

# Canadian Missionary Link

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## EN ROUTE TO THE PANAMA MISSIONARY CONGRESS.

### Letter No. 1.

Editor MISSIONARY LINK:

You have asked me for some account of my trip from Florida to Panama, where was convened from February 10 to 20 an inter-denominational "Congress on Christian Work in Latin America." My article or articles must be brief, and therefore much that might be of interest to your readers must be condensed almost to the point of being uninteresting.

The trip was by steamer from St. Petersburg, Florida, where, with my family, I have been wintering, via Tampa, Key West, Florida and Havana, Cuba, to Christobal (or Colon, as the port was formerly called) on the Isthmus of Panama. From here the journey across the isthmus was made by railroad to the City of Panama on the Pacific Ocean.

### A Word About Cuba.

The island is more than seven hundred miles in length and over fifty miles in width at its widest part. Its population is chiefly of Spanish descent, with a sprinkling of peoples from North American and European countries.

Havana is the capital, having a population of 350,000. As we entered its fine harbor our ship passed over the grave of the "Maine," which has recently been taken up. Very many thoughts are suggested to one's mind as the ship slowly moves along towards her moorings, and he looks around and sees vessels flying the flags of almost every country of the world, and among them

(to your correspondent the most solemn and interesting sight of all) several interned German ships, smokeless, lifeless, inactive, in whose presence everybody's voice and soul were hushed. Parenthetically let me here say that with very few exceptions the hearts and prayers of the delegates and visitors to the Christian Congress at Panama, and indeed of the multitude of tourists of the United States of America, were with and for the success of the Allies, because they are fighting for a heaven-born principle, Liberty, and the freeing of all nations from the absolutism of Prussian Imperialism and Militarism. Then as one looks up toward the city and her fortifications, he is charmed by her beautiful situation upon the hills that surround one of the best harbors of the world. "The Spanish and Moorish architecture, the profusion of tropical trees and flowers, the remarkable cleanliness of the streets, all combine to make Havana an unusually beautiful city. The people are given over to gaiety and pleasure-seeking, and are fond of display, much of which is very tawdry. Theatres, wine shops, and houses of ill-fame abound, and are filled with patrons, while the churches are empty. The Cubans are also cursed with a passion for gambling, which is fostered by the Government in the form of the National Lottery, and is one of its chief sources of revenue. Likewise the Roman Catholic churches continually resort to the lottery for the raising of money for the support of their various institutions. As one walks along the streets he is accosted at short intervals and solicited to buy a ticket—