

THE DEATH SONG OF CHILIQUI 297

was no sound except their own deep breathing, and overhead the drone of the departing Chieftain.

Cha-koos took off his neck-cloth and swung one end of it to his brother. D'Zintoo crouched and gripped it. In the right hand of each was a buffalo knife, ten inches of blade exceeding sharp and heavy, embedded in a massive bone handle.

"Now," said D'Zintoo, thickly.

The blades clashed, pressing each against the other. There was no time to draw back and stab, for the secret of fighting with buffalo knives is first to maim and then to kill. Cha-koos leaned back, feinted, and slashed like lightning at the sinews of his brother's wrist, but D'Zintoo's arm fell away like water, and Cha-koos was hard set to save himself. The neck-cloth ran taut between them. It meant that only one hand was in action, but it spelled out the interchange of every savage impulse. Not for an instant did the beady eyes desert the defiant gaze that met them. Cross and parry, thrust and counter, the blades flickered, darting, twisting, and glancing, but always return-