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flopping about the garden in amazing fashion, and affording hilarious excitement to the bloodthirsty young anglers.

At lunch, the Senhora was at pains to discover whether or not I liked the fish; apparently one who relishes that particular dish when tasting it for the first time is supposed always to return to the spot where he first sampled it. The same belief attaches to the drinking of yerba maté, the universal green tea of South America, a test which already I had unwittingly passed with flying colours, for its rather peculiar taste had appealed to me immediately, and I had asked for more. So, evidently, I am destined to return to Descalvados at some future date, for the fish tasted exceedingly nice and the Senhora did not have to press me to accept a second helping.

After lunch one of Hill's cattle outfit arrived to escort me back to the camp, and we got away to a quick start. Rather quicker than was expected, as a matter of fact, for my horse this time was a mettlesome beast and as I raised my hand to swat a mosquito he leapt into his stride and was off like the wind. Surprisingly I found that a full gallop is not a difficult gait to sit, though I did wonder what was going to happen when we reached the edge of the swamp. Two chickens and a pot-bellied toddler escaped sudden death by about six inches near the Indian quarters and my mount, deciding that he would not make a racing dive into the water, jolted to a standstill. "Jolted" is a good word, and but for the big pommel on my saddle the first jolt would have got rid of me. The cattle-hand appeared after two or three minutes and shook his head reprovingly. Perhaps he thought I meant it!

He set a faster pace than Mac had done the previous day, and soon we were both very wet from the constant splashing. The horses seemed to know instinctively when to avoid deeper patches of water, although more often than not it came up to their bellies and sometimes higher still. The ground underfoot offered good foothold, despite being flooded, for the long grass and other vegetation made a firm carpet and prevented the horse's hooves from sinking into the thick mud.

In the rain season flood waters come down and the low-lying country for hundreds of miles is inundated. Towards the end of January and into February the floods are too deep for horse riding and transit across country must be effected by canoe. Before this happens the cattle are rounded up from the worst swamp areas and driven to higher campo where the floods will not penetrate. This was the task upon which Walter Hill and his outfit were engaged at that moment.

At the camp our mounts were unsaddled and their backs washed down with water to keep them in good condition. It was also a good opportunity for a swim and a wash myself, an operation in which Hill joined me, and which helped to ease my aching limbs.

THE camp consisted of three or four corrals and a shelter for the men. This was merely a roof of palm branches supported on stout poles; there were no walls, and it was entirely open on all sides. Altogether we now numbered eight and our hammocks were slung side by side across the hut. Hill showed me a

better way to fix my mosquito net, or "bar" as he called it, so that the underneath part hung clear of the hammock all the time, and the mosquitoes were unable to make contact with my recumbent body.

What a man! He was full of cheerfulness and vitality, and everything we did was the "big" event. For instance, our swim was the "big wash," our meal of yesterday had been the "big feast," and as soon as it grew dark we prepared to have the "big sleep."

"What are the best joints in London City?" he demanded. I told him which were our finest hotels, and of the different sorts of people who stayed in them.

"Wal," he replied, "I guess if you paid top money you wouldn't get a bunk like this in none of 'em, so you're better off than them folk, ain't you?"

It was a verdict with which I heartily agreed.

I SEEMED barely to have snuggled down when Hill was shaking my hammock. "Come on," he said, "open your eyes, they won't fall out!"

This was easier said than done, as a mosquito had found his way inside the net and bitten me pretty considerably across the brows. But their bites do not last for days as an English gnat bite will, neither do they itch so much, and a quick rinse at the edge of the swamp soon put matters right.

It was just daylight, and Pietro, the youngest member of the outfit, had already driven our horses from the corral. Usually they roam free over the campo like the cattle, but to save time some had been rounded-up the previous day, and our mounts were selected from these.

A hasty meal of cold meat and maté, and we were off on my first ride as a cowpuncher. The cattle in these parts are third quality stuff, not comparable with the fine beasts of the Argentine, and their numbers are constantly depleted by disease, particularly the scourge of screw-worm. This is a tiny worm which gets under the skin, and breeds there, and once it gets a hold nothing, apparently, can be done about it. Many of the calves are poor, rickety things, and half of them do not survive. Our job that day was to locate some cattle which had been grazing on low-lying, swampy land away to the west, and to drive them off to higher ground.

It was a fascinating ride. Descalvados is well within the tropics, and the sun was getting high before we picked up with the cattle. Without disturbing them we lay off a little way and drank cold maté. Then, Walter and I remaining where we were, the rest of the boys rode off into the campo and gradually described a wide semicircle behind the cattle, rounding up all the stragglers and driving the whole bunch to where we sat waiting.

(To be continued next week)

#### Time to Relax

BY way of offering listeners a relaxation interlude after the evening meal, 4ZB presents, on Mondays at 6.30 p.m., a 15 minutes' programme, "Melodies in Waltztime." This item features tuneful music by orchestras ranging from huge symphonic combinations to small instrumental groups. Outstanding vocalists in this type of music are also featured.

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