

Canadian Missionary Link

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AT PANAMA.

The Congress on Christian Work in Latin-American Countries.

Letter II.

The voyage from Havana, Cuba, to Cristobal, Isthmus of Panama, was uneventful, except that there were on board ship two hundred or more delegates and visitors to the Congress. The good-fellowship of such a company of men and women made the trip a very agreeable one indeed. The Congress consisted of world-renowned missionary specialists and of regularly commissioned representatives of the missionary societies of North America and Europe. Owing to the war, the European delegation was very small. Besides the large number of regularly appointed delegates, there were many visitors, such as newspaper editors, widely known pastors and laymen, and last and best of all, scores of missionaries, "our battle-scarred heroes from the firing line." Considering the distance of Panama from the great centres of the United States and Canada, and the still greater distance by days from some countries of South America, which were well represented, the large attendance at the Congress was remarkable. The only reason that I can suggest for such a remarkable gathering is the intensity of the grip of the missionary spirit on many men and women everywhere, notwithstanding the spiritual indifference of many others in the churches.

"In a general way, it may be stated that the primary purpose of the Congress was to study the religious and social conditions of Latin-America, that

the missionary societies of Anglo-Saxon America and Europe may be advised as to what obligation they have to the people living in the West Indies, Central America and South America." To this end eight Commissions, appointed by the Continuation Committee of the Edinburgh Conference, were constituted to make a thorough study of all the questions involved in such a purpose, to report thereon, and to make any suggestions and recommendations they considered necessary. For a full year these Commissions were at work preparing data to be considered by the Congress. They called to their assistance great educators, public officials and men of affairs in Latin-American countries, but, of course, their chief dependence was on the missionaries working in these countries who have first-hand knowledge of the conditions and needs of the peoples. The subjects covered by the Commissions are as follows: (1) Survey and Occupation of the Field; (2) Message and Method; (3) Education; (4) Literature; (5) Women's Work; (6) Church in the Field; (7) The Home Base; (8) Co-operation and Unity. One day of the Congress (three sessions) was given to the discussion of each of these reports. In due course the reports of these Commissions, amended and perfected by the discussion, together with the addresses made by the great leaders in the Congress on the reports, will be printed in two volumes of several hundred pages. That any who desire may have access to these reports and discussions, the writer subscribed for a set to be placed on the shelves of the missionary library in the Mission House, 223 Church Street, in the hope that many will read them, or,