

known world and put his finger upon the spot best suited for the carrying out of his beneficent design.

The Isthmus of Panama, or Darien, is, beyond a doubt, one of the most interesting, as it is certain yet to be one of the most important bits of *terra firma* on this round globe. The connecting-link between the continents of North and South America, it is also the barrier dividing the Atlantic from the Pacific Oceans, and, in fact, one side of the world from the other.

From the time of its discovery and occupation by the Spaniards, it has been a matter of general belief that whoever had command of this narrow neck of land held the key to the commerce of the world. Here would naturally be concentrated the mutual trade of the Atlantic and Pacific coasts of America. Moreover, it would necessarily form an important stage in the shortest route between Europe and the Indies, as well as the innumerable islands lying far to the south of the equator.

Little wonder, then, that the Spaniards wanted to keep the isthmus to themselves, and always did their very best to make it particularly unpleasant