

## THE PROPOSED DARIEN CANAL.

One of the most interesting articles in the last number, *Hours at Home*, is that of Lorenzo Dow (probably a pseudonym) on the Darien Canal from which we take the following facts and statistics:

"The distance from New York by way of the Cape of Good Hope to Calcutta is 17,500 miles; to Canton, 18,500 miles; to Shanghai, 20,000; to Wellington, New Zealand, 13,740 and to Melbourne, 14,230 miles. From the same port to the same, by way of Cape Horn, the distances are: to Calcutta, 23,000 miles; to Canton, 21,500 miles; to Shanghai, 22,000 miles; to Wellington, 11,000 miles; to Melbourne, 12,720 miles; to San Francisco, 12,000. The first voyage from New York to the first named port, by way of the Cape of Good Hope, is longer by 4,100 miles than the distances between the same ports by an inter-oceanic canal; and by way of Cape Horn longer by 9,600 miles. If a ship could sail through the isthmus from New York to Canton, it would save over the route around the Cape of Good Hope 8,900 miles, and over that by way of Cape Horn, 10,900 miles; and if it sailed for Shanghai instead of Canton, there would be a saving in one case of 9,000 miles and in the other of 11,600.

"From official returns it appears that the trade of the United States that would have passed through an isthmus canal in 1856 was \$100,294,687, and tonnage to the value of \$92,874,250; a total value of nearly \$200,000,000 in gold.

"From English official returns of the year 1856, the value of the ships and trade of England that would have passed through the canal was \$190,649,554 in gold; and that of France, from official returns for 1857, \$67,210,609 in gold; a total of three millions of tons of shipping, and a value of more than \$450,000,000 in ships and merchandise would have passed this isthmus annually ten years ago had there been a way. Careful estimates from official sources show that if the trade of the world could pass from ocean to ocean to-day by the Darien, there would be a saving yearly of \$50,000,000 in gold, and that ten years hence this saving would amount to \$100,000,000 every year! a sum sufficient to build and thoroughly equip a ship canal that would answer all the requirements of the world's commerce for all time to come. We lose annually a larger sum by dishonest officials, we squander more in idle shows and superfluous offices, than would suffice to construct this great and enduring work.

A New York paper publishes some interesting details of the expedition now fitting out for the purpose of surveying a route for the proposed Canal.

It will be under the control of Lieutenant Commander Thomas O. Selfridge, of the United States Navy. The total number of men who will take part in the affair will number about 257, and the gunboat *Nipsic* will be the flagship of the expedition, and the *Guard* the storeship.

Besides the officers of the ships, a geologist, a botanist, a telegraph operator, a photographer, and a draughtsman, all civilians, have been detailed for the occasion; officers of the coast survey will also accompany the expedition, and act as assistants to commander Selfridge. The telegraph operator has been furnished with about eighty miles of wire. He has also forty cups of Gross's battery, the strength of which he considers quite sufficient to knock all the monkeys who may presume to occupy the wires for gymnastic purposes into the land where the spirit of all dead mon-

keys go. A full set of army signals has also been furnished. The flags will be used in the daytime and lanterns at night. Every scientific instrument necessary for the proper carrying out of the plans of the explorers has been secured and safely packed away.

A large quantity of beads, trinkets and various cheap articles, held in high esteem by the Indians, form part of the "treaty" cargo of the ships, and these it is the intention of the commanding officer to scatter among the savages with a lavish hand in order to secure their friendship.

The primary object of the expedition is to make a thorough survey of the isthmus and to discover, if there be any, the breaks in the mountain through which a canal might be cut. After all the preliminary preparations have been completed, two parties will start out to discover, if possible, the depressions in the mountains and to reach a pass which Dr. Cullen contends exists in the mountains and which has not as yet been discovered. Two lines of levels will be established from these points to wherever the depressions may be found, thence to the Savanna river at the mouth of the Lara.

In the meantime natives will be organized into gangs as labourers, and be made serviceable in rendering the passage of the explorers as easy as possible. Aid is also expected from the alcaldes, and the Colombian government will do its best to help the expedition in various ways. On the 21st inst. two gentlemen will proceed to Aspinwall to ascertain the correct astronomical position of Aspinwall and Panama, and the result of their investigation will of course determine the base of operations of the expedition. After the explorers shall have made a thorough survey and reconnaissance of the country, the vessels will proceed to the Gulf of San Blas, and thence exploring parties will set out to establish a line of levels and ascertain if that portion of the country is better adapted to the passage of canal than that between Caledonia Bay and the Bay of Darien. The expedition will be occupied for about six months. Commander Selfridge expresses himself confident that a line of levels will be established on the Isthmus, a thing which no other expedition has ever yet been able to accomplish.

Each exploring party will have a special telegraph wire of its own, connecting with the ships, and there will consequently be no danger of any one of the parties falling victims to starvation in the wilderness, as did many of Strain's expedition. The region to be traversed is very mountainous, and the ground is a complete network of undergrowth, so thick and strong that it would be impossible to make any progress through it without the aid of the axe. The Indians, who may at certain points prove troublesome, are said to be of a warlike nature, and although under the nominal control of the Colombian government have never been conquered by the white man. The distance from the point where the expedition will start—Caledonia Bay—to the Savanna river is forty miles, and after they shall have made their way to this stream, the men will follow its course to the Bay of Darien, where the United States steamer *Nyack*, which will leave the Pacific Squadron in proper time, will be in readiness to receive them. It may be mentioned that, besides the Savanna, the river Chauquanaque flows through the region through which the explorers will pass, and it is believed that it has water enough to keep a canal well supplied.

Commander Selfridge does not believe that depressions in the mountains will be discovered in sufficient extent to suit the

wants of a well constructed canal, but he believes, nevertheless, that the canal is a feasibility, and that tunnels of five or six miles in length could be cut through the mountains if suitable depressions were not discovered. The job would, of course, be a costly one, but he thinks that for \$120,000,000 a canal in every way suitable for the navigation of steam vessels could be constructed. As to its being a paying investment he has not the least doubt. He believes, however, that a canal with locks, except ordinary tidal locks, would not suit the wants of commerce, and in fact, would be in every respect a failure, and a failure that would cost over \$100,000,000 would be no joke, even in the nineteenth century.

The *Nipsic* and the *Guard* will leave this port some time this week, or at the latest during the early part of next week. In the meantime everything is being put in readiness for the big job ahead. The sailors are being daily drilled to the use of the carbine so that if necessary they may be able to depopulate the Indian tribes on the isthmus to a certain extent.

## THE INDIANS OF CANADA.

## THE SIX NATIONS—THEIR SITUATION AND EDUCATION.

(From the Report of Consul Blake to the State Department.)

Of all the tribes or bands of Indians in Canada, the confederation known as the Six Nations of the Grand River contains the largest population. Their historical celebrity began with the earliest explorations of the Hudson River, and their present advanced condition also invests them with peculiar interest. In 1868 their numbers were 2796, and they annually increase. They consist of portions of the kindred nations of the Mohawks, Senecas, Cayugas, Onondagas and Oneidas, who once inhabited the valleys on the rivers and lakes of Central New York, including the Mohawk and Genesee; and were so powerful a confederacy that they not only overran the region afterwards known as Upper Canada, but carried their wars far and wide into the western prairies. Their young men tested their bravery and endurance by expeditions against tribes occupying remote Southern regions, and particularly against the Cherokees, whom they esteemed as foemen especially worthy of their best efforts.

To the five nations already enumerated have been added the Tuscaroras, who, although at an early period they migrated to North Carolina, are shown by tradition and language to be of the same original stock, and when driven from their southern hunting grounds, were admitted into the Confederacy, which from that time ceased to be "The Five," and was called "The Six Nations."

These Indians residing on the Grand River are the representatives and descendants of those aborigines of whom De Witt Clinton said they were peculiarly distinguished by "great attainments in policy, in negotiation, in eloquence and in war." They form the organization which eighty years before the American revolution held up their union as a political model to the English colonies.

I deemed the present condition of these Indians worthy of close investigation. Every facility for obtaining information regarding them was cheerfully afforded by their courteous Visiting Superintendent, Mr.