

forty-six million cubic mètres to one hundred and twenty-five million; while the estimated cost has, as the magnitude of the undertaking became less capable of disguise, been reduced by M. de Lesseps from forty-two million sterling to twenty-eight million. Yet, while of this sum nineteen and a half million had been raised and disposed of up to September, 1884, no more than one twenty-sixth part of the excavations, and that the easiest work, was at that date ready. In June, 1883, out of an expenditure of nine million sterling, the modest sum of £152,000 only appears to have been spent in actual work; of six million sterling—half the capital stock, called up on the organization of the Company—£1,800,000 went at once into the pockets of the promoters; and what with share capital and bonds the Company were responsible, in September, 1884, for £30,647,700, for which they had received only £22,598,968 in cash. And at this date only one-fourteenth part of the excavation work had been done.

THIS little result of so much expenditure is, however, in one way, perhaps, not to be regretted. For, according to competent authorities, if more had been done, so much more labour, as well as life, would have been wasted. It is stated by these that natural obstacles to the completion of the design exist, which, in all human probability, it will be impossible to overcome. First, the proposed canal runs in its course through a valley, draining such a large area of country that its master stream—the Chagres River—rises to a height of thirty to forty feet in a single day; and to arrest this flood it will be necessary to construct an embankment of such enormous proportions that it cannot, with human means, be finished between the occurrence of two floods—and attacked in an incomplete state it will certainly be destroyed. And secondly, a cutting three hundred and sixty feet deep has to be made through a range of mountains, which, being three-fourths of soft material instead of wholly rock as estimated by M. de Lesseps, will necessitate the digging of so vast a trench, with a top width of a third of a mile, that the mass of earth to be removed is simply too stupendous to be put in figures. And if this could be done—if the range of mountains could be removed bodily—the earthen slope could not resist the rainfall (one hundred and twenty inches annually; falls of six or seven inches in a few hours being not rare) in that district. An earthen cutting of such proportions exposed to a tropical rainfall, which in a few hours would wash away the toil of months, may well be regarded as inexecutable. And if it were executable it would be a huge financial failure. The cost of the whole work, supposing Nature permit of its completion, is estimated by Mr. Rodrigues at £107,853,161 sterling; and the annual deficit in working the canal at three million sterling—the maximum revenue being reckoned at a dollar a ton (the Suez Canal rate) on an estimate of the probable amount of tonnage to pass through the canal, prepared by the chief of the Bureau of Statistics at Washington. That M. de Lesseps should imperil so vast a sum of the hard-earned savings of his simpler fellow-countrymen—who seem to regard him with childlike faith—is inexcusable. That he should cast it so rashly into such a quicksand is monstrous. The work should not have been begun, much less allowed to proceed so far, till its completion was ascertained to be feasible. But M. de Lesseps appears to think his buoyancy and dash will remove mountains and avert floods as easily as it draws money out of the trusting habitants. He is raising a great monument to French élan. It has been said that every sleeper on the Panama Railway represented a human life spent in its construction; and the sacrifice of life in the construction of the canal is likely to be as horrible. Workmen half fed, herded together in squalid hovels, insufficiently sheltered from the weather, unable to escape, since there is nowhere to escape to,—are smitten by the pestilential fever of the country, and go to the hospital only to die; and this frightful experience, common, it may be said, to all such great tropical labour schemes, is, it seems, but an episode in what the *Economiste Français* predicted would be “the most terrible financial disaster of the nineteenth century.”

THE Pope, says *Town Topics*, is an expert versifier of Latin. His latest production is “*Novissima Leonis XIII. Pont. Max. Carmina*,” of which he has sent a superbly bound volume to Prince Bismarck. Were it not in a measure disrespectful to suppose his Holiness guilty of such a thing, one could imagine this a “gift of the Greeks,” and that his compliments to the grim Chancellor were not unaccompanied by a merry chuckle over this triumph of irony. As if Prince Bismarck could tell the difference between a new or an old song in the Latin! Of all the grave charges laid at the door of the Prince, he is guiltless of a classical education. The arts of diplomacy and persuasion having failed to bring their long and bitter controversy to a satisfactory termination, it is probable that the Pope at last bethought himself of a more subtle weapon with which to extinguish his adversary.

THE New York *Star* says: “A bill granting copyright to foreigners will, it is said, be introduced in the U.S. Senate by Senator Hawley, and into the House by Mr. Tucker, the accomplished chairman of the judiciary committee. The measure will, we understand, be substantially like the one reported by the judiciary committee of the last Congress. It will grant copyrights to citizens of those foreign countries which give the same privileges to Americans. There will doubtless be, as there were before, strenuous efforts made to attach limitations and conditions to the copyrights that may be granted to foreigners. The condition that is frequently suggested is to require the book or other article to be manufactured in the United States. This seems to be plausible, and is urged upon the ground that it will afford protection to American publishers, printers, bookbinders, etc.; but a little consideration of the subject will, we think, lead to the conclusion that such a limitation would be very injurious even to the interests which seek for its protection. If our Government should attach such a condition, other Governments would do the same. The result would be that all copyrighted books and other works would have to be manufactured in the country in which the copyright is granted. As respects French and German works which are sold in this market, it is quite clear that such a requirement would be a great hardship to all American readers of the literature of France and Germany. Indeed, as the market is a limited one, it would have the effect, substantially, to prevent Continental writers from availing themselves of the privilege of our copyright law.”

THE New York *Times* thus discourses on the pretended discovery in America of a painting by Raphael: Chicago is disputing the claim of Cincinnati to be regarded as the centre of æsthetic culture in America. It has “an alleged Raphael,” concerning the genuineness of which its numerous and accomplished experts in art are now wrangling. A diligent search for Raphaels has been going on in Europe for over a hundred years. Within that period every picture for which any internal or external evidence can be adduced to sustain a “claim” that it is by Raphael has been described, catalogued and identified, so that it is as familiar to collectors as a 2.20 trotter is to the connoisseurs of Chicago. The chance that the Chicago Raphael may be genuine is not improved by the announcement that it was stolen from the Vatican. The Pope may sometimes despatch one of his Cardinals with a small picture from the Vatican collection under his arm to the nearest pawnbroker’s in order to secure an advance sufficient to provide needful maccaroni for the Papal household. These pledges, however, are always honourably redeemed when the collections come in, even though Peter’s pence are transferred in Ireland to the Parnell fund. Besides, the exhibition of a Raphael in the window of a Roman pawnbroker would lead to a Raphael for hypothecation. It is to be feared the Chicago connoisseurs will ultimately discover that the claim of the owner of this picture proceeds merely from his disposition to spell Raphael “raffle.”

KING LOUIS II. of Bavaria is close upon forty years of age, and has long been known as a woman-hater. The announcement of his intention, says *Town Topics*, to marry the widow of a rich manufacturer of Nuremberg in order to get relief from his financial embarrassments is a genuine surprise. Some fifteen years ago he was about to marry a distant cousin, the daughter of Duke Maximilian and sister of the Empress of Austria. At a late day the engagement was suddenly broken off, and this is how it came about: At the age of twenty-five he was counted the handsomest man in Europe. It is even said that many an American girl has sighed and said: “One kiss from the King of Bavaria and then die!” His fiancée was the envy of the royal world. One afternoon His Majesty called at her home and was obliged to await her pleasure for some time. At last he heard her voice in an adjoining room of which the doors stood ajar. She was engaged in a tempestuous dispute with one of her waiting ladies. A moment later, and just as His Majesty was advancing to meet her through the half-open door, he saw her seize one of her dainty slippers from her foot and strike her attendant full in the face. He waited no longer. In horror and dismay he fled and never returned.

HIGH-PRICED singers, says the same paper, are out of favour this year. Even dear Madame Patti is having hard work to barter her exquisite voice for the fabulous sums of former seasons. Heretofore, when she found the effete audiences of Covent Garden reluctant in pouring their shekels at her shrine, she simply packed up and came to the outstretched arms of enthusiastic America—or went to Russia. This year she decided to hazard a less remote Continental tour. She was recently announced to sing in Amsterdam, and in order to reimburse her manager for the large sum he was to pay her, the price of the tickets was placed at a figure