

### Chapter 3

## The World Within As Viewed By The Artist

My first love was to become a forester as I loved the outdoor life but my parents wouldn't let me leave home. As a result, I worked as an artist and became involved in a fantastic visual world. In 1929, year of the great depression, men jumped out the window to save their families from financial ruin via life insurance. You couldn't get a job unless you had a relative who would hire you.

I must mention my brother in law brother Irving Goldfine (he started the advertising slogan "the sky's the limit") who ran the art studio for Scientific Photo Engraving. My brother-in-law Joe obtained a job for me in Irv's art department when I graduated High School during the depression. \$10.00 per week was the salary out of which I took my train fare and nightly meals before night school and still saved \$275 in a year and a half. Irv took care of his parents and did not marry till late in life. He had one son Robert and died of a heart attack a few years after. In the studio I learned photo retouching and line drawing on photographs which were then bleached out.

Then there was Joe's other brother, Johnny, who had an orchestra and wrote two songs which were plagiarized to make "Stormy Weather." My sister noticed the similarity on the radio and told Johnny. They were the source of Lena Horne's success, and she had a long run at the Cotton Club as a result.

When my brother in law Joe passed the bar after the second try he gave me his saxophone (he had played so many years himself his thumbs were short from holding the sax, an alto sax). I began to learn to play it on my own but I was never good at reading music and didn't have the lung capacity. Between reading music and studying law, Joe wore heavy glasses. I, myself, was always careful to read by daylight and when writing or drawing to have the light over my left shoulder to avoid shadows.

My last year in college, I did some research at the museum of natural history on comparative anatomy, with particular reference to the mandible. One curious point was the evolution of the ear bones from the rear part of the masticating apparatus.

I went to Cooper Union art school at night and my visual world began to affect me so much that I dreamt all night long. Finally, by asserting my will power, I eliminated my dreams (at least from a conscious subconscious level) contrary to psychologists statements that this is impossible. The painting or drawing of Van Gogh's that I like the most is the one called "contemplating eternity (or oblivion?)", a black and white sketch of an old man in a chair. Talking about a painting helps it come alive. If I had stayed in the field of art, I would have gone into colored motion pictures because of the fact that "living art" can reach the emotions better than "still life."

There are a few of my works that I enjoy in addition to the portraits that I have painted. One is the sunlight shining through my closed eyelids that I gave to my friend. Another is the one showing the view of the rest of my visible body as I gaze out from the prison of my skull. Lastly, there was the blue nude that had red hair and looked like a pizza pie and was my first painting sold. Being an artist was great. You could be temperamental and no one could complain. Also, it was a good way to meet people as I sketched continually on buses, on trains, in class and other places. "Where did you get the talent?" was a constant question. Ninety percent perspiration and ten percent inspiration was the answer. I'd get so involved at times, that I would forget to eat or sleep. I had a good eye for color and learned the secondary (formed by combining two primary colors) and tertiary (formed by combining two secondary colors) on the color wheel (tertiary: citron, olive and russet). The thought of spending my whole life painting bothered me and when I read Robert Browning's "In a Balcony" there was a phrase "let Rubens there paint us, we want to live the things he paints" that helped my break away from painting. Also the concept of a "starving artist" didn't appeal to me. So, on to college and dental school.

About 1937 Al Baxter, one of the staff artists and I drove out to Roosevelt Field in his car to see the return of Sir Hubert Wilkens from his voyage attempt to reach the Pole under the ice cap.

CCNY was tuition free in those days except for books, lab fees, transportation and food. You ate lunch standing up at crowded tables. There were no women and the "thrones" had no privacy and no dividing walls. Anything official required standing on long lines for hours. Recreational facilities, outside of gym or sports were nil.

After lunch we would gather in the "alcoves" to talk. All through college I kept my spirits up by humming Suite L'Alleziane by Bizet and singing the words I wrote to it, to my self "On I go, Oh Where ..."

While at Columbia, School of Dental & Oral Surgery, my friend and I went to a German propaganda film in Yorktown (part of Manhattan) in which the German Air Force was portrayed as invincible by Goering. A group of us, at graduation time, went to a German Brauhaus and sang some French and U.S. songs in response to some German songs. Most of Dental School was hard work and long hours with little time for socializing. I fell in love with one or two of the dental hygiene students. With the first one, I was rebuffed after I was invited to dinner and failed to come up to her parents standards. I was just as content, as I didn't want to impose her congenitally missing teeth on any future offspring. The second one I still have a yen for but there was a religious difference plus a deep south difference and learning the doxology was not sufficient.

The Alpha Omega dental fraternity, which I joined for one year, had all the old exams but I wasn't too keen on segregation by religion and, also, in my last year I was short on funds. In fact, I had to use up the \$275 dollars I had saved in a years work, for tuition

which really hurt. I sketched all the Professors, made some volunteer didactic drawings for Dr. Omans, and drew a few covers for the School Journal (Illustration # IV).



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ILLUS # ~~IV~~

SDOS - COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY



## Chapter 4 The War Years

When I started college in 1932, the prospect of war was already in the offing. Volunteers were going to Spain in the Lincoln brigade, protesters were protesting ROTC and American Firsters were getting publicity. By the time I reached Dental School, things were beginning to come to a head. People made fortunes selling scrap steel to Japan. Our economic squeeze on Japan and our program of lend lease were caused by the coming war.

At 25 years of age, I was tired of living alone and as I now had my dental license and an assured way of making a living, I began to look for a wife. By December, 1941 I was married and had been accepted as an Officer in the AUS.

Several ships had already been sunk sailing out of New Orleans. Go to any night club and you could find out who was leaving when for where. We stayed at Jackson barracks after a tour at Camp Lee and Camp Pickett. I drilled medical officers and gave lectures to enlisted personnel on first aid. On the ball or on the boat was the motto over the barracks door. I made the drawings for our companies sidewalks at Camp Pickett and gave construction advice. We left New Orleans for destination unknown. Those before us went to North Africa, those after us to the South Pacific. We landed in Panama. On the trip down, we saw flying fish, phosphorescence on the surface of the water that was as blue as ink, white foam which left veins of pastel green like the grain in marble, and porpoises. I kept busy sketching and playing the harmonica. We passed through torpedo junction near Cuba. We reached Panama at nighttime and traveled across the isthmus in an old train that still had kerosene lanterns hanging from the ceiling.

My tours of duty took me to Albrook Field, France Field, Gulick and Rio Hato. While at France Field, I was in the middle of removing an impacted molar when we had an alert. A German sub was firing at the oil refineries in Venezuela (Aruba to be exact).

There were a few tragic war stories that I heard. I heard a story of a plane being refueled and a soldier (the gasoline attendant) catching on fire with his arms spread out like a cross. Another was about the landing on Kiska from the Aleutian Island of Attu at night - the men in this one group came off the landing barge and kept walking and walking in the water and couldn't find land -- they were walking up a river. Fortunately the Japanese had already pulled out.

Another story I heard was that of a scared pilot on D day dropping men to certain death in the water before he reached the flack area and turning back. What was truth and what was fiction is hard to say. This last story had one happy part. There was a sergeant in the tail of a plane that exploded and the sergeant and tail came down safely spinning like the seed pod from a maple tree.

One weekend we took a small contingent of troops down the southern coast of Panama as far as the road went. Then we got out of the jeeps and hiked until we reached the town of Bayano. There, the MD with us treated some of the natives who had malaria with quinine or that other drug which imparts a yellow color to the skin with constant use. We slept in our jungle hammocks. I didn't know how to string mine up and I slept with the netting collapsed over me. (ILLUSTRATION # V). There were fires in the brush a mile away that looked as if they had started by spontaneous combustion. While we were there, one of the fires reached the village and the natives were busy pouring water on the thatched roofs. Hiking back we had to shield our faces from the heat of the blazing brush. I tested my forty five in the woods and, even with two hands, I couldn't hit my target.

I still can't get over my amazement at finding that bananas grew upside down, although there is no criterion for saying which is upside and which is down.

On a morning visit into town, one may see all types of army clothing hanging on the wash line. How they got there is up to your imagination including the body of a soldier found once in a while in the drink.

"Sing bell bottom trousers coats of navy blue,  
He'll climb the rigging like his father used to do,  
If it's a girl why bounce her on your knee,  
If it's a boy send the fellow off to sea."

Extra funds, appropriated during wartime, may have found their way, particularly near the end of the war, into tennis courts and other types of refurbishing for post war purposes.

In addition to being taken on a visit to Coconut Grove for educational purposes when we first arrived in the zone, we were taken to Palo Saco (dry wood) which is a leper colony. Our guide said that the lepers did not mind visitors but I could see that that was not strictly true as some of the residents shied away. The same sights were visible that you can see on TV programs. There was a type of money used which had holes in the middle (possible old Chinese coins). Although there is now an excellent drug for treatment, it seems that the means of transmission is still not known. I associate it in my mind with dampness.

One weekend we visited a one family sugar mill with machinery made of wood. Sugar cane put in was crushed and foaming juice came down the sluice. Local taxis held about ten to twenty people and were called Chivas. Cars drove on the wrong side of the road, British style. One day, during the war, the system was change to American style right hand side of the road. It wasn't safe to travel for two weeks.



BAYANO Apr. 1944

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~~MATER PARISH, DIZON~~  
~~AND JUNGLE HANGING~~  
BAYANO

ILLUS # ~~VII~~

As a youth I had a habit, after sitting in a movie theatre for two hours, of using up the energy saved by jogging home. One night at Gulick, after watching a movie, I forgot myself and reverted to this habit. A vague sound penetrated my mind. Then the second time I heard it and the third time I stopped dead in my tracks. It was an MP looking for a prowler in the nurses quarters. Fortunately for me he had been well trained.

Upon my transfer to Rio Hato I made the mistake of telling the pilot that it was my first time up (we were in an observation plane) so he decided to give me a thrill and buzz a sail boat on the ocean. I was doing well until we reached Rio Hato and, then, when we began to circle the field, I became dizzy because of the cowling which prevented me from keeping my head erect. When we landed I couldn't open the safety belt it was so rusty and stiff.

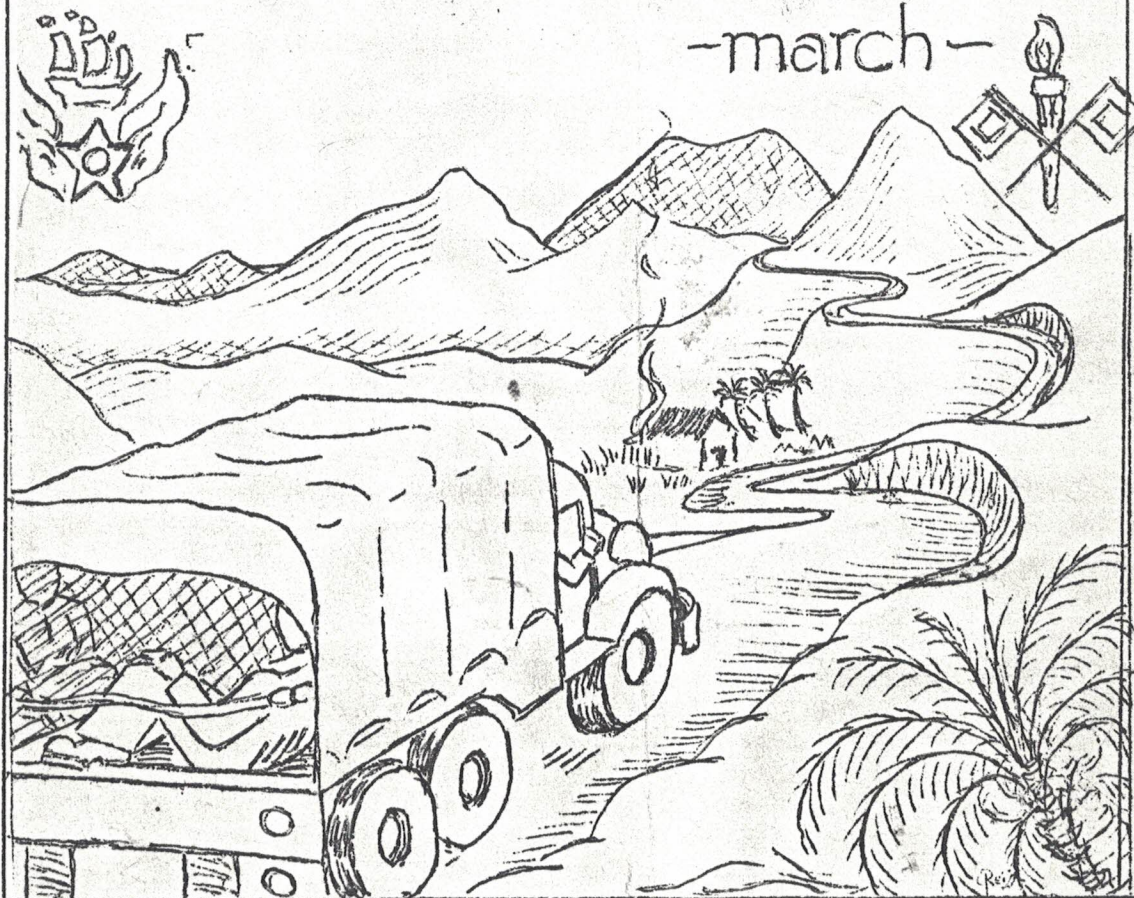
One day I hiked up toward Penonome and a horrible sight imbedded itself in my mind's eye. There was a piece of carrion in the field and about fifty buzzards tearing at it, and crowding, so that one or more buzzards were standing on the other buzzards backs. The dry rustle of their wings sounded like -ugh- I can't describe it. I was in the AUS before there was a separate air force and I was assigned to the Army Air Force. One night there was a plane that crashed into the drink on a routine flight. A week later some fishermen brought a bloated body in that you could smell a mile away. The skin looked like marble with blue veins and was peeling off. Right after one crash, they woke me up at about three a.m. to chart the burned up pilots teeth for identification purposes. He was on his back and the back half of his mouth was full of blood. Needless to say, I was not too happy about flying after that.

One week I was put in charge of a group of about twelve men who were being given a weeks vacation (rest & relaxation - R&R) at El Valle. El Valle turned out to be the Shangri La of Panama. (ILLUSTRATION # VI) There was no activity in the tiny town except for an open air cantina (a flat block of concrete with colored lights strung around it). The valley was so windy that the mess tent wouldn't stand up and we had to lash it to a tree. I drank too much Cerveza Nacional and had trouble getting back to my pup tent. On our return to base with the troops my sergeant and I discovered that we were covered with ticks. They would not back out upon the application of a lit cigarette. We had to remove them one by one with college pliers. Fortunately they didn't carry any disease like Lyme or Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever. It took about one hour for each of us to be picked clean. (I forgot to mention the delicacies that struck my fancy in New Orleans - pralines, soft shell crab and everything served at Antoinette's. Also, we happened to catch a performance by Phil Baker at the Roosevelt Hotel). In the hills of Panama we saw natives carrying their things in bolsas (woven bags of straw, very light weight). While in the zone, we visited Kelly's one night, on Central Avenue. The show was "The Rape of the Ape." An ape comes on stage carrying a girl but it turns out there is only one person half ape half girl, etc. At that time, in the zone, the toilets were divided into silver and gold (native and U.S.). Since the agreement to give back the canal and years before that, there no longer were segregated toilets. At least once a week, we would have an earth tremor and sometimes it was bad enough to cause us to run out of the house.



# The TARGET

-march-



EL VALLE - THE SHANGRI LA OF PANAMA

ILLUS. # XVII

VI



The quarters were built on concrete stilts to discourage animals from entering. Dens of iniquity dot parts of Panama City and one street, Cocoanut Grove is devoted to houses of ill fame.

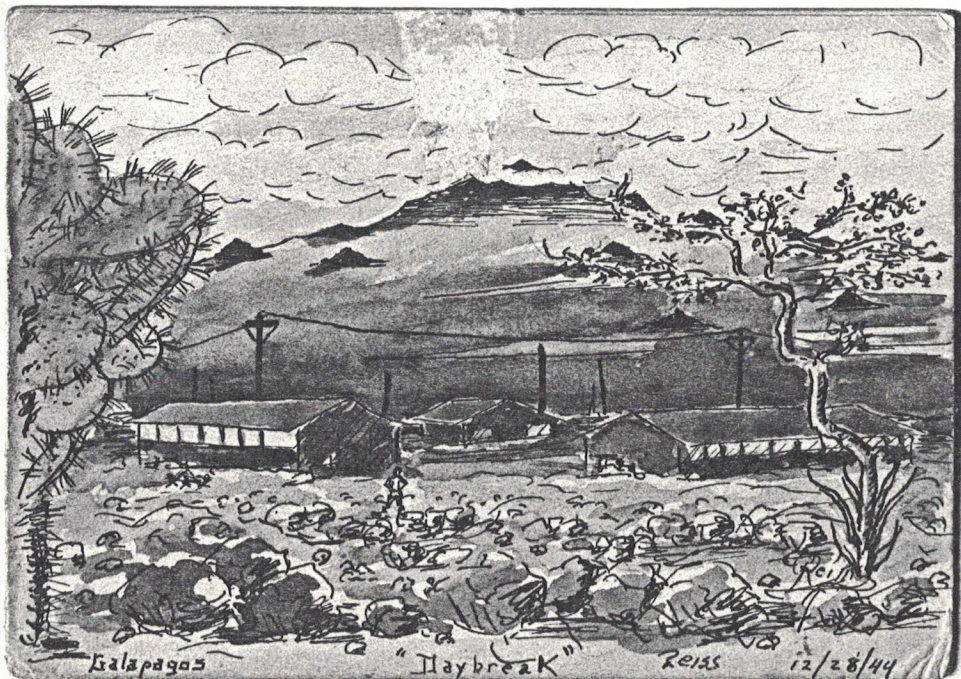
From Rio Hato, I was transferred to the Galapagos Islands as Air Base Dental Surgeon. I still remember how well the watermelons grew there. Sun every day. You could almost see them blowing up. We covered them with chicken wire to keep the wild goats from eating them. One day I chased a marine iguana and he nipped my army boot with his sharp teeth. Another time I had a wonderful fishing trip around the islands with about seventy other men. Bait could be obtained by lowering a line with ten hooks and pulling it up rapidly. Sharks, hammer heads, skates (sting rays), seals, bonitos, tuna (better than chicken when fresh) abounded. It never rained on the island, except for one night that it poured. The siren alarm went off, I awoke and I woke every one else in the barracks. It turned out to be a false alarm.

To keep socks from being lost or mixed up the chap who did our laundry used to run a piece of string through them and tie them all together. As a result, we ended up with holes in every pair of socks. My solution to this was to wear two pair as the holes usually did not match and thus would not show.

One day we received a second dental chair from the zone and, when we installed it and I began to work with a patient in the chair, it began to sink down slowly. I called on one of the mechanics from the air base, took the seat off the chair and he checked the base. He found a slow leak in the hydraulic system and said he would come back tomorrow to fix it. The next day he came back and, when I took the seat off, I turned it over and to our amazement there was a large snake coiled up in the straw stuffing. Throwing the seat outside, I picked up a large rock and dropped it on the snakes head when he crawled out, but he was in sand and it didn't kill him. We had to push him over onto the sidewalk before we could succeed in smashing his head. We never did stop to check the type of snake but we did make the Panama newspapers. Ordinarily, there were not supposed to be any snakes on the island but there were scorpions and thousand leggers, although I never saw a scorpion. One of the physicians in Bedside Manor, a gynecologist, was able to get home in the states for one day and he assured his wife's pregnancy by a simple physical principal.

The only person who had first hand information on the Baroness who travelled from Austria to live on one of the islands with three husbands has passed away but he left a story about her. His name was Finssen and he reportedly had been in several revolutions. He had come to live down here for safety reasons. One of the volcanoes was still active but it never awoke while I was there for nine months. There was a Norwegian family on one island whose son had size twelve feet and couldn't get shoes to fit himself. At one of the piers I was able to see a live shark at about a two foot distance, looking him right in the eye which was a cold, light china blue that could put the fear of God into you. I read the bible twice while I was on the island. Our bunk house was called "Bedside Manor" because all the physicians slept there. (ILLUSTRATION # VII)





GALAPAGOS (ILLUS # ~~VII~~ VII) A7B



Here is the story of the Baroness as told by Mr. Finssen to one of the soldiers --

### The Baroness

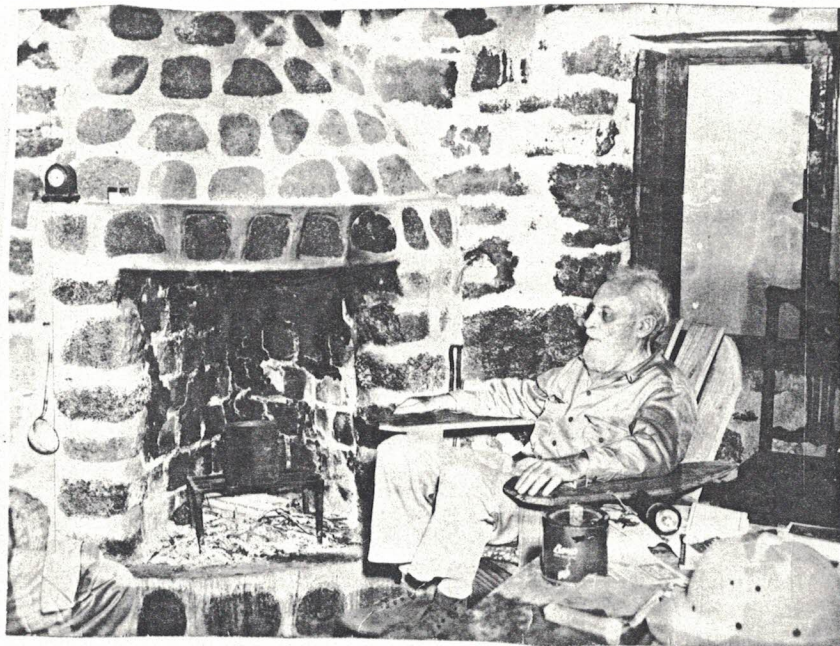
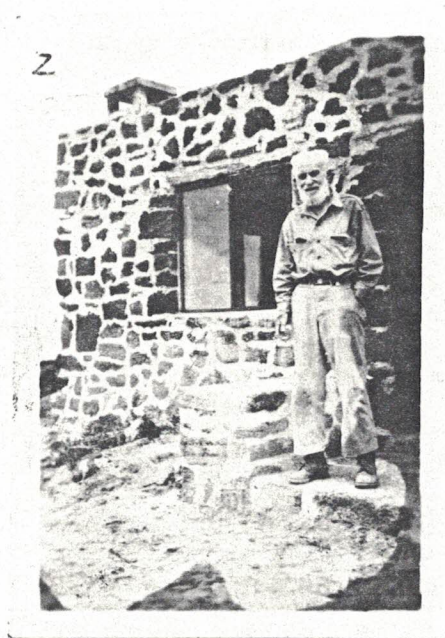
(as told by Mr. Finssen who had first hand information and who has since passed away)  
(ILLUSTRATION # VIII)

"In 1928 a middle aged dentist, Dr. Fredrick Ritter, in Berlin, got tired of the struggle and decided to move to a tropical island where he thought he would live an easy life without much work. The fact that he had just stole another man's wife, Dore Loergin, may have made the far away places more alluring. He took her to Floreana and set up housekeeping under a tin roof. He was either too ignorant or too indolent to build a house, so he claimed that living in a house was unsanitary. He announced his intention to live 150 years or more. The Galapagos turtles could so why couldn't he? He called his place "El Retiro de la Pas". The peace did not last long as this chronicle will show. In those days the world was full of German would be scientists. Ninety percent of the Germans that came out here claimed to be scientists of some kind. Lately, we are getting a better understanding of German science.

Ritter and Dora were no exceptions. Ritter claimed to be writing a new philosophy, but nobody could find a head or a tail to his writings. He claimed to be a vegetarian, probably because he was a poor hunter. On one of my wanderings on Floreana I happened to shoot a steer in self defense so I took what meat I could carry to the Ritters. The doctor gave a long and fearful sermon on the evils of eating meat but in the meantime Dore kept frying and as the aroma of the cooking reached his nostrils he gradually changed the line of his sermon. At last, he decided that the biggest sin of all was wasting food and that therefore it was his Christian duty to help eat the meat so nothing was wasted.

On leaving Berlin he had his teeth drawn and false teeth made of stainless steel. He inserted these and went to work. When my hunting dogs saw him tear into the meat with those glistening steel tooth fangs, they got an inferiority complex that they carried with them to their grave. He put away more meat in that one sitting than I could eat in two weeks. In spite of Dore and a few colonists living on Floreana, he claimed to live a hermits life on a desert island. He must have been a disciple of Goebbels. He told this tale so often to the tourists and yacht owners that those simple simons repeated it as the gospel truth. People thought him mad but I always insisted that he didn't have enough intelligence to get that way. He was a gnome like fellow and wore his hair long tied together with a string at the back of his neck.





MR. FINSEN- GALAPAGOS

ILLUS H ~~IX~~ ~~IX~~

VII



He said that the Vikings wore it that way. He kicked the hell out of Dore and made her work like a mule. She was an unattractive, slovenly drudge. The only thing I remember her by is that I never saw her neck clean. They were nudists and doctor got sore as hell when people walked in without warning. Dore did not seem to mind. They raised chickens and bananas but lived mostly on handouts from the yachts. Dr. Ritter had a modest racket but he got by on it while it lasted.

In 1935 the "Winters" came to Floreana. Winter was an officer in World War One and was a typical soldier. He probably came out here to forget. Their ambition was to cultivate the earth and make a living. They were not looking for publicity or fame so they did not cut in on Ritters racket and peace still prevailed on Floreana. They are there still. The next visitor to the island was, however, a different story. She was the Baroness Boise Bozquet de Wagner Whereborn of Vienna and Paris. She announced her intention to start a private and somewhat casual paradise on the island. She brought with her two German lovers, Alfred Rudolph Lorenz and Robert Phillipson and in case of accidents she picked up a third one in Guayaquil. Like Ritter she established a home under a tin roof and called it "Hacienda Paradise." She elected herself the private Queen of Galapagos and she put Floreana on the map. She was her own press agent and a darn good one at that. She caused stories about herself to be widely published in the European papers. Some of them were humdingers like the one about Pablo Rolendo and his bride Rosa who were shipwrecked on their honeymoon tour and drifted ashore on Floreana. She cast them adrift in a small boat to perish in the storm. Needless to say, those people never existed. She decreed that no one could land on the island without her permission. She got fan letters from the four corners of the earth and ne'er do wells offered to serve under her banner if she would only pay the fare. Lots of yacht owners heard of her doings and flocked to Floreana. They were eager to make their other wise dreary travels seem interesting and get their name in print and connected in some way to the outer edge of some adventure. To them she was manna from heaven and they gazed on her as royalty in order to shine in reflected glory. They did their best to spread her fame. She was a sight to see walking aboard the American yachts and beating her chest like an ape and screaming "I am the Queen of Galapagos". She was quite an actress. This was not so good for poor Ritter. The Baroness easily outshone the yokel and took away all his trade. Violent quarrels resulted. Then, something happened to bring me into this history. A friend of mine, a fisherman from Santa Cruz named Stampa, foolishly defied the Queens order and landed on Floreana to hunt for meat. He was promptly arrested and the Baroness threatened to have him shot. He got away with Winters help and came home with this strange tale. I suppose that, subconsciously, I should be taking a more active part in the social doings of Galapagos. Anyway, I felt that I had urgent business in Floreana. I