyond it to the trail that led up the mountain. There we asked a man how far it was to the lake. "Half an hour, no more, señores." We had already walked two hours! He took time to draw with a stick in the dust a map showing the route we should follow.

We started up the steep mountain road—no traffic problems on that route, for there were no wheeled vehicles, not even oxcarts. We met country people coming down to town. Every half hour or so we inquired how far it was to La Laguna, and each time we were told that it was only a half hour.

At noon, when we had been walking for nearly four hours, we came to a spot where clear water trickled over rocks beside the road. I announced that here I proposed to stop and eat lunch, even if I should never see the Lake of the Gilded Man. Tom told us to wait there and he would reconnoiter. He climbed a mountain ridge and from its top he could see far in all directions. He came down and reported that he didn't see the lake anywhere. While he was gone, a horseman passed us, and we asked him how far it was to La Laguna. His reply had a familiar sound, "Only a half hour, señoras!"

Lunch consisted of corned beef sandwiches, cookies, coffee with milk, and water. The Argentine corned beef was removed from the can, sliced with Tom's pocket-knife, and eaten with some rolls we'd bought in Sesquilé. We usually bought fruit at the local market on our Sunday trips, but Sesquilé wasn't having market, and we found no fruit, not even bananas. The coffee with milk came from thermos bottles; my friend and I had each carried one.

Tom always assumes that mountain water is polluted. He put a tablet into one of the empty thermos bottles, then filled it from the mountain stream. I've never drunk chlorine bleach, but I

venture the opinion that it would taste better than that water. Tom concluded that maybe the water was purer than he'd thought, so he dumped out part of the "bleach" and diluted it down to where we could barely taste it—he said that that was a good test of whether you had enough free chlorine to take care of any organic matter present.

We discussed the most recent advice that it was only a half hour to the lake, but we thought we'd better allow as much time to walk down as we had spent walking up, so we gave up and started back. The day following I was the owner of some very sore muscles. Even my ribs ached!

As we are inclined to be stubborn, a month later we decided to make another try at visiting La Laguna de Guatavita. This time our party included Trujillo, who was told in advance that his duty was to get us to the lake. Meanwhile a friend who had been to the lake told us that we had stopped "about a half hour" too soon. This time we had our plans made. We'd go to Sesquilé again, and we'd send Trujillo rushing off the train to hire a taxi to take us as far as it could. The plan didn't work. There was only one taxi, and its driver was busy taking the local padre to another town. So we started out afoot.

We retraced our steps along the level road to beyond San José, and then we again started up the mountain. We didn't dare stop to make pictures this time, but walked as if our lives depended on it, and even at that it took us two hours to reach the mountain trail. We came to the stream where we had lunched before. A short distance beyond the stream, the trail branched into several paths leading through the paramo. As we were hesitating to decide which path to take, a man and a small boy came by. They were country people who lived in the region.

"Tell me, señor," said Trujillo, "can you inform me which trail leads to La Laguna?"

"Si, señor," said the man, "you should follow this one."

"My friends the Americans have heard much of La Laguna, señor, and they have come a long way to see it. Would you permit the muchacho to guide us to it?"

"With great pleasure, señor."

The boy led us along the trail which branched to the left. The region through which we passed was bare of trees, but countless

datura plants (digitalis or foxglove) waved in the cold wind. Soon we reached the rim of the lake. We looked at our watches and sure enough we had walked just half an hour from the point where we had turned back a month before.

Very few people see the Lake of Guatavita, aside from the campesinos who raise crops of potatoes near by. Like a crater lake, it is in a cup in the mountain, the sides steeply sloping down to the water, and you must be inside the cup to see the lake. At the water level, the lake is almost round and nearly a quarter of a mile in diameter. The nearer we came to the lake, the less real the legends seemed; the twentieth-century descendants of the Chibchas who live here now seem far removed from the ceremonies, precious metal, and gems which characterize the legends of El Dorado.

The others walked down to the edge of the water, leaving me sitting just over the rim of the cup, shivering and gasping for breath in the thin atmosphere of the 10,500-foot elevation. Trujillo decided that he wanted to swim in the lake, and he did. We thought that both Trujillo and the Gilded Man were typically Colombian in their preference for bathing in cold water!

When Tom had returned, he grinned as he presented for my inspection a broken grinding stone which he said had probably been used by the Chibchas and had felt the footsteps of the Spaniards who came there to seek for treasure.

Now that we'd reached our goal, I wish I could relate that we stood gazing at the lake and thinking lofty thoughts—but we didn't! As we ate our lunch we talked of the hidden wealth beneath the waters. Tom speculated aloud as to how he'd go about getting the treasure out of the lake. He pointed to the notch that had been made in the side of the lake in an attempt to drain it to recover the treasures. "That was all wrong," he said. (The people who made it decided it was, too, after they'd spent about 32,000 English pounds sterling trying.) "The water should be siphoned off by means of a pipe running over the lip of the cup. That would work if there isn't an underground source of water." Tom wanted a portable rubber boat to get out on the lake and drop a line down to see how deep it was. I could understand his wanting a rubber boat, especially if he had to carry it up that steep road himself.

As I took a farewell look at the lake before leaving it, I recalled again how El Dorado was sought by the early Spaniards in a myriad of locations in both continents. I wondered if any had, like us on our first trip, stopped a half hour short of their goal.

XXIV

TIERRA TEMPLADA

BOGOTA has a perpetually cool climate, but you have to spend only two hours on the train to reach towns where there are always warm days and cool nights. This region is *tierra templada*, the name applied to that part of Colombia lying at three thousand feet to a mile above sea-level. At that altitude, Colombia is at its best. The climate is mild, and tropical plants like coffee, orchids, and bananas thrive.

Four of us made a trip to tierra templada one Sunday: an American friend, Trujillo, Tom, and I. We went to Cachipay, a small town fifty miles west of the capital, situated at a little less than a mile above sea-level. We left the train at Cachipay and walked downhill to La Esperanza, about six miles farther on, and then caught a train home from there. We not only soaked in some of the sunshine, but saw at close range coffee trees and other tropical plants.

At 9:30 Sunday morning we got off the train at Cachipay and walked a few blocks to the plaza. The principal market is held on Sunday, in the square in front of the church. This makes for an odd mixture of commerce and religion. The three big doors of the church are left open, and at the most solemn parts of the Mass men in the market place remove their hats, and men and women alike cease their trading and stand with bowed heads facing the church.

The Sunday of our trip was the day of the Virgin Carmen, and, as part of the ceremony, firecrackers and Roman candles were set off on the steps of the church. Many children were making their first communions, and we saw little girls dressed in long white dresses and veils, and little boys wearing white ribbons on their sleeves.

At one side of the plaza, a woman was offering for sale a sow and eight little pigs. She was asking the equivalent of three dollars apiece for the pigs, and had not sold any as yet. On another side of the plaza, we saw a man leading a burro loaded with bananas. Standing beside the burro was its baby, a little fellow only a week

old. The baby burro was cute as a button. He let me pet the soft "bangs" on the front of his head and stood obligingly still while we snapped his picture.

The most popular attraction in the plaza was a man on tall stilts, stalking around with a sign advertising a show to be held that afternoon.

Around the market we saw stacks of bananas, plátanos, pineapples, tangerines, oranges, tiny apples, and yuca. In addition to the woolen ruanas common around Bogotá, there were in use and for sale cotton ruanas and muleras. I bargained for a cotton ruana to add to our collection of Colombian souvenirs.

After spending a while in Cachipay, we set out afoot for La Esperanza. At first we followed a highway, and then we branched off to a camino. The dirt had washed out from between the huge stones and part of the trail was muddy. Much of the time we picked our way from stone to stone. Along the way we met an occasional campesino. Most of them greeted us, "Adiós," or in response to our greeting replied, *"Que le vaya bien."* ("May you go well.")

In the region of La Esperanza there are many colorful estates with tall palm trees, red and purple bougainvillea, shrubs laden with yellow flowers, and orange and other citrus fruit trees. Occasionally there is a home with a swimming pool in the spacious grounds. Many of the estates are named, and we noted the American influence in the names appearing on the attractive gates—one was called "Johny" and another, "Dolly."

We reached the station in La Esperanza almost an hour before train time and wandered up the road to eat our lunch. We sat down across the road from a growth of coffee trees, their shiny leaves and red and green berries shaded by taller trees. The shade made it hard to get a nice color picture of the trees, but we tried it. We did not know that the meaty covering around the ripe coffee beans is edible until Trujillo told us. We found that this covering had a pleasantly sweet taste.

At the station, country women were waiting to sell to the passengers on the train oranges, lemons, bananas, pineapples, tangerines, and gardenias. I bought two bunches of the fragrant white flowers, principally because I wanted to see how they were wrapped. They were enclosed in four broad red leaves of a plant

grown alongside the gardenias for this purpose. The leaves were tied at each end with palm fiber. (Susana was horrified when she learned that I had paid ten centavos a bunch, as she paid only five centavos for them at the Chapinero market.)

A popular town in tierra templada is Fusagasugá. It is some twenty-five miles southwest of Bogotá, and is reached by highway. Our only trip to Fusa was somewhat of a disappointment. It had been raining so steadily that we felt as if the damp cold had seeped into our bones, and we thought that a trip down the hill would help warm us up. That one Sunday, not a drop of rain fell in Bogotá, but much of the day it rained in Fusa. Fusa enjoys the reputation of having a good climate—we were just unlucky.

Our bus was typical of those in use on Colombian highways. It was a converted Ford truck, and five passengers were tightly packed into each bench-like seat. However, the road wasn't bad and the seats were fairly comfortable, so the trip was not unpleasant. Part of the road is level, but much of it is the kind of mountain road that gives me an uneasy feeling in the pit of my stomach. Just enough space is chiseled out of the almost perpendicular mountain to make a ledge for the road, and the mountain is always protesting by falling on the road or sliding out from under it. When my imagination got out of hand, I recalled the accounts of buses going over into precipices and looked with horror at the crosses marking sites of fatal accidents.

Near the village of La Aguadita, we noted an old road that has seen much history. It is five feet wide, very crooked, and exceptionally steep—at places it rises like stairsteps. It is made of great boulders from one to two feet in diameter. We were told that it is more than three hundred years old. It was part of the Camino de Bogotá, and it originally went from the Magdalena River to about twelve miles beyond Bogotá.

There was a livestock fair in Fusa that Sunday. We were interested and went to see the animals in a street a few blocks from the main plaza. Several hundred head of cattle were tended by many boys whose duty it was to keep the animals from running off. (The "corral" did not have a fence around it.) No one seemed to be buying or selling. We were told later that most of the sales are made at the coffee tables which dot the sidewalks, and

not out among the animals. In the "corral" we saw a huge Cebú bull, an ugly fellow about six feet high at the hump—these animals are noted for their disease-resistant quality rather than for their beauty. (This stock, imported from India, is the so-called Brahma of Texas—we know it as the sacred cow of India.)

We walked to the plaza, where market was going on. The fair had attracted a good quota of games of chance and fast-talking salesmen. The games were located at one side of the plaza, and the rest of the square was jammed with stalls stacked high with vegetables, fruits, and meats. Some of the stands offered orchids for sale. Much prepared food was available: meat, soup, sticks of doughnut-like bread, and a taffy made from panela. We bought some taffy to take home to the muchachas. The hairy shanks of a beef were hanging at a meat counter, pending the end of their journey in somebody's soup.

Fusa is the town in which the Government of Colombia confined the interned Germans and Japanese, and many of their families had moved there to be near the internees. On every street, we saw towheaded children with rosy cheeks, looking as if they had been scrubbed with a brush. We saw only one little Japanese girl. A Colombian waif, who wanted to practice his English (which he'd no doubt learned at the movies), said "Goodbye" when he saw us. We paid no attention to him, so he tried "Aufwiedersehn." At that, we couldn't help laughing.

The highlight of our day was a visit to the Luxembourg Garden. The owner, Señor Luis M. Cortés, told us that he had named his garden for the famous gardens in Paris of which he had learned from a German botanist. Señor Cortés became interested in plants while he was still a boy. About 1930 he started a garden on a small lot in Fusa. He is especially interested in orchids, which grow wild in the forests of the surrounding mountains. Most of his orchids flower only once a year, in August or September, and not many of them were in bloom at the time of our visit. He broke off one of the few blooms to present it to me—it was an orchid with tiny yellow and brown flowers.

Señor Cortés told us that the expression "as delicate as an orchid" represents a misconception. When orchids bloom, the flowers last for many days, and they keep well after being cut. In their natural habitat, the cool, damp woods, orchids grow al-

most anywhere that the tiny seeds happen to fall. Not all orchids grow in trees; some grow on the ground. Señor Cortés has made many trips to the woods in search of orchids, and he has hundreds of specimens in his garden. In one small section of the garden are cactus plants, varying in size from tiny ones only an inch tall to plants fifteen feet tall. There are also dahlias (including one with a striking red and white striped bloom); begonias, poinsettias, and bougainvillea. Three large parrots (one red, one blue, and one green), two perky little Pekinese, and a young monkey made up the animal group.

Señor Cortés was most pleasant, and we found his interest in nature study contagious. He asked us to sign his guest book and proudly showed us the names of famous people who had visited the Jardín Luxembourg. If they enjoyed their visits as much as we enjoyed ours, the work of youthful Señor Cortés has been worth while. One doesn't have to possess a talent for painting fine pictures, composing great music, or writing renowned books to contribute to betterment of life. A modest gardener in an inaccessible Andean village has made his contribution which his records show has been internationally appreciated.

Toward the end of our stay in Colombia we visited Barbosa, another town in tierra templada. Barbosa is not a resort town. It is a railhead. It is located in the Department of Santander, 135 miles north by slightly east of Bogotá, at the end of the railroad. The railroad to Barbosa is the completed part of the projected line from Bogotá to Bucaramanga, the prosperous capital of Santander. Some twelve years before, the Bogotá-Barbosa section of the railroad was finished. There was talk during our stay in Colombia of completing the railroad, but work had been suspended for some time. We decided that the engineers became discouraged because they'd have to go up the hill again, and certainly the rest of the job was enough to discourage even a Colombian railroad builder. At present you go from Bogotá to Barbosa in five hours by autoferro, and then get passage in a car and ride some ten hours more to reach Bucaramanga. You can fly from Bogotá to Bucaramanga in an hour.

We left Bogotá by autoferro early one Saturday morning, stopped for two hours in Chiquinquirá, and continued our trip to Barbosa

by the following steam train. Our mode of transportation was modern, but one view from our train window was reminiscent of biblical times—horses were being driven over wheat to thresh it, and then people picked up the kernels by hand.

Since our previous visit to Chiquinquirá, nearly two years before, there had been erected near the railway station a shrine in honor of the Virgin. The sky that day was a bright blue flecked with fleecy white clouds, and the artist seemed to have dipped his brush into their blue and white to paint the Virgin's robes.

Barbosa was the youngest town we visited in Colombia. It grew at the point where the work on the construction of the railroad halted. Since the industry of Barbosa is transportation, it has a dozen small hotels and *pensiones,* several warehouses, headquarters of a trucking company, and buses connecting it with Vélez, Jesús María, the Magdalena River to the northwest, Bucaramanga to the north, and Tunja and Sogamoso to the east.

At the station, Tom called my attention to the arrangement made for refueling the autoferro. The diesel train makes a round trip between Bogotá and Barbosa each day, with a four-hour layover in Barbosa. It leaves Bogotá with enough fuel to go to Barbosa, but not enough for a round trip. A steam train leaves Bogotá for Barbosa each morning, arriving in Barbosa before the autoferro starts back to Bogotá. When the steam train arrives, the diesel train fills its tank from the oil shipped on the steam train. This arrangement eliminates the necessity for storing fuel in Barbosa.

Our hotel (the Gales) was an attractive building of Spanish style. Pots of orchids hung from the rafters, one plant with pansy-like blooms. In the patio there were two cages of *toches*—I wanted to hire a singing teacher for these yellow and black birds. Their notes are clear and pure, but they string a few notes together and repeat them over and over. They never quite succeed in making a tune, and yet they come so near it that I found it quite distressing! They sang quite noisily early in the morning, but during the rest of the day they were quieter.

The hotel was clean and the rooms were well-screened. I commented on the good screening job, as on previous trips into warm country we had invariably noted broken screens. Tom reminded me that we were in a region where yellow fever is a potential danger. The beds were hard and smooth. The food was typical

of better Colombian hotels: soup, two starch dishes, two protein dishes, a dulce, and coffee. Most of all we enjoyed the delicious fresh pineapple, served three times a day.

Our visit to Barbosa was made more pleasant by the friendliness of the other guests at the hotel. Among them was a retired general of the Colombian Army, who knew many stories of the country around Barbosa. The bellhop, *Botones* (Buttons), was a good looking lad, and exceedingly courteous and likable. A diminutive "Buttons," *Botonscito,* was the child of one of the servants. He was a chubby child of three or four years, and someone had made him a uniform like that of the older Botones.

We walked on Sunday out the road to Vélez. We saw fields of cane and of yuca and many guayaba (guava) trees. Not far from the town there is a trapiche with a huge water wheel. In a trapiche the juice is expressed from sugarcane and boiled down to make panela.

Along the road we met a man and boy driving seven mules and horses toward Barbosa. Each animal was loaded with something wrapped in banana leaves, and we noted a sweet odor. The man told us that they were carrying guayaba to a small factory in the town. It was to be combined with the sirup from sugarcane to make the gumdrop-like candies called *bocadillos.* The first cooking of the fruit and cane juice had been done at home, and the sweet was to be further processed and packaged in Barbosa. Bocadillos are packed in several ways. My favorite ones are the size of nickel candy bars and come wrapped in dried banana leaves and packed in wooden boxes, three dozen to the box. It's surprising how many uses there are for banana leaves!

We had been told that the bocadillos made around Vélez and Barbosa are the best in Colombia, so I bought two boxes of them to take back to Bogotá. When I got home with my bocadillos, I learned that Susana could buy them cheaper five blocks from our house. I wouldn't admit I'd paid too much that time, for the ones I bought were fresh and the ones in Bogotá were not.

We saw several specimens of the plant from which fique, the fiber used for many purposes in Colombia, is made. The plant resembles the yucca which grows in many parts of the States. In itself it is not attractive, the sword-like green leaves often looking somewhat bedraggled; but the blossom is striking, a straight

slender stalk shooting high into the air sometimes as much as twenty-five feet or more. Branching out from the main stalk are smaller stems, upon which appear the delicate white blossoms.

It was market day in Barbosa, and country people were returning to their homes carrying their purchases in net bags, fique sacks, or in baskets atop their heads. One family was moving its meager possessions to another location, the people on foot and two mules carrying their household goods. Strapped to the back of one of the animals was a sewing machine. Looking back after we had climbed the winding road, we saw the movers far below us, going on toward Barbosa.

Along the road were a few adobe houses, but no prosperous-looking farms. Near one small house someone had constructed a laundry-place. Two huge flat stones were mounted on a platform made of poles, so that washing could be done from a standing position. A small trickle of water ran out of the mountainside, and discarded lemon peels indicated some laundress had used the lemons for their bleaching property.

Later we walked toward Bucaramanga. One of the few dwellings along the road was named the "Lusitania," and beneath the name some country artist had painted a ship. A boy in front of another house was making a rawhide lariat. From a fresh cowhide he had by a tedious spiral-cut made a narrow, long rawhide ribbon, an inch wide by one hundred feet long. He had tied one end of the strip of rawhide to a tree in his front yard, the other to a post of the porch. Carefully he had twisted and rolled the strip so that it acquired the rope shape. He had worked with such care and skill that all of the hair was in the core of the rope and the outside showed only the leather. We chatted with him as he worked the almost dried rope. He was rubbing it with a dressing of beeswax and tallow to make it pliable and water-repellent. Soon he would have a very useful, strong rope almost sixty feet long. We were told that in the cattle-growing plains country of eastern Colombia all of the cowboys use rawhide lariats.

As we took our seats in the autoferro to return to Bogotá, we were again reminded that temperature in Colombia is a matter of altitude. Two gentlemen were comparing Barbosa with Puente Nacional.

"Here in Barbosa, the climate is delightful. How mild! How

pleasant! But in Puente Nacional"—the speaker shrugged his shoulders—"it is too cold."

"You are right, amigo," his companion agreed. "Puente Nacional does have a cold climate."

They were speaking, perhaps, of some distant place? Not at all. Puente Nacional was only eight miles away and the autoferro would be there twenty minutes after we left Barbosa. But there is a difference of nearly a quarter of a mile in altitude between the two towns. Had we asked our fellow passengers the difference in altitude, they might well have replied, "Two degrees, señores." For we found it a not unusual practice to express altitude in terms of average temperature rather than in meters.

XXV

VILLAVICENCIO

"WHY are we stopping here?" Tom asked, as our friend drove the station-wagon to the side of the mountain road.

"This is Buenavista, where you and Gen can get your first 'Good View' of the llanos."

We got out of the car to stretch our stiff legs and take a look. There were the plains, indeed, two thousand feet below us, with no back drop of mountains on the eastern border. "I can't believe it's Colombia," I said. "It's too level."

We'd heard a lot about the llanos, but this was our first trip into them. This great level region, making up about a third of the country in area, is sparsely inhabited and little developed. Whether or not the llanos can be made to contribute significantly to the Colombian economy is one of the questions confronting the country's leaders. Erratic rainfall, poor soil, lack of transportation facilities—these and other difficulties must be overcome. At present, the llanos are grazing land, and about forty thousand head of cattle from this region are driven to market in Bogotá each year.

The principal town of the llanos, Villavicencio, is only a century old. In the future, Villavicencio may be the Omaha of Colombia, the packing-house city located at the edge of the seemingly endless plains. At the present time, it is more like Abilene of the 1870's. It is the point where herds are assembled from the plains to begin their six or seven days' walk to Bogotá. It's a hard trip. The cattle start their sixty-five mile journey at 1,500 feet above sea-level, follow a mountain road that reaches an elevation of 10,500 feet, and reach the end of their trail at 8,700 feet.

We started out for Villavicencio one Saturday morning with an American friend. A few miles out from Bogotá, we passed through the paramo, the treeless region in which grow plants which are unusual and quite interesting to botanists. Perhaps the paramo is most characterized by the mullen-like *frailejón* plant, with its broad, gray-green, velvety leaves. The climate, however, does not encourage one to linger and admire the flowers. The clammy cold that day was intensified by a fog.

The road over which we traveled was built in 1936 and according to all reports it has been improved greatly since that time. It is still sufficiently rough, narrow, and winding that I would not recommend it for those inclined to be nervous! There were four sections of the road so narrow that one car could not pass another, and there were chains at each end of such stretches. Telephones connect the watchmen stationed at the ends of these sections. We reached the first chain and learned that there were five cars coming through from the other direction, and that there would be a wait of about thirty minutes. When those five cars came through, it was our turn to use the road, and the watchman at the other end of the chain was advised as to how many cars were in our group.

We were fortunate in our timing and had only five-minute waits at the other three chains. We made the trip during a dry season and did not run into landslides, which can delay traffic hours, days, or weeks, while the road is being cleared.

On the way we passed a large herd of cattle being driven to Bogotá. The fierce-looking horns made the cattle seem quite menacing when we were approaching them. Tom remarked that in this respect they are like the Texas longhorns which made up the great herds driven north on the Chisholm Trail. (We rarely saw polled cattle in Colombia.)

The herd was guided by three men and a boy. Each of the men had slung over his shoulder a bunch of cattle shoes, fique pads a half-inch thick and nearly round in shape. As an animal wears off a hoof on the rocky road, it becomes lame. When this happens, the animal is roped and thrown and a shoe is fastened to the lame foot with cord. If the animal gets too crippled to continue even with shoes, it is hauled in a truck the rest of the way. Truck rates are such that it does not pay to haul the cattle all of the way, in spite of their loss of weight from the trip, around 12 per cent. The cattle are fed nothing en route except the little grass that they may be able to get from a well-picked pasture.

Cattle owners have other troubles in addition to heavy weight loss. An occasional frightened steer hurtles over the precipice, sometimes taking others with him. And many of the animals are infested with the *nuche,* a grub under the skin noticeable by the warty appearance and the open sores where the grub bursts out. It gives the animal the appearance of big wens all over its body.

We had expected Villavicencio to be hot, but found it cool enough for blankets that night and only pleasantly warm the next day. It is sprawled out like a midwestern town in the States and appears quite unlike the compactly-built towns of the sabana.

As we left our hotel one evening, we saw across the street other transients. They were convicts, three truckloads of them, on their way to the penal colony at Acacías. They were standing, handcuffed to a chain which was fastened to the truck. "Little likelihood of reforming men," I thought, "by hauling them like animals to a malaria-infested inferno."

We rode a few miles out into the llanos, along a very rough road, part sand and part "gumbo." The land appeared to be sour, and we did not see crops. During the rainy season tall green grass covers the llanos. It was the dry season, and the principal vegetation was sparse grass and broom sedge. There were small clumps of wooded growth that broke the monotony of the level wastes. We were told that among these green patches are monkeys and other animals, and that in them abound the brilliantly colored birds which we saw flying across the road. How we would have liked to explore one of these "oases"!

Along the road we saw an occasional house, the abode of a man whose livelihood is earned by fattening the cattle that are assembled in Villavicencio for their long walk to Bogotá. I observed that water was supplied by a driven pump of the type I knew from my childhood.

Looking out over level land for the first time in many months made us a little homesick. It reminded us of parts of Southeast Missouri and of Texas between Corpus Christi and Brownsville.

The most notable feature of Villavicencio to us was the field station of the Rockefeller Foundation yellow fever project. We had previously learned that the Foundation laboratory in Bogotá produces yellow fever vaccine on a large scale, supplying Colombia and several neighboring countries. This Foundation, working with the Colombian Government, has greatly reduced deaths from yellow fever in the country. Yellow fever still exists, however, in several areas of Colombia. Were the disease confined to the human population, its elimination would be more easily achieved by routine vaccination in areas of potential yellow fever.

But yellow fever exists among certain forest animals, the mos-

quito which transmits the disease lives in these same regions, and consequently there is still great danger from yellow fever to humans. The problem of the Villavicencio station is the study of the mosquitos which carry the disease and of the forest animals which serve as the reservoir of the disease. These animals (monkeys and marsupials) are found in the forests near Villavicencio.

Dr. Marston Bates, the director of the field station, showed us around the laboratory, let us meet at first-hand some yellow fever mosquitos, and told us something of the efforts to determine which jungle animals serve as a reservoir for the disease. The spotless aspect of the research center spoke of hours spent in patiently training assistants.

Our brief visit reminded us that in many parts of the world groups of men are quietly working to control disease and improve health. In Colombia, West Africa, and Brazil they are concerned with yellow fever; in the United States, Mexico, Bolivia, Egypt, and elsewhere, with malaria; in Mexico and India, with malnutrition. These are only a few of the peaceful battles being waged. Though many will benefit from their findings, only a handful of the world's population even knows that such work is going on.

XXVI

HONDA, A CITY OF SEVEN BRIDGES

HONDA is a city of bridges—six of them span the two creeks that wind crookedly through the town to empty into the Río Magdalena and another extends over the river itself. (The Magdalena span is hardly a full-grown river bridge—it is not used for wheeled vehicles, but only for people and animals.) At Honda the waters of the Magdalena rush along over rapids, and on the river banks lie huge boulders, middle-sized rocks, and small pebbles. At the time we visited Honda, the Quebrada Seca (Dry Creek) lived up to its name and had little water. The Quebrada Gualí was full of water and hurried noisily through the center of town.

Our last trip away from Bogotá before leaving Colombia took us to Honda for a three-day vacation. The difficulty about seeing Honda in three days is that the eighty-mile bus trip takes nine hours each way, so we traveled two days to spend one day in Honda. The trip, however, was one of the most pleasant we made, and we regretted its briefness. Honda was wonderfully hot, and it was picturesque. People were friendly, but only mildly interested in tourists. Tom had left some of the worries of his wartime assignment behind him. Then, too, Trujillo accompanied us, and he always made our trips more pleasant.

The road from Bogotá to Facatativá is level and smooth. After Faca we traveled along a winding rough mountain road. The mountain road offered beauty to compensate for its roughness—along much of it grew shiny green coffee trees fragrant with white blooms. Before dropping down into the Magdalena Valley, we caught glimpses of the winding river from far above it in the mountains. We ferried across the Magdalena at Cambao and followed level roads along the river valley the rest of the way to Honda.

Bordering the road from Cambao to Honda were crops of cotton, yuca, rice, flax, pineapple, corn, and the fiber plant henequen (introduced from Mexico). In pastures were many Cebú cattle, resting in the shade of the umbrella-shaped ceiba trees. An iguana, more than a yard long, ran across the road in front of the bus. We were told that the meat of these animals is delicious, but never

got a chance to try it. (The iguana is among the largest of the lizard family remaining on earth—it is related to the dinosaurs whose skeletons we see in museums.)

We drove on to Armero and then to Mariquita, the village where almost four hundred years ago Jiménez de Quesada, the founder of Bogotá, died.

When the bus reached the end of its run in Honda's business district, we found ourselves comparing Honda with Girardot. For like Girardot, Honda is on the Magdalena; and like Girardot, it is a clean, prosperous town, very much aware of coffee. Honda, we found, has retained more of the quaint charm of its early colonial days than has busy Girardot.

The Hotel America was screened well, and we had a room with bath. (I called it a semi-private bath, because it was closed off from the rest of the room by a rather thin curtain.) The beds were of metal and the floors of the hotel were of concrete and tile; termites are very destructive in a hot country. I saw the biggest roach I have ever seen. I thought at first that it was a mouse.

The meals at the hotel were well-prepared, but typical of Colombian hotel fare in their preponderance of meat and carbohydrates. One meal consisted of five courses: *sorbete* of *curuba* (milk, curuba juice and sugar); soup containing meat, yuca, potato, and spaghetti; fish prepared with capers, and a baked banana; meat, rice and potatoes; a dessert made of two tiny apples cooked with much sugar; and coffee. Ants crawled over our plates while we were eating, but I think that they were about as well under control as is reasonable to expect in a hot tropical country. Trujillo let the waiter know that we were fond of fish, and for dinner we had fresh Río Magdalena fish, fried to our taste. We were regular patrons of a small store called Heladería Alaska (The Alaskan Ice Cream Shop). The ice cream tasted good, and we liked even more the *frescos,* drinks made of fresh fruit juice, sugar, water, and ice. Our favorites were those made of blackberries and the ones made of *lula.* (The juice of this member of the tomato family tastes surprisingly like the juice of white grapes.)

Saturday morning we walked away from the center of Honda to the bridge over the Magdalena, Puente Navarro, the ironwork of which was made in San Francisco about fifty years ago. A colorful procession crossed over the bridge. There were women carry-

ing baskets on their heads; a man balancing on one shoulder a twelve-foot bamboo pole along which were suspended big clay pots, eight before and eight behind; chap-clad men on fine-gaited saddle ponies, driving a bull across the bridge; another man with a recalcitrant sow that didn't want to be either led or driven; and three girls with the little pigs that went to market—three fat little pigs on leashes. We each paid three centavos toll for the privilege of crossing the bridge to the village of Puerto Bogotá.

We had been told that the *11 de Noviembre*, a steamboat, was going up the river that morning. We were interested in seeing the boat pass the rapids, so we walked through the sandy streets of Puerto Bogotá to get closer to the river bank where the boat was tied up. As we approached the boat, we saw that the ascent of the river had not as yet begun, and we concluded that we would be able to see it better from the Honda side of the river.

Puerto Bogotá is a village of thatched mud houses, but it appeared to be clean. Some three hundred yards back from the river the town ends abruptly at the foot of a very steep mountain, from which someone had suggested that we might see the snow-covered peaks forty miles southwest of the village. Trujillo was all for scaling the mountain to get a look, but Tom and I thought that it was just a little hot for mountain climbing.

In Puerto Bogotá we saw at close range features of Colombian country homes that we had often observed from train windows. One was a kitchen, built apart from the house. It had bamboo walls and a thatched roof; and, as is typical of all but city dwellings in Colombia, it had no chimney, smoke coming out between the cracks in the bamboo. In the yard of one home was an outdoor oven, a hemispherical adobe structure resting on a square adobe base. Four poles supported a thatched roof which protected the oven from the rain. In another yard we saw a flat stone set at a slight angle on an adobe base, a rounded stone resting on top of it—these stones are used for milling corn. In front of the little church a very thoroughly padlocked poorbox set in a concrete base invited contributions.

We came back to the bridge to see how the boat was progressing. Work had begun on the ascent, so we recrossed the bridge for a better view. I sat down on a huge granite boulder, while Tom and Trujillo approached nearer the boat, jumping from one

big rock to another. Soon two children came up to me; finally more came, and when there were still few enough to count, there were fifteen. After they had been there a while, they forgot their shyness and began asking me questions: why did I take pictures, how did the camera work, what time was it by my watch. At least two of the children asked me if the rock wasn't hot—I therefore assumed that they had never lived in Bogotá and didn't appreciate a chance to warm up. My little friends told me they lived near by, along the river front. They were clean, well-behaved, clear-skinned, and very energetic. Not far from where we were gathered, a man dived into the river and started to swim across it. One of the little girls proudly announced that the swimmer was her *tío* (uncle).

The children were more interested in the steamboat, though, than they were in me, and when it began to gain on the river, there was excited talk about it. The boat was the property of the Naviera Colombiana, the largest line on the Magdalena. It was one of the boats in use on the upper Magdalena, above the rapids at Honda, and when the river was high it went all the way to Neiva. The rapids in the river at Honda are such that large boats do not ordinarily pass them, but this boat had been taken down to Barranquilla for repair, and it was now returning to the upper river to go back into service. At seven or eight that morning, the crew ran the boat up the river as far as possible by its own power. Then by use of a combination of cables, winches, boatpower, and manpower, the crew and ten or twelve men on the bank assisting them proceeded to conquer the rapids.

First one of the cables, nearly a thousand feet long, was carried forward until it was fully extended. Then it was fastened to a strong tree along the bank, the other end being attached to a winch on the prow of the boat. The men took up their posts along the bank of the river, between the boat and the shore. Each one manned a pole five to six inches in diameter, and sixteen to twenty feet long; their job was to keep the boat away from the bank, in the narrow channel where the water was deepest. The cables attached and each man in position (about midway the length of his pole, holding it between the bank and the boat), the boat got up all the steam it could and the winch began operation. (Tom and Trujillo were concerned as to what would happen if a pole should break; it would surely have killed at least one of the men.)

The boat puffed as though it were going to come apart at the seams; gradually it took in the cable until it neared the tree to which the cable was fastened. There the boat stopped and the other cable was carried forward and fastened to a tree farther upstream. Again the men manned their poles, the winch commenced to wind in the cable, and the boat puffed again. At length the steamboat rounded the bend, the worst part of its hazardous trip completed by mid-day. Boat and men alike rested, and we "supervisors" along the banks settled back and discussed how it had been done.

Along the outside of the bend of the river, a dozen women and children were fishing for driftwood, pulling it toward them with poles. On the shore near one of the houses someone had tied up his dugout canoe; near it was a raft made of balsa logs.

After lunch we explored Honda further. Along the smooth paved streets of the new business section, we admired the white hospital with the palm tree guarding the entrance, and a school, white with red tile roof. Only a few blocks from the hospital and the school, steep, narrow streets reminded us of Honda's history as a colonial town—it was founded in 1560. These older streets are paved with large, smooth stones, and tufts of grass grow between the stones. Substantial stone buildings with balconies and iron grillwork belonged to the era of the narrow streets, as did a picturesque streetlight fastened to the side of an old building.

Still more distant from the center of the city, an old white church seemed quietly aloof from the modern scenes around it. Near the church, a man dressed in white carried on his shoulder a long bamboo pole on which hung four huge baskets of bread. In the park facing the church, a bright red fountain presented a colorful—if jarring—effect.

We were reminded of Honda's claim to fame in recent history when we passed the house where was born Alfonso López, President of Colombia during most of our stay in the country. We came across the brother of the President, Señor Miguel López, that afternoon in Honda—Tom had met him in connection with his cinchona work. Señor López was accompanied by a young Colombian agriculturist who had once visited in our home in Washington. They told us something of the history of the city and of the agricultural projects being carried on near it.

We recalled that a friend of ours had begun fifty years before at Honda her two-weeks' trip over the mountains to Bogotá. She had married in the States a member of a prominent Colombian family and in 1895 went to Colombia with her two young children to make her home in Bogotá. The boat trip from the States was an arduous one; the boat trip up the Magdalena to Honda was even harder. At Honda she was met by the trusted servants of her husband's family, who had brought mules, bedding, cooking utensils and supplies out from Bogotá. Our friend relates that there were on the boat members of a theatrical troop. They had overheard her say that she had never ridden and all were standing around waiting to see her mount. She had the mule led around the corner, where she could climb up without an audience.

The trip to Bogotá, says our friend, took forever. They traveled even more slowly because of the children, who rode a separate mule, one each side of the animal in especially built cages. Our friend claims that she is a Santa Fereñian, dating back to the time when Bogotá was called Santa Fe de Bogotá. (This is not unlike saying that you lived in New York when it was New Amsterdam.) Today she travels by air. However, I am sure that, if the occasion demanded, she could still make the mule trip over the mountains, and that she would do it without losing the zestful spirit that has endeared her to friends and family. Compared with her journey, our nine-hour trip on an uncomfortable bus was indeed luxurious travel.

Early Sunday morning we started back to Bogotá. When we stopped at Cambao, I bargained for two big pineapples. Upon my arrival home, I was graduated *magna cum laude* by Susana. I had at length passed the test—I had paid less for my pineapples bought near the point of production than she had paid for smaller ones in Bogotá!

NORTH TO THE BORDER

XXVII

ADIOS, COLOMBIA

SINCE the Cinchona Mission had been organized to procure quinine for the army, when the army's need for quinine ended Tom was anxious to turn his attention to other work. But he was asked to remain in Bogotá until the last of November, some months after the end of the war.

As the time for our departure approached, we tried to get everything in order: give notice that we were vacating our house, sell most of the household goods we had bought in Bogotá, crate the things we were to send by ocean freight, secure plane reservations, get the necessary visas to make short stop-overs in Central America, and obtain the papers needed to leave Colombia. I had to sort our possessions into two classes, those we would carry through as baggage and those we could spare until our trunks came through by boat. Since boat shipments are sometimes delayed six months, this sorting required some thought—a crystal ball would have been most useful!

There seemed to be an endless amount of what Colombians call *papelería* and we call red tape. I found it was just as hard to get out of Colombia as it had been to get in. We had to have police permits to leave the country. We needed, in addition, statements that we owed no debts. Each of these was issued by a different office of the Colombian Government and couldn't be secured too far in advance; but we had to apply for them far enough ahead to allow for the offices' being closed because of holidays, the supply of forms being temporarily exhausted, or just being told to return mañana for some unexplained reason. Our passports had to be renewed at the United States Consulate. We needed enough Colombian pesos to get us out of the country, but any surplus would have to be converted to dollars at a substantial loss, because of Colombia's intricate exchange regulations. Added to our difficulties, Tom never knew with certainty the exact date he could leave, and in order to be sure of passage, we had to apply several weeks in advance of our departure. The month of November was a busy and hectic one for us both.

The kindness of friends solved one problem for us, that of find-

ing a place to stay after we gave up our house. Bogotá hotels at best are cheerless and cold, and at the time we were leaving all were crowded to capacity. American friends who learned of our difficulty took us into their home for the last week of our stay. Thus evenings made pleasant by leisurely conversation beside a cheery fireplace are part of grateful recollections of my first and last days in Bogotá.

At last Tom had surrendered to the bank's representative the numerous keys and padlocks to our house and survived his "trial by inventory"; we had seen our crates and trunks loaded on a truck and carried away for shipment; and we had made the last trip to a Government office for official documents. Our pockets and purses were bulging with permits, health certificates, passports, rather long plane tickets, and the all essential Travelers Checks.

On a Wednesday morning early in December we were to travel by Avianca to Cali and there board a Panagra plane for Panama. Trujillo wanted to see us off, so Tom asked him to come by for us in a taxi at four-thirty in the morning. Trujillo had a little trouble with the decrepit alarm clock that I had "willed" him, so he and the taxi were at our door more than a half hour before they were expected. We laughed when we found it was so early, and Tom went downstairs to tell Trujillo to wait for us. Trujillo worried about the taxi meter that was clicking while we dressed and packed the last things in our bags. But Bogotá taxis don't charge very high rates and the waiting taxi gave us one consolation—we didn't have to be uneasy for fear Trujillo had overslept or been unable to get a cab.

Soon we joined Trujillo in the taxi and rode down in the chilly darkness to the Avianca office. There we found that Ernestina and Carmen had also come to tell us goodbye. As we sat waiting for the Avianca bus to take us to the airport, we tried to joke, as we had many times before, but it was hard to forget that we were going far away. We sadly realized that it was the lives of our helpers that had been most affected by our stay in Bogotá. We were proud to claim as friends Colombians from all walks of life, but it was Trujillo, Ernestina, Susana, and Beatriz who had worked with us daily and adapted themselves to our ways. And their loyalty, patience, and indulgence had affected our lives, had made us say with conviction, "Colombia is our country, too."

At the airport we weighed in, presented our tickets, and boarded our plane. Our three friends waved to us as the plane taxied across the field and took off.

The Douglas DC-2½ in which we made the trip to Cali was stripped of the luxurious trappings commercial airplanes usually have, leaving the customarily well-covered interior bare of upholstery, and we had no hostess. Since planes leaving Bogotá take off from an altitude higher than those at which U. S. air lines usually fly, I am told that removing excess weight makes sense. Avianca has an enviable record for safety, gained in spite of flights over terrifically mountainous country, and sacrificing adornment in the interest of reduced load is no doubt one precaution taken in the interest of security. One advantage of our fourteen-passenger plane was that everyone had a seat by a window, and Tom and I didn't have to take turns looking out.

The trip was smooth and the air was clear. From the windows of the plane we saw to our right the Nevados of Tolima, Santa Isabel, and Ruiz, hoary-headed giants which raise their heads high above their neighbors for a look at Bogotá, a hundred miles east of them. We tried to take a farewell look at the Magdalena, but the clouds hanging over the valley shielded the river from our prying eyes. We saw to the south the Nevado of Huila, Colombia's highest peak. We remembered Trujillo's story of the painter from his home state, the Department of Huila. Trujillo had related his anecdote to best that of a friend, Eduardo.

"Well, man,"—Eduardo's serious expression gave no hint of the nature of his story—"in my *departamento*, Santander, there is an artist possessed of unequaled talent. So well does he apply his paints"—Eduardo painted a few strokes in the air to demonstrate—"that his paintings fairly breathe. My friend Don Francisco has the good fortune to own one of these paintings, a likeness of Simón Bolívar. It is so lifelike—this you will find hard to believe—that the Liberator must be shaved each day."

"But of course I believe you, amigo. That artist is truly remarkable—as are many from Santander. There is in my tierra in the Departamento del Huila a man who paints with some skill. But you are not interested in hearing of him, perhaps." Trujillo had apparently finished his comments.

"Tell me more! In what does your paisano excel?"

"It is nothing, really. He paints landscapes. His masterpiece is an oil of the Nevado del Huila. I have not had the good fortune to see the painting. But they tell me that so real is the snow that men must put on their ruanas to view the picture."

Trujillo put an imaginary ruana over his shoulders, and both friends chuckled over the stories.

We saw no more of the Nevado of Huila. We were leaving behind the steep ridges of the Cordillera Oriental, only to look down on the lofty peaks of the Cordillera Central. Before the day was over, we were to soar above the third of the cordilleras which make Colombian topography more vertical than horizontal, the Occidental. Winding highways appeared as narrow ribbons strung through the mountains; a small cemetery clung to a steep slope. As Cali came into view, we observed many flooded regions, and when our plane had landed on the soggy airport, we waded through water to reach the administration building.

We were not due out until the afternoon, so we confirmed our passage and then rode into the city. Cali, at three thousand feet above sea-level, is agreeably warm. Its paved streets and modern buildings manifested progress; its stately palms and bright flowers gave evidence of a city not too busy to be beautiful. As we visited the market and walked slowly through the streets of Cali, I remembered that this would be our last stop on Colombian soil.

When we returned to the airport, we were told that our plane might not leave that day, as earlier north-bound planes had been forced down short of Panama because of bad weather. However, by the time our plane had come in from Lima, the weather forecast was more favorable. When we took our seats, I at once noticed that almost everyone was speaking English—I had to restrain myself from rushing up to each one as though he were a long-lost friend!

The plane at first floated above the fertile valley of the Cauca River. Many fields were flooded from the recent heavy rains. We could orient ourselves for a while from our map of Colombia and from a small compass that helped determine the general direction the plane was following. (The hostess on the next plane joked with us about that compass, accusing us of checking up on the pilot.) An hour or so out of Cali, our plane made two complete circles, and we thought that we were heading back—the steward

had reported that the weather ahead was still not too favorable. However, after circling, we headed north again.

We learned that two earlier planes had been forced down short of Panama, one at Turbo on the Gulf of Darien and another on a tiny Pacific island off the coast of Panama. While it sounded like a wonderful experience to happen to somebody else, I wasn't sure that I wanted it to happen to me.

The jungles of the Chocó were the last we saw of Colombia, their appearance quite different from the mountainous region we had left that morning. The thick vegetation permitted no glimpse of the mysteries beneath it, but dared the travelers flying above to come down and pit their forces against the tangled vines, the venomous snakes, the man-eating alligators, the poisonous insects, and the steamy heat. The Chocó, an area rich in gold and platinum, is a region to view comfortably only from the air. Near the ocean, small muddy-looking pools altered the spinach-patch aspect of the jungle, suggesting that here was treacherous swampland.

The Chocó was left behind, and I excitedly anticipated my first look at the Panama Canal. Though I had come through Panama on my trip to Colombia, wartime restrictions had caused the plane windows to be covered. This time we were free to look all we liked, and we made our first inspection of the Big Ditch as we circled over it in losing altitude.

We came out of the plane to the comfortable warmth of Balboa. Panama customs review was thorough, but there was a notable absence of the numerous U. S. Army officers who had inspected papers before. (Here for the first time our baggage was looked over by a woman customs inspector.)

Our bags duly sealed by the customs officials and our passage duly checked by the Pan American clerks, we went out of the ultra-modern airport building through glass doors which opened automatically as we approached them. (How interesting to Trujillo would have been these photo-electric-cell-operated doors!) We drove in to Panama City to the Hotel Colombia, had dinner, and then decided to see a little of the capital of Panama.

It still seemed odd to hear so much English spoken and to see so many tall people. The shop windows were full of Christmas

things, and we began to realize that it was indeed December and that we were getting back to country that had seasons.

The following morning we were off to the airport at the usual early hour, and as usual I sleepily complained about having to get up so early, receiving small consolation from Tom's explanation that there's smoother flying weather at that time of the morning.

While we were waiting at the airport, a good looking Canal Zone police officer came up to Tom and said, "You're Tom Bellis, aren't you?" Before I could imagine what we'd done wrong, the officer introduced himself as Bill Wittrock of Cape Girardeau. We had a pleasant visit with him before our departure. Since it was our first meeting with a Missouri friend for some time, it did seem as if we were getting home.

Soon we were looking down on the winding highways and small farms of Costa Rica. Near the capital, San José, a small electric train rounded a curve. I had heard much of this beautiful Central American country. Costa Rica has some solid virtues: it is so democratic and peaceful that even the President rides the streetcar, wealth is so equally distributed that there are few rich and few poor, and Costa Ricans are rightfully proud of the low rate of illiteracy in their country. And Costa Rica has color: brightly painted oxcarts, beautiful señoritas, and a wider variety of birds and plant life than is found in any part of the Americas. I regretted that we had only a few minutes in San José rather than an overnight stay, as we had planned. Perhaps we can see it the next time we visit Central America.

The curtain fell on the mountains and coffee plantations of Costa Rica, a horizontal curtain of white clouds that gave me the unreal feeling that I was floating above an endless expanse of fluffy snow. It obscured our view as the scene on the ground was changing. Then the curtain drifted back, and Nicaragua, heretofore just a name from the history and geography books, came to life as beautiful Lake Managua and a smoking volcano appeared on the stage below us. We had but fifteen minutes at the Managua airport, only enough to notice bright bougainvillea outside and carpenters inside making a mantel of cedro, a fine wood similar in appearance to mahogany.

After leaving Managua, we saw another smoking volcano and several others whose ash-covered sides gave evidence of recent ac-

tivity. A study of an atlas some time after our flight locates these volcanoes in El Salvador, the smallest of the Central American republics; but our plane took us so rapidly from one country to another that at the time we could not tell where Nicaragua left off and Honduras and El Salvador began. Of the next country there could be no question—the shapely Volcano El Agua and the blue waters of Lake Amatitlán seemed to welcome us to Guatemala.

XXVIII

GUATEMALAN HIGHLANDS

IN GUATEMALA we went to the San Carlos Hotel, at which I had stopped before. It was as attractive and comfortable as ever, but rates had almost tripled—the war had brought inflation to Guatemala. That afternoon we visited the market and looked at the extravagant display of Christmas goods in the windows of the shops along Guatemala City's "Fifth Avenue"—Avenida Sexta.

The next day we boarded a ramshackle bus and rode over the dusty highway to Antigua. There was one compensation for the dustiness of the dry season—flowers were profuse and colorful. There was bougainvillea in red, pink, and purple, and the poinsettias looked as though they were taken from Christmas cards.

We engaged a little boy named Angel to guide us around the ruins of Antigua, the trip made more pleasant by the warmth of the day. In the church of San Francisco, I noticed a change—two arches had become unsafe and had been removed by the engineers in charge of the ruins. A round-faced Indian youngster told us that one of the volcanic peaks was called "Way-go"—he was trying to say Fuego and couldn't quite pronounce it! The fountain at La Merced seemed more perfect than ever, its weather-made colors surpassing the efforts of artists to produce beauty.

Again I had the impression of looking into the past, to the time when the massive ruins were showy churches and monasteries, and the streets were lively with processions and fiestas. María answered the door when we called at the Popenoe house, and she invited us in. This home, known as the "House of the Cypress," is, like the ruins, something out of the past. A patio with rare tropical plants and birds is surrounded by rooms restored to their colonial splendor. The beautiful furnishings help make of the house a living museum-piece. I thought the back patio, with its stone washing-place, quite intriguing, and the kitchen was no less so. The house runs a poor second in interest to its famous owner, Dr. Wilson Popenoe.

At noon firecrackers and rockets were set off on the steps of one of the churches. Other reminders that Antigua is the home of

living Guatemalans were the public washing-places, with running water, concrete tubs, and concrete floors—strikingly modern in contrast to the use of a polluted mountain stream.

We returned to Guatemala City that afternoon, and early the next morning we set out by bus for Chichicastenango, an Indian village one hundred miles away in the Guatemalan Highlands. My teeth chattered as we traveled along the mountain roads in the semi-darkness, and I saw heavy frost in the valleys. We almost regretted not having taken a conducted tour in a car, for the countryside was very dusty and eight hours on the crowded bus left our legs pretty cramped. Otherwise the trip was quite pleasant: our driver seemed very capable and our fellow-passengers were congenial.

In the seat beside us were a Guatemalan army major and his ten-year-old daughter. When we stopped for breakfast, at eight o'clock, I tried to talk with the little girl. At first she didn't understand my Spanish and told me that she didn't speak English. Unfortunately, Tom overheard her, and I'll never be able to live that down. The breakfast stop was at a small roadside eating establishment, and the breakfast, the major told us, was typically Guatemalan—I concluded that the Guatemalan diet is akin to the Mexican. Breakfast consisted of red beans, beefsteak, a very hot chile sauce, tortillas, cheese, *huevos rancheros* (scrambled eggs, with onion and green pepper), and sweetened coffee. The tortillas and eggs tasted especially good, and I sampled everything except the cheese and the chile sauce. The major and the driver, who were seated at the table with us, had a small portion of aguardiente.

Now that it was light enough to see, we noted Indians going to market. On their backs the men carried heavy loads of pottery and other wares, and ahead of them they drove pigs.

We had told the major that it was our first trip to Chichicastenango, and when we reached Lake Atitlán he asked the driver to stop for five minutes so that we might better enjoy the view. The lake is too perfect to seem real. Its blue surface reflects the symmetrical volcanic peaks which hover around it, and on its shores are little Indian villages. It is recorded on one of our favorite kodachromes, which managed to capture some of the vivid color. During the hour that our bus spent encircling it, we caught glimpses of Lake Atitlán many times.

We stopped for a few minutes at Sololá, an Indian village seventy-five miles from Guatemala City. Across the square from the bus stop, Indians in native costume were dancing in front of the church. In Sololá, I saw Indian men wearing black and white checked wool skirts as part of their costume. The skirts were tied around their waists like aprons, and short striped trousers were worn under the skirts. The variety of designs and styles in the dress of the Indians was a constant source of interest during our stay in Guatemala.

At a road intersection located 8,530 feet above sea-level, we changed to a smaller bus—the larger vehicle was bound for Quezaltenango, Guatemala's second city. Our route then took us over a steep and winding road overlooking deep chasms. In the bordering fields were brown cornstalks, mute reminders that corn is the principal food of the Indian population.

Chichicastenango had a dressed-up appearance, in preparation for the December fiestas. Green pine needles had been carried from the woods and spread in the entrance of many of the buildings, and practically all of the houses and the two churches had recently been whitewashed. The village is popular with tourists, as the Indians of this region have retained their customs, their dress, and their language from pre-Spanish times, only slightly modified during the four hundred years since the conquest.

Sunday is market day in Chichicastenango, and on Saturday the Indians were bringing produce into the village. Two churches overlook the plaza where market is held; a government building is on one side; and stores and shops line the rest of the quadrangle. On the steps of the churches, Indians swung censers of incense. On the brick floors of the churches flickered countless groups of lighted candles, blackening the ceilings with their smoke.

Supposedly, the Quiché Indians worship the Christian God inside the church and the pagan one on the steps. Actually there seemed to be such a mingling of the two religions that I wondered if the Indians were quite that orderly in their worship. They had a high standard of moral conduct before the coming of the Spaniard; they still do. Perhaps the deities are not concerned as to what religion the credit is due.

A local boy named Manuel asked if we would like to walk up the mountain to see the idol. Even though Manuel had but one

leg, he managed his crutches so well that he climbed the mountain better than we did. He was a cheerful, friendly, and intelligent youth, and he had picked up quite a few English words from the tourists who had come to the village.

Before starting up the trail we entered the patio of an Indian home where Manuel told us we could see weaving and a mask factory. At one side of the patio was a stable. On the other side were living quarters. Squatted on her heels on the floor of the patio, an Indian girl was weaving on a hand-loom a red cloth of intricate design, which she made only from memory. One end of the loom was fastened to a post supporting the house, the other end, to a three-inch belt encircling the weaver's hips. Her thread lay in a small basket beside her. In a room opening off the patio we saw the display of gaudily painted wooden masks, used in ceremonial dances at fiesta time.

After climbing a short distance up the steep mountain path, we paused and looked down on the little town. In the foreground below us were brown cornfields. Beyond these were white houses with red roofs, and far in the distance we could see volcanic peaks. At the edge of the village, on the side of a hill, was a small cemetery. Our view was framed by the pine trees sparsely scattered over the mountain. Our guide pointed out to us a *ranchito,* a little hut not large enough to stand in. Manuel said that it was used by a boy who protected the sheep from coyotes at night; the lad slept in the hut near his flock.

We came to the shrine of the pagan idol. Long ago, we were told, there was a wooden idol worshiped by the Indians as a part of their native religion. Later this was replaced by a stone figure. When I saw stone crosses beside the idol, I thought that it was another instance of the mixture of the pagan and Christian religions. I have since read that the cross also had significance in the religion of the Mayas. This leaves me in doubt as to the origin of the crosses that we saw.

At the time we reached the site, a witch doctor was there with an Indian couple. (The witch doctor, like our guide, was one-legged.) Manuel told us that the husband was sick and that they were praying for his recovery. In front of the idol had been placed grains of corn, rose petals, and lighted candles. The witch doctor added an offering of aguardiente, sprinkling it on the ground be-

fore the idol. Although the Indians pay little attention to tourists, we had a feeling that we were invading their privacy, and we did not stay long. We went down the mountain path with our agile guide and parted from him in the market place. The next morning we saw him carrying camera equipment for another American, and he grinned cheerfully at us.

The streets, as evening approached, were reminiscent of Mardi Gras in New Orleans. Costumed boys, wearing painted wooden masks—some smiling, some grimacing, some solemn—danced in the streets. They repeated the same dance in various parts of the village, followed by a crowd of people. The music was furnished by three marimbas; one two-man drum and cymbals (one man carrying the drum and the other playing); a bass viol which the player picked; a slide trombone; a cornet; and a long clarinet.

Upon the recommendation of the major, we stopped at a smaller hotel rather than at the luxurious Mayan Inn. We were comfortable, but I'm sure we would have eaten better at the Inn. From some source I got food poisoning, annoying at any time and especially so when traveling. Our little hotel did have its points of interest. In the patio there was a parrot that sounded so much like a baby crying that I could hardly believe it was only a bird. There was a colorful guaca, too (larger than the parrot); and there were many orchids, some of them in bloom. I liked the fat little Indian boy who came in to make a fire in our fireplace with corn cobs, "fat pine," and wood.

We were the only Americans staying at our hotel, and once as I came out of our room three little boys, children of some of the help, were waiting to get a look at me. The nights were quite cold, but we had a generous supply of heavy blankets and did not need to add the one that we bought in the market—a soft, hand-woven blanket with Quetzal birds and ducks forming part of its design.

Sunday morning we were out of the hotel early, expecting to see activity in the market. After all, we had just come from Colombia, where market begins almost as soon as it is light. At nine in Chichicastenango produce was still being spread on the ground, and some of the vendors were still in the process of erecting cloth shelters over their stalls. (Most of these were flour sacks which had been sewed together—they were supported by poles.) The

sun was bright, and it must have felt good to the country people who had slept out in the square alongside their wares. In the market I saw incense, dried red peppers, candles, limestone, corn, panela, green coffee, salt, firewood, necklaces made of beads and coins, and hand-woven cotton cloth and woolen blankets in a tempting variety of designs. Among the fruits and vegetables were small round avocados at a penny apiece.

Although the Indians talked their native language among themselves, in making a few purchases I encountered none who did not speak Spanish.

In the market place, Quiché women walked to and fro, babies slung on their backs. Several tiny girls were diminutive models of their mothers, in red embroidered blouses and short red wrap-around skirts. The Quiché men wore short black wool pants and black wool jackets, both elaborately embroidered; red sashes and red head dress completed their costumes. Some wore sandals, others were barefooted. The women carried their possessions wrapped in brightly colored, hand-woven "carrying cloths"; the men used bags which resembled newsboys' satchels.

The strikingly different costumes of some Indians indicated that they were from other villages; the "store clothes" of many showed that gradually some of the old ways are disappearing.

All day long market went on in the square. In the background, the two white churches were alive with Indians swinging incense and praying before lighted candles, on the steps, on the porticos, and inside the churches. Next door to one of the churches, on a white-washed porch, three barbers plied their trade. For haircuts they charged two cents per customer.

In the afternoon, a funeral procession passed by the market on its way to the cemetery on the side of the hill. A group of Quiché Indians, dressed in their native costumes and holding in their hands the gold scepters of the Society of Jesus, headed the procession. The casket was carried by eight other men.

Monday morning we started back to Guatemala City. As we were putting things into our bags and checking to see that we had everything, the lights went out. Tom groped around in the dark and found the boy who had called us, and after a long search the boy located matches and a candle. We learned from a fellow bus passenger that usually the lights go off at five in the morning for

the day. I had carried a flashlight and an alarm clock with me on my trip down and never used them; on this trip, we had needed both and didn't have them!

The return trip was unpleasant because of the dust. I arrived at Guatemala City with my hair straw-like from the grit, and a considerable portion of Guatemalan real estate covered my skin.

That afternoon we had disappointing news: we were told at the Pan American ticket office that the outgoing flight had been canceled, and that we could leave the next night or try "ship-side" the next afternoon. We went to the airport the following afternoon to await the incoming plane. It was my first attempt to go ship-side, and I was glad that I hadn't tried to go down to Colombia that way. It is so disappointing when the plane goes off and you're not on it, which was what happened to us—there weren't any cancelations.

We had dinner that evening at the Pension Gueroult. We found the food delicious, the service excellent, and the garden in the patio exceptionally interesting. I bought another Guatemalan textile from an Indian woman who came by the pension. I had read and been told that Guatemalan Indians are unusually honest, and a small incident in connection with this purchase added a measure of proof. I bargained for the textiles, a tablecloth and six napkins, paid the woman for them, and she handed me my purchase. Some minutes later, the Indian woman returned, a relieved expression on her face when she found that I had not gone. She had discovered that she had failed to give me one of the napkins.

It was nearly midnight when we left Guatemala, and our nonstop flight brought us into Mexico City at five in the morning. We saw nothing from the plane except the lights of an occasional town, resembling a Christmas tree, but we had exceptionally smooth flying weather. We had the doubtful honor of making a flight that was not yet scheduled; this flight was to be added to the regular schedule shortly.

XXIX

ACROSS THE RIO GRANDE

OUR three days in Mexico City were not very agreeable to me. Perhaps I was getting tired; it was a week since we had left Bogotá. Then, too, I was still feeling the effects of the food poisoning contracted three days before. Nothing seemed to work out exactly right.

The first day, we went to Villa María to see the fiesta of the Virgin of Guadalupe, the Patron Saint of Mexico. We had been told that there would be colorful native dances. We saw nothing but crowds and crowds of people—and Tom got his pocket picked! (Fortunately, he lost only his sun glasses, coin purse, and a dollar or so of change.) When we returned to our hotel, we found that water was cut off each night in Mexico City—it was the dry season.

Tom had been planning for months to fly to Tampico when we reached Mexico. When he checked with the ticket office, he learned that all passage was sold out for a week. Then we rode out from the city to the Floating Gardens of Xochimilco. There we saw no flowers other than crops of cauliflower, and we were charged an exceedingly high rate for a boat ride over the canals.

On Friday morning Tom learned that a passenger had canceled his reservation on the Tampico flight, and that he could make the trip that day at noon. He wanted to fly to Tampico, look it over that afternoon, and then go on by train to Monterrey, meeting me on the train there Sunday morning. He left for the airport, first giving me final instructions to visit the markets and stores and buy things for Christmas—and to get myself and all the bags to the train the following morning.

Shortly after Tom left I developed the worst case of dysentery that I had in all of my stay in Latin America.

I spent that afternoon in my hotel room, my physical discomfort increased by a fever and by fear that I would be too sick to get to the train the next morning. The maid came in after a little and she gave me some advice and sympathy and something to laugh about. I asked her if she could get me some boiled water to drink, and I explained that I had become ill from something that I had

eaten. She left and returned with the water. "I am so sorry, señora," she said, "that you are ill. Perhaps it is due to the altitude." I didn't tell her that I'd just come from a city that was even higher than the capital of Mexico! As she cleaned, I asked her about herself.

"What part of Mexico is your *tierra*, Lupe?"

"I come from the State of Guadalajara, señora."

"I know Guadalajara from the movies, Lupe. How I would like to visit it! It must be very beautiful."

"Si, señora, it is like heaven! There are fiestas, many fiestas, and there are laughter and dancing. Here in the capital everyone is in a hurry. To be sure, Mexico City has paved streets and tall buildings and fine parks, but in Guadalajara the people are more friendly." Lupe paused and shrugged her shoulders. "I would have stayed there, señora, but my husband and I had a dispute. So I came to the capital to work."

It was my turn to express sympathy.

Saturday morning, feeling weak and sleepy, I took a taxi to the Sunshine Special. I had asked the porter at the hotel, Javier, to bargain for a taxi—I don't like to bargain with taxi drivers even when I feel good. I suspect that I over-tipped Javier, as he told me that I certainly was *simpática*.

Once on the train, I settled back in the comfortable seat. I was to spend three days and three nights in that same Pullman car. I didn't even worry about the labor troubles which had frightened away so many travelers that the car was only a fourth-filled. (Mexico's railroads were in the throes of strikes, with entire crews walking off from their trains in the middle of runs, which often meant in the middle of the country.) I decided to try eating breakfast, and it was so good that I began to feel better. My fellow passengers—Americans, Mexicans, a Canadian, and a Spaniard—were quite friendly.

From the window of the train, the view slid by: the big plant of the Goodyear Rubber Co.; fences of maguey, the fiber crop; irrigated land; burros; corn shocks; a level sabana, surrounded by mountains; turkeys; cactus; old churches; herds of goats and sheep; girls carrying buckets of ground corn, to be used in making tortillas. I could tell that we were getting farther north by the pale sun and the leafless trees. Once we stopped on a siding and

there slid by a trainload of workmen returning to Mexico from war jobs in the States.

When the train reached Saltillo, the conductor told us that we would be there for half an hour, so a number of passengers left the train to stretch their legs and get some air. I bought from a vendor for thirty cents a small basket filled with so many things that I could never get them all back in: a doll with a small hat; miniature baskets; a broom; a brush; a *metate* (for milling corn); a *molcajete* (a mortar for pounding chile peppers into powder); and three pieces of doll furniture. At Saltillo I again saw freight cars with familiar names: Frisco, U. P., L. & N., and others. A tall Mexican, wrapped in a long poncho to protect himself against the cold of the morning, was standing near the tracks. A big sombrero completed his costume to make him look like the Mexicans of the movies.

On Sunday morning Tom boarded the train in Monterrey and we continued our trip home. He reported that Tampico was attractive, and he liked the looks of the irrigated crops on the road from Tampico to Monterrery. He had been advised not to take the train into Monterrey because of the strikes, so he had ridden a very good bus, run strictly on schedule and with reserved seats. He liked Monterrey, too, and he said that it must be a pretty honest town, since he saw people leaving milk bottles on steps and there seemed to be fewer windows covered with iron grillwork than is usual in Mexican cities.

Around six o'clock Sunday evening we reached the border at Nuevo Laredo. The Mexican immigration official who set up shop in the diner to look over our papers used a word new to us, *chemacos.* We didn't know the Mexican slang word for "children," but when he changed to *hijos,* we understood him.

The train went over the Rio Grande to Laredo, and we were again in the United States. Tom noticed, when filling out his customs declaration, that he had left Miami exactly three years and two months before. I had been gone for two years and five months. Our sentiments were expressed by the immigration inspector who looked at our passports and then said in a friendly Texas drawl, "It's good to be home, isn't it?"

TEN ROOMS *and* TWO PATIOS

Genevieve Hoehn Bellis

Tropical fruits and vegetables, flowers, baskets, fique bags, burros loaded with firewood, candle vendors, silver shops, the sing-song chant of the mango vendor, the persistent cries of men selling lottery tickets, the shrill call of the bottle woman—the author recalls as part of her life in Bogotá. Sometimes it was confusing, but it was never dull.

Mrs. Bellis left wartime Washington to join her husband in South America, where he had been sent in connection with quinine procurement. Her story tells of the house in which they lived and of the two servant girls who never quite succeeded in making their "señora" into a conventional Colombian lady, try as they might. The author visited Zipaquirá, where Indians have been mining salt since long before the conquistadores reached South America. When she traveled by steamboat on the Río Magdalena, she saw huge alligators leap into the water as the boat neared them and heard monkeys chattering in the jungles along the shore. And she walked up and down the Andes Mountains in search of the Lake of El Dorado of legendary fame—and finally found it.

The author was fascinated by the steep Andes that make railroad building so difficult and give Colombia such a variety of climate: perpetual snow high in the mountains, perpetual heat at sea-level, and between these two extremes the delightful climate where orchids, bananas, and coffee thrive. She was impressed by the fine libraries, schools, museums, and laboratories that she observed in Bogotá.

The reader will feel that the author of *Ten Rooms and Two Patios* likes Colombia and Colombians.

If not available at your bookstore, write 2630 S. Troy St., Arlington, Virginia.