

their numbers that matters came to a stand. The bravest might here have faltered; but the men who had that work in charge were men of whom a nation might well be proud. Their energy—their pluck,—nothing could overcome. Going off into the adjoining countries they brought up fresh men, and on went the work again. On the 1st of October, 1851, a train of working-cars, drawn by a locomotive, passed over the road as far as Gatoon, about eight miles from Manzanilla, and struck the Chagres at that point. The worst eight miles of the road were passed; but this was the darkest hour of the enterprize. Three million of dollars had been expended—thousands of the labourers had perished—the supporters of the road were disheartened—and the directors in New York could only keep the work moving at an enormous expence on their individual credit. At this period an accident occurred which proved the turning point of their fortunes. The Transit Company was at that time passing passengers up the Chagres in bungoes, and by mules across the mountains at great expense and delay. Two large steamers arrived with passengers at the mouth of the Chagres. The weather was so tempestuous that, after several lives had been lost in attempting to land, they were forced to take refuge in Navy Bay. It was proposed that, instead of waiting for fine weather, to return to the mouth of the Chagres, and the passengers should be transported over the railroad to Gatoon, and there take the river. Such an accident had never been contemplated—there were no accommodations for landing,—no passenger cars; but men going to California did not then stand on trifles. Rough working-cars were rigged up, a thousand passengers were carried over in safety, and the reality of the road became an admitted fact. When the news by the return of the steamers got to New York, the prospects of the Company changed, the stock went up, and its upholders were thenceforward removed from further doubt and anxiety.

In July, 1852, the road was completed to a place called Barbacoas, a distance of twenty-three miles from Aspinwall. There the Chagres River intersects the road. At this point it is about three hundred feet in width, flowing through a deep and rocky channel, and subject to sudden and resistless freshets often rising forty feet in a single night. Though this spot is now spanned by a magnificent iron bridge, it was not accomplished until after great loss of time, and sacrifice of life. A year was lost, but the Com-