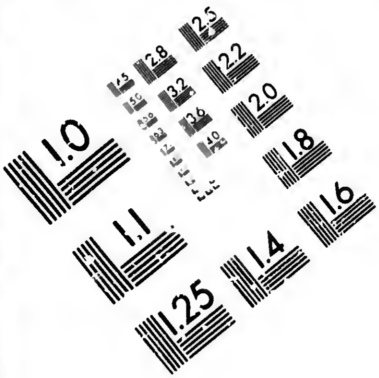
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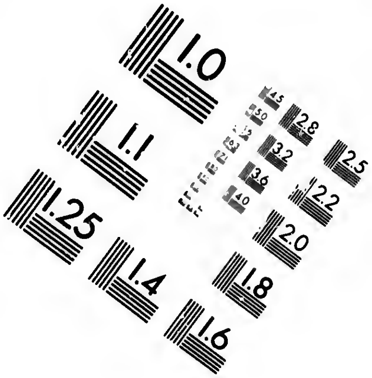
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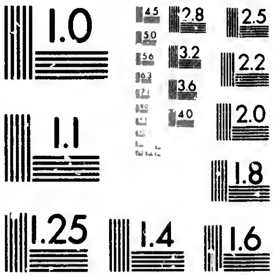
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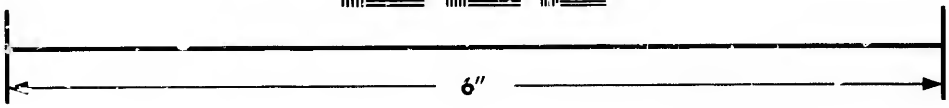

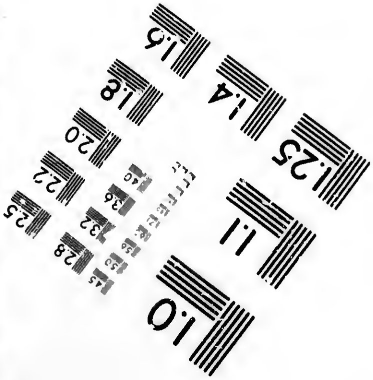
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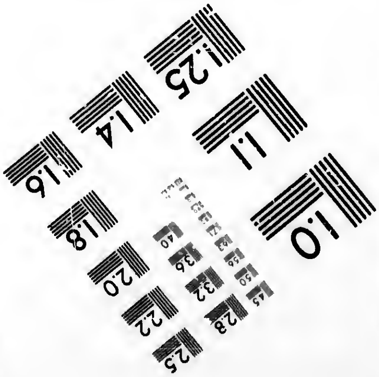
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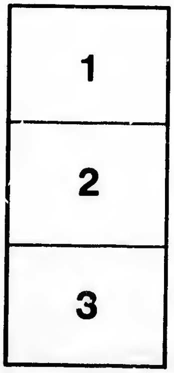

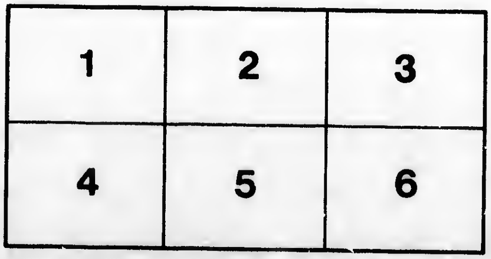

B. Chamberlain
with Grat. regards,
J.H.G.

THE ISTHMUS.

A SKETCH,

READ BEFORE THE

NEW BRUNSWICK

PROVINCIAL RIFLE ASSOCIATION,

AT SAINT JOHN, N. B., MARCH 7TH, 1867,

IN AID OF ITS FUNDS.

BY

LIEUT.-COL. THE HON. J. H. GRAY, M. P. P., Q. C., D. C. L.,

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY OF NEW BRUNSWICK.

Printed for Private Circulation, by Request.

SAINT JOHN, N. B.:
WILLIAM M. WRIGHT.
1867.

[ERRATA.—Page 14,—22d line—omit the word "and" after "Chagres." In 31st line of the same page instead of "removed" read "relieved."]

THE ISTHMUS.

A NARROW neck of land some fifty miles wide, connects the two Continents of North and South America. Spreading broad off to the northward and eastward is the Carribean Sea, with Cuba, Jamaica, Hayti, and the Leeward and Windward Islands; to the northward, Honduras, Yucatan, and the Gulf of Mexico; to the south, New Grenada and Columbia; to the west, the Pacific.

Across this little neck of land now lies the great highway of the civilized nations of the earth. In its two harbours, one on the Atlantic, and the other on the Pacific, float the flags of England, France, and America, in friendly rivalry. To it the enterprizing merchant of Europe looks when speculating on the trade of the West; to it the returning emigrant from Australia, New Zealand, and distant China, turns his eyes when considering the route by which he shall again find his way back to the land of his birth. The merchant of New York or Boston looks upon it but as an ordinary journey of business or amusement, as he counts the six thousand miles that by this passage carry him to San Francisco. From Lima and Valparaiso and the cities of the South, from British Columbia, Vancouver's Island, California and the cities of the North Pacific, the name of the Isthmus comes sounding like a household word. It seems to require no other name—it asks no distinctive appellation.

From the time of its discovery (in A. D. 1513) over three and a half centuries ago, until within the last sixteen or seventeen years, it rested in the obscurity of history,—occasionally lighted up for a time by brilliant trade, or by the fitful glare of some wild adventurer's scheme, who, like Scotch William Patterson, in 1698, saw advantages which the world was not then sufficiently advanced to appreciate, but who had not the means to accomplish what his own far-seeing judgment pointed out,—and again relapsing into an oblivion, the deeper from the temporary light,—known of late years very little to any but the geographer or the scholar, and practically of no benefit to the inhabitants of Europe or America.

Whence then this wondrous change? Who made this highway for the world? England looked at it, and hesitated; France looked at it, and was appalled; American Enterprize seized it, and triumphed.

The territory through which the road passes belongs to neither England, France, or the United States. It falls within the Province of Panama, at present one of the Constituent States of New Grenada in Central and South America. The political action of this part of the world is like its physical action, subject to sudden and violent disturbances. It breeds revolutions, as its air breeds storms. It would be of little interest to follow its modern history otherwise than as connected with the immediate subject in hand; and fortunately for mankind, that subject is in a great degree removed from the shifting politics of the country.

The settlement of the north-western boundary,—the acquisition of Oregon and California by the United States, and the subsequent discovery of gold on the slopes and rivers of the Sierras Nevadas descending to the Pacific, told the Americans that time was too valuable to be wasted in going round Cape Horn. Congress, in 1848, authorized contracts to be entered into for the establishment of two mail lines of steamships,—one from New York to Chagres—one from Panama to California; but the inducements were at first not considered sufficient to attract capitalists. Two men at last came forward, whose names will not soon be forgotten. William H. Aspinwall took the line on the Pacific side,—George Law, on the Atlantic. The latter contract was thought good enough, because it connected with the cities of Savannah and New Orleans, and "terminated at the portals of the Pacific." But where was to be the profit of the other? What great emporium of trade then called from the shores of Oregon or California for the traffic of the East? What trade? What travel would compensate for the immense outlay involved in establishing an ocean line of steamships from Panama to the North,—to places then barely bruited in the mouth of Fame? People wondered that so sound a man as William H. Aspinwall should embark in so hopeless an enterprize. But it soon became apparent that to his far-seeing mind this was only a part of the plan. The bold design of a Railway across the Isthmus was not only conceived, but acted upon.

In connection with Mr. Henry Chauncey and Mr. John L.

Stevens, a contract was immediately made with the Government of New Grenada for the construction of that work. A skilful and experienced engineer was forthwith employed, an exploration was made, and the feasibility of the work, so far as engineering construction was concerned, established.

But before going into the details of this work, its difficulties, its triumphs, and its probable ultimate consequences, it would be as well perhaps to take a rapid glance at the general route by which it is reached. The traveller embarking at New York in one of the noble ships of the Pacific Mail Steamship Company, finds himself surrounded by all the comforts and appliances of modern civilization,—the highest perfection to which the construction of marine vessels has yet attained,—the most perfect and noiseless discipline,—the most studied arrangements combining elegance and security,—a polite and varied society:—all tend to rob the sea of its nausea and its terrors.

The Bay of New York is celebrated for its beauty; and after crossing the bar, one looks upon the broad Atlantic with a keen appreciation of Byron's well-known lines:—

> "Oh! who can tell, save he whose heart hath tried
> And danced in triumph o'er the waters wide,
> The exulting sense,—the pulse's maddening play
> That thrills the wanderer of that trackless way."

Off Cape Hatteras, which is ordinarily passed about the third or fourth day out, a storm is naturally looked for; and the traveller is seldom disappointed. The wind comes whistling through the shrouds, and toppling over the waves, as if bidding defiance to the Gulf Stream. But little recks that noble ship, the Henry Chauncey, of the conflict of the elements. She rides the storm as if in mockery of its power, claiming for man as the heritage of his creation, dominion over the sea as over the land. *

On the fifth day, towards the afternoon, the low shores of Watling's Island loom in sight This was in reality the first land discovered by Columbus, and is the true St. Salvador. The present St. Salvador lies farther to the northward and westward, and has

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* This observation should be toned down a little. Almost on the day month from the time referred to, and within a radius of fifty miles from the same spot, the *Evening Star* foundered in a gale with 300 passengers; the *Daniel Webster* was abandoned, the *Santiago de Cuba* had her decks swept by a heavy sea, losing several passengers, and the Canadian steamer *Victoria* went down.

generally been considered as the land first discovered; but more exact enquiries, and a closer nautical examination of the distances and route followed by the great navigator, have deprived it of that distinction. Passing by Rum Cay and through the Crooked Passage, on the next morning, the bold high lands of the south-eastern end of Cuba shew themselves, and coasting eighty or ninety miles along its rugged, and at this point, unsettled coast, you round Point Maysi, and faintly looming up some thirty miles off, the north-western hills of old Hispaniola or San Domingo—the modern Hayti—break upon the sight. On through the windward passage, in the pale moonlight rise the perpendicular cliffs of Navassa Island; and as the faint outlines of the Southern Cross melt away in the morning light, Morant Bay and the shores of Jamaica shew faintly on the starboard quarter. What a night! What a scene of matchless beauty! Unconsciously the mind wanders back to the great man who unveiled this continent to the world, and planted the Cross on the unknown Islands of the West. What were his emotions when these scenes first burst upon his view? Clouds and darkness gathered round the evening of the old man's days. Yet how bright is now the memory of his heroic name! On further, through the Carribean Sea, some five hundred miles, and by eight or nine o'clock on the night of the day week you left New York, the Spanish Main dimly appears in the distance. Puerto Bello is passed; and by midnight Aspinwall is before you. Puerto Bello is passed; but though unimportant now, we ought not to pass it without a reference to its former greatness. Though situated in a most unhealthy spot, it was at one period, about two centuries ago, A. D. 1654, "the theatre of "the richest commerce ever transacted on the face of the earth. "The gold, silver, and other productions of Peru and Chili were "carried annually thither from Panama to be exchanged for the "manufactures of Europe, while on the other hand, the galleons "arrived from Spain laden with every article of necessity and lux-"ury. At this period Porto Bello was filled with people, its har-"bour crowded with ships, and the neighbouring fields crowded "with droves of mules laden with the precious metals. Bales of "goods, chests of treasure, and bustling crowds, everywhere met "the eye. The Fair of Portobello—which was the period "named for the barter and exchange of goods—was limited to "forty days on account of the insalubrity of the place. After

" this the galleons returned to Spain, by way of Cuba, often with " twenty millions of dollars in money and goods. The two towns " of Porto Bello and Panama which were the main channels of com- " munication between Spain and her most valuable colonies, were " reduced almost to nothing after the galleons were abolished."

Such is the historian's description of what Puerto Bello was.

Puerto Bello was subsequently plundered by the buccaneers, and ultimately taken by a British squadron, under Admiral Vernon, in 1739. Not far from this, at Puerto Caballo, took place one of the most gallant exploits of the British Navy,—the cutting out of the Hermione. Indeed, the whole of these latitudes, teem with the prowess of the British arms.

As Mrs. Hemans says:

Loud rush the torrent floods
  The Western wilds among;
And free, in Green Columbia's woods,
  The hunter's bow is strung.

But let the floods rush on,
  Let the arrow's flight be sped:
Why should they reck whose task is done?—
  There slumber England's dead!

The warlike of the Isles—
  The men of field and wave—
Are not the rocks their funeral piles?—
  The seas and shores their grave?

Go, stranger; track the deep:
  Free, free, the white sail spread.
Wave may not foam, nor wild wind sweep,
  Where rest not England's dead.

But we have reached Aspinwall. 'Tis midnight. The signal rockets whiz aloft; and pealing on the midnight air, the thunder of the heavy guns announces the big ship's approach. Lights are seen flitting along the wharves, and in the Company's buildings. And slowly sweeping round the harbour, this huge vessel of three thousand tons, glides up to the wharf as gently as if an infant's hand had touched it. One or two restless travellers—whose eyes weary not, and ask no sleep—spring upon the land, and stand upon the Southern Continent under the cocoa trees bending beneath the weight of fruit, and gaze up at the clear blue sky, and the silvery light of the moon, and draw in with long breath the fragrant air, and wonder whether it be a reality or a dream,—the land of the myrtle and the palm, where nature blossoms in one perpetual spring.

To persons accustomed to the bold and rugged scenery of the coast line and land-locked harbours of British North America, the harbour of Aspinwall does not present an imposing appearance. The land around it is low, and the first impression is that it must be shallow. Such, however, is not the case. " It is about three miles in length by two in breadth, with an average depth of seven fathoms, affording good anchorage in every part."—(*Panama Hand Book*).

It was formerly called Navy Bay, and was discovered by Columbus on his third voyage, though he was not aware at that time that it formed part of the continent. It is well buoyed, and many steamships are seen at anchor, and at the wharves. It is much exposed to the tremendous storms of the Atlantic. The remains of an English steamer, absolutely torn to pieces at one of the wharves a few years since are shewn you. At this time, [August, 1866], a wharf of a singular kind is being built by Col. Totten, the distinguished American engineer, who constructed, and now manages the Railway. Huge blocks of stone of enormous size, embedded in concrete and fastened and sunk in some peculiar manner, it is hoped will be strong enough to resist the force of the sea. Hitherto efforts have failed; and ordinarily constructed piers of granite have been tossed and knocked about like playthings. The teredo renders all wooden piles thoroughly useless unless coppered both below and above its reach.

The town is on the small island of Manzanilla, about sixteen miles from the mouth of the Chagres River. There is one cross street, and one broad main street,—the latter built up only on one side. These streets are not very long, and not very clean. Occasionally in some parts a deluge from a slop-pail may be seen flying from the verandahs above as you walk along in front of the shops, and the little pools thereby made are not indicative of the most refined civilization. But these are little trifles which will disappear as the American overcomes the native element in the population. The houses are principally of wood, broad, and rather flat, with two stories, and apparently cool and comfortable; the shops well-filled, though no attempt is made at decoration or display: and the people, civil, cheerful, and obliging.

Further on, in the main street beyond the business part of the town, and beyond the extreme seaward point, where an iron lighthouse stands, and immediately on the sea-shore, are a number of neat cottages, in the midst of groves and gardens filled with the beautiful flowers of the tropics. These are the residences of the officials of the Company and of the Railway, and of the agents of the different French and English companies carrying on business there. Still further on, a fine large, stone, Protestant church, erected by the Railway Company, built in gothic style—like the Cathedral in Fredericton, though larger—closes the apparent line of buildings. Returning to the business part of the town, on the opposite side of the broad main street are the wharves; and towards the upper end, stands a large, massive, stone structure, three hundred feet long by eighty wide,—the freight station of the Panama Railroad Company. This was in August last undergoing extensive repairs, having been nearly blown to pieces with the surrounding wharves by the nitro-glycerine explosion, which took place at Aspinwall in the month of April previous, on board the steamship *European*, by which, apart from the dreadful destruction of property, some seventy or eighty human beings engaged in the ordinary pursuits of commerce lost their lives; and an agency of unparalleled destructive power was promulgated to the world of which before it had been ignorant. Through this building, and along the main street, directly in its centre, a triple railway track is laid; and along this track, (for nearly the length of Prince William Street, from the Bank of New Brunswick to the Market Square), are standing the passenger and freight cars, with the locomotive puffing and blowing and ready for the start across the Isthmus. To the right of the Pacific Mail Steamship Company's wharf, and immediately contiguous to a building used for a chapel or meeting-house, are several enormous tanks, holding many thousands of gallons of water. The island of Manzanilla, about two miles square is of a low coral formation, and has no springs of water. That obtained by digging is so brackish that rain-water is preferred; and the tanks being filled during the wet season, supply the Company's ships during the dry, when no rain falls.

Aspinwall can at present lay no claims to architectural beauty, or to the possession of any of those indications of wealth which are so conspicuous in the larger cities of the United States; but its future no man can limit. The wooden buildings must soon be superseded by brick, iron, or stone; and better municipal regulations necessarily following from the infusion of the Saxon element in the population, will remove the features which now strike the stranger as objectionable. There is here a small ant which is most destructive to wooden buildings; it works with untiring energy, and will destroy a large house in a few years. It makes large nests a foot or eighteen inches in diameter, and builds them in an incredibly short period in the corners and along the crevices of the very rooms in use. Mr. Gibbons the agent of the Pacific Company mentioned that his house was destroyed, undermined by them; and they can be seen working in myriads in their nests, on the fences, and among the debris of wrecks lying in the rear of his house. The residence of the agent of the English Steamship Company, is an imported house of corrugated iron, and consequently unassailable by such insects.

Large numbers of vultures are seen in every direction about the town, lazily perched on leafless old trees, and along the ridge poles of the houses stretched out to their full lengths, with their broad wings expanded, and so perfectly motionless, that it is difficult at first sight to believe them living animals. They are the scavengers of the city, and consume the offal and filth that would otherwise putrify and endanger health. There is a fine of two dollars for killing one, and consequently, as if conscious of security they are undisturbed by the approach of man, or the business and turmoil around them.

Before enjoying the comforts of the Railway, let us see what difficulties its constructors had to overcome. The contract made by Messrs, Aspinwall, Chauncey, and Stephens, with the government of New Granada, has already been mentioned. Among the most important concessions by the terms of this contract, was one guaranteeing that all public lands lying along the line of the Road were to be used gratuitously by the Company. Also a gift of two hundred and fifty thousand acres of land to be selected by the grantees from any public lands on the Isthmus; two ports, one on the Atlantic and the other on the Pacific, which were to be the termini of the Road, were to be made *free ports*, and a privilege was granted of establishing such tolls for the transit across as the Company might think proper. The contract was to continue in force for forty-nine years, subject to the right of New Granada to take possession of the

Road at the expiration of twenty years after its completion, on payment of $5,000,000, and at the expiration of thirty years, of $4,000,000, and at the expiration of forty years, on payment of $2,000,000. Three per cent was to be paid to the Government upon all dividends declared. The entire work was to be completed within eight years, and a sum of $120,000 was to be deposited at its commencement as security for the fulfilment of the contract, but to be refunded with interest on the completion of the Road within the given time.

A charter was now obtained from the State of New York for the formation of a Company, under which one million dollars of stock was taken. The original grantees transferred their contract to this Company. A second survey was made, a summit level of two hundred and sixty three feet was discovered; and a line from ocean to ocean, not exceeding fifty miles in length. Panama was selected as the Pacfic terminus, and Navy Bay, (now Aspinwall), as the Atlantic terminus. The following is the description given by a writer of that day of the nature of the country and the work:—

"The character and geographical position of this country through
" which the line of the Road had been carried, was such as might
" well have made the hardiest projectors shrink from attempting
" its construction. The first thirteen miles beginning at Navy
" Bay, was through a deep morass covered with the densest jungle,
" reeking with malaria, and abounding with almost every species
" of wild beasts, noxious reptiles, and venomous insects known
" in the tropics. Far on,—(tho' some of the land was so fair
" and beautiful that the natives called it Paraiso),—the greater
" part of the line was through a rugged country, along steep
" hill sides, over wild chasms, spanning turbulent rivers and furious
" mountain torrents, until the summit ridge was surmounted,
" when it descended abruptly to the shores of the Pacific Ocean.

" Situated between the parallels of 8° and 9° north of the
" Equator, a sultry tropical heat prevailed throughout the year,
" nearly half of which time the country was deluged with rains,
" which, if they would not seriously damage the works, were cer-
" tain to impede their progress, and add greatly to the arduous
" character of the undertaking. The whole Isthmus, tho' covered
" with the most luxuriant vegetative growth, possessed little or no
" timber sufficiently durable to be of use in the construction of a
" permanent work. The native population composed of a mon-

"grel race of Spaniards, Indians and Negroes, were too indolent "and unaccustomed to labor to be depended on to any great extent. The resources of the country were entirely inadequate "for the support of laborers. Men, materials, and provisions were "to be transported thousands of miles; and yet, despite all these "obstacles, the dim glimpses of which had, at a previous time, "caused European capitalists to shrink back with fear, the noble "projectors of this Road at once, and earnestly, pushed forward "this stupendous enterprise."

Such was the country at that day. After much consideration and various trials, it was ultimately determined to commence the work at Navy Bay. Col. Totten proceeded to Manzanilla Island and commenced clearing in May, 1850. The breaking ground is thus described by the same writer:—

"This Island cut off from the main land by a narrow frith contained an area of little more than one square mile. It was a "virgin swamp covered with a dense growth of the tortuous waterloving mangrove, and interlaced with huge vines and thorny "shrubs, defying entrance even to the wild beasts common to "the country. In the black slimy mud of its surface alligators "and other reptiles abounded, while the air was laden with pestilential vapours, and swarming with sand flies and musquitoes. "These last proved so annoying to the laborers that unless their "faces were protected with gauze veils, no work could be done "even at midday. Residence *on* the Island was impossible. "The party had their quarters in an old brig, which brought down "materials for building, tools, provisions, etc. etc., and was anchored in the Bay."

On this Island is now the town of Aspinwall.

"No imposing ceremonies inaugurated the 'breaking ground'. "Two American citizens leaping, axe in hand, from a native canoe "upon a wild and desolate island, their retinue consisting of half "a dozen Indians who clear the path with rude knives, strike "their glittering axes into the nearest tree; the rapid blows reverberated from shore to shore, and the stately cocoa crashes "upon the beach.

"Thus unostentatiously was announced the commencement of a "Railway which from the interests and difficulties involved might "well be looked upon as one of the grandest and boldest enterprises ever attempted."

How simple and how practical! A year or two after that time, in 1852 or 1853, we had a great Railway opening in Saint John. We broke ground "according to Hoyle"—a grand procession—great speeches were made—and much eating. Past history was drawn upon—Greece, Rome, Tyre, and Carthage were ransacked for great works and great enterprises—the future was drawn upon—and populations, and peoples, and cities, and ships, and trade, and travel, and arts, and gold mines were to grow up so fast that Greece, and Rome, and Tyre, and Carthage wouldn't be worth remembering. We were to be the highway of nations—all Europe was to rush frantically to the Land's End—jump over to Halifax—skip thro' Nova Scotia—whirl thro' New Brunswick—pitch headlong into New York—and wind up at New Orleans in the twinkling of an eye! It was a great opening tho' the work didn't go on; but then it was a magnificent outburst of "bunkum."

Other great openings have taken place since that time, and great dinners have been given,—but the Railroads have not been built. One cannot see why a man should refuse a good dinner because he feels satisfied that a Railroad cannot be built out of chops and tomatoes. The dinner must be eaten, and it may as well be consumed by a man who has something to give, and gives it,—*his appetite*, as by men who won't give what they have,—their money.

There was no dinner at Manzanilla, and no speeches, and so the work went bravely on. The monied men of the United States never waste time in calling on Hercules, but first put their own shoulders to the wheel. The monied men in the Provinces call lustily on Hercules wherever they fancy he may be found, whether in England or in the United States, but they put their own shoulders to the wheel in the most delicate manner, so the work never goes on. At Manzanilla the work went on; but the rainy season had now set in; the island was still uninhabitable; the whole party had to live on board the brig, which was crowded to its utmost capacity. Below decks the vessel was alive with musquitoes, sand flies, and other insects. Driven almost to madness, the men preferred sleeping on the deck in the drenching rain rather than endure the attack below. Fever broke out, men died, but the indefatigable leaders still pressed on; other men supplied the places of those who fell; but working waist deep in water in those deadly swamps, in an atmosphere saturated with malarious poison, told so painfully on 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 Octobor, 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 Company redoubled their efforts. Labourers were drawn from every quarter of the globe. Irishmen from Ireland, Coolies from Hindostan — Englishmen, Frenchmen, Germans, Chinamen, Austrians,—over seven thousand able-bodied hardy men were gathered. But though their national habits and peculiarities were studied in every way; though comfortably housed and attended to—(for, by this time, the construction of the road to this point enabled the Company to provide comforts which in the commencement of the work were unattainable),—they perished miserably. Their previous habits of life were not adapted to the work. Within a month, the Chinese, one thousand in number, became affected with a melancholy tendency to suicide, and ended their existence by scores. Disease broke out amongst them, and in a few weeks scarcely two hundred remained. The Irishmen and Frenchmen suffered dreadfully, and had to be reshipped,—those of them that survived. It has been stated—though no voucher has been produced for its correctness—that the road could have been measured in a continuous line by the corpses of those who had perished in its construction, which, in a road of forty-eight miles, by a very simple calculation, allowing the unusual average of six feet to each man, would give nearly forty-three thousand as the number. The persons best able to stand the climate were the people of the adjacent countries, the natives, and the men from North America. Notwithstanding all these discouragements, the work went on; and by January, 1854, the summit ridge was reached, eleven miles from Panama. At this time the road was advancing over the plains from Panama, and up the valley of the Rio Grande, to meet the advancing work from the Atlantic side; and on the 27th January, 1855, at midnight, in darkness and in rain, the last rail was laid; and on the following day, a locomotive passed from Ocean to Ocean!

The probable effects of this road upon the future traffic of America, and in some measure of Europe, with Australia, China, Japan, and the Sandwich Islands, may be judged from the following table of distances:—

	MILES
The distance from New York to Sydney, Australia,	
via Cape Horn is	12,870
via Panama	9,950
Difference in favor of Panama	2,720

		MILES.
The distance from New York to Honolulu, Sandwich Islands,		
via Cape Horn is	13,560	
via Panama	6,800	
Difference in favor of Panama		6,760
The distance from New York to Hong Kong,		
via Cape Horn is	17,420	
via Panama	11,850	
Difference in favor of Panama		5,570
The distance from New York to Jeddo, Japan,		
via Cape Horn	16,710	
via Panama	10,220	
Difference in favor of Panama		6,490
The distance from England to Sydney, Australia,		
via Cape of Good Hope	12,828	
via Panama	12,720	
Difference in favor of Panama		98

The breaking ground commenced in 1850; the construction account was closed in 1859,—shewing an entire cost of eight million dollars. The road is forty-seven and three-quarter miles in length, with a maximum grade of sixty feet to the mile. The summit ridge, about ten miles from Panama, is two hundred and eighty-seven feet above the Atlantic ocean. There are four tracks on the Atlantic side, three on the Pacific, with station buildings, freight depots, offices, machine shops, and the necessary accommodations at either terminus; a pier of four hundred and fifty feet in length, on the Pacific side, and a steam tug for carrying off passengers and freight to the main steamers which lie about three miles off in the bay, near a group of small islands lately purchased by the Pacific Mail Steamship Company, and which, as they can be easily connected with the main land, will ultimately form the terminus on that side. The road, so far as the casual observation of a traveller would enable him to judge, is well and substantially built. The iron bridge across the Chagres at Barbacoas may be taken as a type. It is composed of six spans of over one hundred feet each, built of boiler iron with a top and bottom chord, two feet in breadth, and one inch in thickness, and joined by a web of boiler iron of proportionate strength. The track is laid on iron girders three feet apart, and the whole structure supported by five piers and two abutments of hewn stone, twenty-six feet wide, and eight feet in thickness, increasing in the proportion of an inch to the foot down to their foundations, which are constructed of piles and concrete. The cross ties or sleepers of the road are of lignumvitæ, and the ballasting most substantial. Doubtless, these are all evidences of a most costly work. It will be better understood by bearing in mind that the road from Saint John to Shediac on the Gulf of St. Lawrence, one hundred and ten miles, cost six million dollars,—the forty-eight miles, from Aspinwall to Panama, eight millions. But the result amply justified the expenditure, and proved the correctness of the judgment of its originators. Up to the opening of the road in January, 1855, that is to say from the running of the first passenger train in 1852, (not quite three years), the amount received for the transportation of passengers and freight was $2,125,232.31. Up to January, 1859, when the construction account was closed at eight millions, the gross earnings amounted to $8,146,605.

The running expences together with the depreciation in iron, ties, buildings, etc, amounted to $2,174,876.51, leaving a balance of $5,971,728.66, as the legitimate returns for the money invested in the Road,—an expenditure of eight millions in a period of seven years, during the first of which but twelve miles were in operation—the second—twenty-three, the third, thirty-one,—and only for the last four years of the above period was the Road in use throughout its entire length. Out of these receipts the directors paid the regular interest on all mortgages and other bonds, ten per cent dividend to the stockholders in 1852; seven per cent in 1853 and 1854; twelve per cent in 1855, 1856, 1857, 1858, and 1859,—then had a balance on hand of $529,041.50, besides a sinking fund of $153,395.83, and no floating debt. These statistics are taken from a very valuable book published by Dr. Otis in 1862.

Since that time the business of the route has continued most steady and productive, and it is now paying twenty-four per cent, beside putting aside extraordinary reserves for periodical distribution.

The health of the Isthmus has much improved. The clearing of the swamps, the drainage at Aspinwall, and along the line, has produced a marked effect; and of one hundred and ninety-six thousand passengers transported over the Road during a period of five years, it is not known that a single case of sickness occurred in consequence of the transit. Of course, intemperance, imprudence and neglect will produce the same results there as elsewhere, but such results are attributable not to the climate but to the individuals themselves who suffer.

The journey across is performed in three hours. The whistle has sounded—the passengers have crowded into the cars—the locomotive is moving. All is life, bustle, cheerfulness and animation. Off she goes! A scene of unequalled beauty is opening on the sight. A mile or two carries one over the small frith which separates the Island from the mainland, and brings you through the former swamps to where a slightly rising ground on the left called Mount Hope forms the last resting place of the early constructors of the Road,—where the long grass waves over many a gallant man, and the drooping branches of the mangrove and the palm throw a softness and a shade around his tomb. It is now the cemetery of Aspinwall; and here are interred the remains of the lamented Strain, whose fortitude and unselfish devotion as commander of the United States Darien Exploring Expedition have never been surpassed: the names of himself and his two junior officers Truxton and Maury would do honor to any service in the world. After the first ten or twelve miles the scenery becomes bold. Mountains and valleys rapidly succeed each other, clothed with a vegetation so luxurious that language is powerless to describe it. Groves of the broad-leafed palm in the midst of lawns of perfect smoothness—the magnificent trumpet flower twelve or fifteen feet in height!—the lily—trees and vines trellised with white, and purple, and scarlet flowers—the lime—the orange—the citron—the cocoa—the cotton tree—the mangoes—the neat little haciendos for the Railway employees, every six or eight miles. The palm-thatched wigwams of the natives—the varying green of almost every shade—the broad leaves of the banana—the massive cactus—the sharp, sword-like leaf of the cocoa—the great lofty cedro towering up a hundred feet, and clothed from its broad-spreading summit to its base with a thousand tendrils swaying gently backward and forward, and scattering their flowers like falling rain,—seem to stagger the mind. The beauty of the scene—the softness of the air—the song of the birds—the richness of the fruit—the novelty of every thing,—produce for the time a sense of enjoyment—an *abandon* of the soul—as if all heaven and earth were mingled in one elysium.

At a short distance from one of the stations, some seventeen miles from Aspinwall, is a noble tree of the cedro-kind which would of itself attract atttention, but which is generally pointed out should the traveller be fortunate enough to meet one who is acquainted with the Road, and which, sometimes, on the return train, you may have an opportunity of examining, while the locomotive is taking in water. It is known as the Stephens tree,—so called from being the camping spot of Mr. Stephens during the exploration and construction of the Road. It is six yards in diameter, at its base, and towers up one hundred feet without a single branch, with a canopy above over fifty yards in diameter. It is covered with the most luxuriant growth of vines, and altogether is a magnificent specimen of the larger species of tropical vegetation. But beside it, and around it, in that district, and from the same soil there grows a little flower more wonderful still,—a rare variety of flower, but still found in abundance there: botanists call it of the *orchid* family. It is known, however, as the "Espiritu Santo." It has a slight little stalk something of the size and height of our orange lilies, and its leaf and pods, perhaps, somewhat similar; its blossom, shaped like a small tulip, is of alabaster whiteness, and of the velvity texture of the camellia. Its perfume is sweet and powerful, not unlike the trumpet flower or magnolia, but its singularity consists neither in the beauty of its shape, its color, or its fragrance. Its blossom opens,—and poised upon the petal sits the descending dove; no pictured resemblance—no imaginary figure—no impression—but actually moulded—standing out—apart—distinct—bodily formed—its expanded wings curving in as when a bird poises to its rest—its beautiful little head perfectly shaped, bent gently forward—with eyes and bill slightly tinged with pink, and almost resting on its snowy breast. The early Spanish Catholics called it "Flor del Espiritu Santo" the flower of the Holy Ghost; and the superstitious Indian of that day, bowed down before this matchless flower, and gazed upon it with reverence, and ascribed "a peculiar sanctity to the ground upon which it blossoms, and to the very air which it ladens with its delicious fragrance." It is found in low and marshy grounds; is an *annual*, blooming in July, August, and September. It is difficult to bring it to perfection when transplanted; but a plant or two in flower is occasionally brought up, in pots, by the steamers.

Another striking feature along the Road is one where Art triumphs over Nature. The telegraph poles seem massive pillars of hewn stone. The rapid decay of the wooden poles was so great that it became necessary to devise some other plan to carry the wires. Col. Totten devised the present plan. "A small straight stick of the "necessary height was placed upright, and surrounded by a jointed "wooden mould fifteen inches in diameter at the base, tapering to "about eight inches at the top, and sunk into the earth sufficiently "for firm support. This was filled with concrete, and allowed to "stand for several days; when the mould was removed, it was found "firm and strong, and apparently every way adapted to the purpose." They present an excellent and substantial appearance.

It is to be remembered that there is only through traffic on this line. There are no intersecting roads bringing travellers, or freight; but there are nevertheless many stopping places. These are generally the villages of the natives,—some twenty or thirty huts grouped together, thatched with dried palm leaf, and very open, and airy. Hard boiled eggs and fruits of the most delicious kind and in great quantities are brought by the women for sale when the train stops—green oranges, bananas, mangoes—everybody buys, and everybody eats—and fruit is thrown about which the wealth of Saint John could not place upon your table. This principally occurs at one of the stations, either Gongona or Matachin, about three quarters of the way over,—shortly before passing the summit where the trains meet and pass each other. The natives are here seen standing about in groups, or passing from car to car with their baskets. Little piccaninnies from two or three years of age to ten or twelve, of both sexes, are sitting around, or lounging, or standing lazily gazing, as naked as nature made them. The men and women are a little more dressed; the latter may be said to be rather fashionably got up; they look scrupulously clean, and have the most magnificent abundance of black hair, generally beautifully oiled, and dressed and coiled up in a mass behind and around the head, that would laugh to scorn the largest waterfall ever seen in New York.—They wear no crinoline, and the dress is somewhat short,—a kind of white cotton, rather scant, but loose, entirely open in front down to the waist, and with the flounces all around the shoulders. This is the only garment that covers them. The men—well, the men do have a pair of trousers which they generally wear; but occasionally as the train is moving along, should you happen to look out of the window you may see them chopping away with their machetes, or pausing to look at the train as it passes, clothed with not as much as Adam is described to have worn when he left Paradise. Clothing is not required in that climate, and the simple habits of the people do not admit of extensive wardrobes. Such observations, of course, are only applicable to the native Indians or the Negroes from Jamaica and the other Islands, who settled there during the progress of the work, and must be considered as principally limited to the rural districts; tho' sometimes in Aspinwall, and in Panama itself, you see the same classes not over burdened with drapery. The American and foreign residents themselves, and the native gentlemen, and business men, however, dress with extreme neatness, and would soon frown down any stranger who fancied, that in consequence of the freedom of the humbler native population from restraint he might himself indulge in any vagaries with the habits of civilised life.

The scenery around the Obispo is fine, and the attention is drawn from the native to nature, but here again civilization steps in. There is a pretty fair saloon at Gorgona or Matachin,—kept in a little shanty, where claret, and beer, and other artificial drinks can be promptly had. A fellow may be gazing at the lofty peaks of the mountains which towering just beyond throw their long shadows upon the deep valleys, and may be fancying visions of glorious splendor which are to burst upon his sight, as in a short time he passes them and looks his first look upon the Pacific, when suddenly some old Californian who has crossed, perhaps, twenty times, and from familarity with the scene become indifferent to its beauty, shouts out, "Oh, stop your dreaming! Come along,—let's have a cocktail," and off we all scud for "cocktails." In a moment, before you think much about it, old Padre San Juan, as they call him, the keeper has out "cockails," "brandy smashes," "gin slings," "half and half," "bitter beer," "mint juleps," "polywog pops." Glorious things are "cocktails" on the spurs of the Andes with old Californians hob-nobbing—shouting—laughing—yelling; hark! Sharp goes the whistle—down go handfulls of bits—helter skelter, hurry skurry—every devil rushes off to the train as hard as he can go, and the lone traveller from the North wonders where in the deuce all of a sudden his fine ideas have gone to. However, let's get sober; we are passing the summit—we have ten miles to descend—nearly three hundred feet of a decline to be overcome—sharp curves—steep precipices—along the sides of high mountains far above the low valleys—away down beneath--over deep gullies--the head waters of the Rio Grande leaping from rock to rock in wild torrents below---the foliage denser, wilder—more tangled still,—all wild. Nature seems to have suffered terrible convulsions here. Not far from this spot during the early construction of the Road, was a magnificent cliff of basaltic columns a foot or more in diameter and twelve or fifteen feet in length, which overhung the track. Its curious formation, the splendor of its crystals, were most striking to the eye; and it would perhaps have remained to this day the rival of Fingal's Cave in Staffa, or that still more wondrous dome of Iona described by Scott:—

> Where, as if to shame the temples decked
> By skill of earthly architect,
> Nature herself it seemed would raise
> A minster to her Maker's praise.

But the wretched engineers seized the splendid columns, and pounded them into ballast for the Road. An engineer has no poetry in his soul: rhomboids and acute angles jut from every limb. One ought to be impaled every ten miles along a Railway as a warning to his successors, that the world still entertains an appreciation of the beauties of Nature, and that it is not necessary for the sake of saving a few shillings, to destroy all that is beautiful and elevating in Nature's works. Three or four miles bring you to the valley of Paraiso, or Paradiso—so called, because formerly regarded as a lovely spot. And soon you are passing along the sloping plains which gradually take you to the Pacific. The Rio Grande sweeps away to the right, and a few miles off stands Mount Ancon, shadowing down upon the present city of Panama, and almost cooling its base in the gently swelling waters of the Western Sea. It was from this mountain that Balboa first discovered the Pacific. The story as gathered from the Spanish chroniclers is very interesting, and for present purposes may be briefly summarised as follows:—

In 1509 the Spaniards determined upon making permanent settlements on the mainland. They did so on the Gulf of Darien. Their object was gold; their rapacity unsatiable; their cruelties most atrocious. The people of the mainland accustomed to carry on war with each other, received them with a boldness unexperienced in the Islands that had been so easily subdued. Poisoned arrows, inflicting certain death—shipwrecks—want—diseases soon broke up the expedition,—those who could returned to St. Domingo; those who could not remained at St. Mary's in the Province of Darien. Here they became thoroughly disorganised—when Vasco Nunez De Balboa appeared among them. He was a bold daring man, of undoubted courage, great personal strength and plausible eloquence. He was soon selected as their leader. Judging that more gold would be found in the inland than on the coast, he marched with his band into the mountainous parts of the Isthmus. He first, it is said, came across the Albinoes—pure white with red eyes—feeble creatures in mind and body: but soon he met with other tribes of a different race—brave—hardy—and ready to defend their rights. Among these latter an odd custom prevailed: the husbands on the death of their wives, and the wives on the death of their husbands, cut off the end of a finger—widowers and widows were thus easily detected—and by the time a man had had five wives, or a lady five husbands, they would have no ends to their fingers,—quite time to stop, you will say. Notwithstanding the ferocity of these people, Balboa aided by the cupidity of his soldiers—his own indomitable disposition—and packs of blood hounds brought over by the Spaniards, and used in all their conquests, ultimately succeeded in destroying most of the inhabitants of Darien, and in subduing the remainder. One day as the conquerors were disputing about some gold, with great warmth, a young cacique overturned the scales in which they were weighing it, exclaiming with great disdain, " why do you quarrel for such a trifle—if it is for this you quit your country and massacre so many people, I will conduct you to a region were it is so common that it is used for the meanest purposes!" He then explained that there was another ocean, beyond the mountains, which led to this rich country.

An expedition was immediately planned; and on the first of September 1513, one hundred and ninety Spaniards with one thousand Indians to serve as guides, and to carry provisions and baggage, set out with Balboa at their head. The march across was only sixty miles, but it was necessary to climb steep mountains—pass wide rivers—deep morasses—thick forests—and disperse, persuade, or destroy so many tribes of fierce natives, that it was not until after twenty five days that the journey was accomplished. They reached Mount Ancon. Bidding his followers pause in their ascent of the mountain, Balboa continued alone to the top, and gazed long and ardently upon the magnificent scene before him,—the first European whose eyes had ever beheld the Pacific. " Spectators of both hemispheres," exclaimed this haughty leader, " I call you to witness that I take possession of this part of the universe for the

Crown of Castile,—my sword shall defend what my arm hath given to it." The cross was planted on the shore of the continent, and the name of Ferdinand inscribed on the bark of some of the trees.

Buncombe seems indigenous to America. At the time Balboa made this "magnificent" speech, the only citizens of the two hemispheres that were within sight of him were his own few followers some little distance down the mountain, who constituted the citizens of the Eastern Hemisphere, and the poor subdued, conquered Indians who constituted the citizens of the Western Hemisphere. But still the idea was a big one. Since that time buncombe has grown wonderfully! It attained perfection in Washington some twenty years ago, when the "tall talk" took half the Province of New Brunswick away. It flourishes very much at the present day in Massachusetts, and the New England and Western States. It does not get on badly in the British Provinces, particularly when great works are to be conceived. Victor Emanuel and Garibaldi tried it with great effect in Italy; and Napoleon was supposed to be the silent master of the art "from the Alps to the Adriatic" until Bismarck came upon the stage and advertised the absorption of kings and kingdoms with as much coolness as Barnum did his "woolly horse." It does not take very much in England—but that is a mistake. In a national point of view a little "tall talk" sometimes saves a world of fighting; and England might justly use it sometimes to advantage.

In England every man is entitled to the expression of his opinion—nay more,—to the maintenance and advocacy of it. In this country we claim and exercise that privilege, too. We think that those Englishmen—(*few, we hope, they are*)—who talk lightly of throwing off the great outlying dependencies of the British Empire—who speak of severing the connection between England and her Colonies—who weigh as an article of barter the attachment and devotion of millions of British subjects defending her standard—planting her institutions—and revering her Sovereign from the Citadel at Halifax to the distant homes of Vancouver's Island—who weigh in the scales the value of a bale of cotton, or a yard of Manchester cloth, against the hearts, and blood, and affection of men who cost her not one shilling for local purposes—who ask for not one farthing of her public money, further than may be necessary for the preservation of her own Imperial interests—who in her troubles and difficulties with other nations—springing from matters which did not originate with them, and over which they had no control—place their whole revenues at her disposal, and are prepared to let their own land be the battle field of her cause,—we say, the men who so speak—who advocate such a course—mistake the true policy of the greatness and power of England. When yet within the memory of living man, Napoleon sweeping from Marengo to Austerlitz, dictated from the Palaces of Berlin the decrees which were to exclude her commerce from the world—when from Riga on the Baltic to Cadiz on the Atlantic, embattled Europe stood against her—when the blood was not yet dry upon the sands of Corunna—and Rorica and red Vimiera had proved but fruitless triumphs—when the dark lines of Torres Vedras held behind them, under her illustrious chief, the small remnant of the British Army—when then the United States forgetful of their lineage and their race threw in their squadrons against her—the men of British North America *did not falter!* From every hearth and home throughout their forest land went forth the cry "For England!" Her cause was in their hearts,—to share her triumph or her fall was in their prayers,—her destiny was theirs. The descendants of those men in the "New Dominion" will not falter now. From every true and loyal heart, the cry is "For England" still! With a firmer grasp and a stronger hand we nail the old colours to the mast—and with each day's increasing power—each day's increasing prosperity we will rally round her, and battle for her,—the leader of nations in the cause of civilization, and freedom, and happiness, throughout the world! God grant that the policy of those who would separate and divide us, and estrange us, may never prevail!

But to Panama. The train has arrived—the passengers disembark. The station buildings extend almost to the beach, and in close proximity to the pier; they differ very little from other station buildings, except in their entire absence of any attempt at adornment. Every thing is plain; but every thing that is requisite seems there,—offices, freight sheds, car sheds, and the ordinary surroundings of a station. Panama lies off to the right—and busses are in attendance for any who choose to go to the city. As usual they are owned and managed by Americans. Panama, the present city is about two hundred years old, and is built on a flat, rocky peninsula about two miles square, which juts out from the foot of Mount Ancon. It contains about ten thousand inhabitants.

Its situation is beautiful; but no one would be justified in saying the town is beautiful. Like all old towns of a former age, the streets are extremely narrow, the sidewalks not wider than foot paths; and the evidences of delapidation meet you everywhere. It is not clean—not a tree offers its welcome shade from the burning sun—no fountains play—no dashing equipages arrest the eye—no rows of new buildings give evidence of modern life and progress—no bustle—no stirring scenes—no manufactures—no sounds of heavy hammers fall—no merchants rushing frantically from bank to bank to get a few dollars discount—no hungry politicians at the corners thirsting for each other's places—no candidates for seats in the legislature sweetly smiling, and fondly asking after all the dear ones at home—no malicious editors traducing the character and conduct and motives of absent gentlemen—no doctors with savage fierceness contesting whether allopathy or homœopathy will kill, or cure, most effectually—no lawyers—no policemen—and (*Credat Judæus*!) no penny papers!

But with all these wants—in the absence of these unspeakable blessings—Panama is nevertheless a most interesting place—apparently a happy place; and in its own quiet way, doing a great deal of business. The shops are confined to no particular locality. There is no one part of the town for residence—no one part for business, each man pursues his calling where he lives, with little or no display—and every one seems civil and obliging. The shops are well filled with excellent articles from London and Paris, and very cheap. Spanish is principally spoken, except at the hotel, and among the American residents. The latter are extremely courteous and hospitable to strangers; and it is a traveller's own fault if he does not get along well with them. A striking feature in the architecture to a man from the North, is the entire absence of chimnies: no fire place, no mantel-piece meets the eye. As, standing on the verandahs which project from the second stories of most of the dwellings, you gaze around and below over blocks and squares of houses, no projection above the roofs points out how or where the smoke must go, or in what way your savory frijoles and tortillas are cooked. Turtle steaks, and smoking stews come up piping hot, but how they got so puzzles the uninitiated to know. But Panama to a traveller is a pleasant place—'tis a dreamy place. One delights to wander around its old ramparts, and amid its ruined halls—its crumbling cathedrals—its falling churches—its old palaces and convents, covered with the wild ivy and the vine,—beautiful even in decay—

> "Each ruined tower and stone
> Pleads haughtily for glories gone."

In the early part of the eighteenth century it must have been a city of great wealth and beauty,—its religious edifices beyond all number in proportion to its size. You can hardly walk a quarter of a mile in any direction without seeing the evidences of former greatness—the massive structures—the moss-grown walls the bastions and parapets of its former defences—the sentinel towers—the guarded gates—the covered approaches. No doubt, under the panoplied chivalry of old Spain, under the Pizarros, DeSotos, and Carvajals, they must have been impregnable to the half-armed natives; but at the present day, Strangway's shells, and "Armstrongs," or Foster's Batteries would knock them to pieces in a short time.

Of these structures apparently but two at the present time remain for use; one a convent, turned into a soldiers' barrack; the other the Cathedral of Panama. The latter must have been a noble building in its day. It faces on the Plaza, and is approached by a broad flight of steps leading to a terrace: two lofty towers stand on either side, and three great portals lead into the body of the building. A Latin inscription along the architrave, almost effaced by time, shews it to have been built upwards of two centuries ago. Externally the stone is chipping and wearing away, and large crevices along the front show plainly that unless soon attended to, it will share the fate of its former companions. The interior was once magnificently decorated, and is capable of holding many thousand worshippers. Several small chapels branch off on either side, and were formerly adorned with beautiful statuary representing the Crucifixion and other Scriptural scenes connected with the Saints and the Virgin Mary. The remains of the gilding and adornments may still be seen; but the whole place has been shamefully pillaged by the buccaneers and pirates in early days, and by the successive revolutionary parties, which during the last fifty years have succeeded each other for a time in seizing the government of Central America. These chapels and the whole buildings now present the most melancholy appearance: tawdry decorations fail to supply the place of former grandeur; and the confessional boxes themselves are mouldering away. The Cathedral is opened for service every morning, and the Roman Catholic ceremonial is still performed with much of its former pomp. As in the cathedrals on the continent, the great centre of the church is free from seats; the worshippers bring their little mats and kneel—the solemn music swells through the columned aisles, and peals back from the lofty walls—the priest dressed in vestments of great richness, chants in Latin the beautiful prayers—incense burners are moved gently backwards and forwards before the altar—and fragrance fills the air. You gaze above and around, and you see the evidences of bygone power—of bygone wealth—of bygone greatness. You gaze below, and on the monumental slabs which are beneath your feet, you read the names of generations which have passed away,—some who have filled their turn—some who have gone when young and fair, and fondly loved,—if these records speak true. Around you kneeling, bowed in reverential awe, are men and women, and youths of tender years, whose earnest suppliant looks are telling of a time that is to come—and the priest still chants—and the music swells—and you may lean against the column which supports the lofty dome, and there amid ruin, and desolation, and decay, you may calmly look upon that solemn scene, but an unconscious sadness steals upon the soul,—a sense of something that there is no permanency here, and you turn away a wiser, if not a better man.

There is something painfully depressive in these views of old religious edifices in Central and South America. Whatever persons may think of the efficacy of the system under which they were reared, at any rate there was sincerity, there was devotion. The wealth that built them, though torn from captive lands, could have contributed to the gratification of sensual pleasures, but was dedicated to a holier and a nobler end. Man in his rapine might have spared what had been rendered sacred by the cause to which it was devoted. But there seems after all to have been a retributive Justice,—an avenging Nemesis in the affairs of South and Central America. The Spaniards in their thirst for gold had in their early occupation desolated the country with blood. The wail of slaughtered nations,—the cry of trampled humanity was heard above—

> "For lo! a darker hour ascends—
> The altar shakes—the crozier bends—
> The ire of an Almighty King
> Rides forth upon destruction's wing."

And the descendants of those very Spaniards, and the natives whom they outraged, after the lapse of two centuries have swept away the monuments of their power, and cursed with the desolation of anarchy a country of itself the fairest and the richest that the sun shines upon.

How unlike the sturdy old Puritans of New England, or the reckless Cavaliers of Virginia who left their homes in the old world not for gold, but for the sake of civil and religious freedom, or the love of wild and daring adventure. No groves of palm, or fragrant breezes bade them welcome—but cold and rugged blasts, and bold and treacherous foes. They struggled not for gold, but for life—for liberty—for principle—and the same retributive Justice has given to their descendants a country teeming with every blessing, and adding monument after monument to the evidences of its greatness and power.

The Convent as before mentioned is now turned into a barrack. It was once regarded with great respect; and within but a short period gone, travellers used to go to the little wicket at the entrance, place their bit upon the turn-table, and receive from the fair hand of an unseen nun, a draught of the holy water within. The Government troops are now quartered there; and a wretched sentry, with his firelock lying against the wall, is seen before the door with two or three of the guard lounging lazily about. A stranger merely passing through a place should not condemn things solely because they do not come up to his ideas, or to what he may have been accustomed; but impressions will force themselves upon the mind; and travellers will write; and after all it is from hearing what a great many say, that we arrive at the truth at last. About forty men with a drum and fife were going through guard mounting; they were small sized; a few had some attempt at uniform,—the officer in command was tolerably well dressed, somewhat in the French style, but the greater number of the men were most wretchedly clad,—some with a straw sandal on one foot, and a half slipper on the other—and lolling about in a way when on the march that would have put the Adjutant of the 15th into a fever. Each soldier carried an old "brown bess" with a worsted ball and ribbon streamers stuck in the muzzle, a cartouch box of huge dimensions, and very ancient apperance, with other appointments of a similar character. A very free and easy crew they seemed to be, for men doing duty in a garrison town, at guard mounting. They are said to be very poor hands in the use of firearms, but at close quarters against their own people, with their machetes, hew and hack very well. Such as it is, this army occasionally revolutionises the country, and topples over a general or a governor, as money is abundant or scarce, or promises are made freely or withheld. But after all what has such a soldier to fight for? What glories cluster round the past history of his country? What future brightens with cheering hope his coming day? Anarchy and confusion—poverty and misery—ill fed—ill clothed—and rarely paid—nothing to look back to—nothing to look forward to—what is there to care for—what rights are there in such a country to maintain or defend? On such an occasion, an Englishman whether born in the British Isles or in British America involuntarily turns to his own country—her history—her institutions—her laws—her army—her navy—the past comes upon him—the present *glows before* him. However humble he be, there is a pride in the thought which steels him to any endurance.

You know the story of Moyse the Private of the Buffs. In 1857 when Lord Elgin went out as ambassador and plenipotentiary to China, in one of the conflicts in the vicinity of Canton, "some Seiks and a private of the Buffs having remained behind with the grog carts fell into the hands of the Chinese. On the next day they were brought before the authorities and commanded to perform the Kotow. The Seiks obeyed, but Moyse the English soldier declaring that he would not prostrate himself before any Chinaman alive, was immediately knocked on the head and his body thrown on a dung hill."—*China Correspondent of the Times.*

On this occurrence Sir F. Hastings Doyle wrote the following beautiful lines:—

THE PRIVATE OF THE BUFFS.

Last night, among his fellows rough
He jested, quaffed and swore—
A drunken private of the Buffs
Who never looked before,—
To day, beneath the foeman's frown,
He stands in Elgin's place,
Ambassador from Britain's crown,
And type of all her race.

Poor, reckless, rude, lowborn, untaught,
Bewildered and alone,

A heart, with English instinct fraught,
He yet can call his own.
Aye! tear his body limb from limb,
Bring cord, or axe, or flame,—
He only knows that *not through him*
Shall England come to shame.

Far Kentish hop-fields round him seemed,
Like dreams, to come and go,
Bright leagues of cherry blossoms gleamed
One sheet of living snow,—
The smoke above his father's door,
In grey soft eddyings hung,—
Must he then watch it rise no more
Doom'd by himself so young ?

Yes Honor calls—with strength like steel
He put the vision by !
Let dusky Indians, whine and kneel,
An English *lad must die* !
And thus, with eye that wond not shrink—
With knee to man unbent—
Unfaltering on its dreadful brink,
To his red grave he went !

Vain ! mightiest fleets of iron framed—
Vain ! those all shattering guns,
Unless proud England keep untam'd
The strong hearts of her sons.
So let his name through Europe ring,
A man of mean estate,
Who died, as firm as Sparta's King,
Because his soul was great.

Last night, among his fellows rough
He jested, quaffed and swore—
A drunken private of the Buffs,
Who never looked before,—
To day, beneath the foeman's frown,
He stands in Elgin's place,
Ambasador from Britain's crown
And type of all her race.

It is thus that the humblest individual can maintain the honor of his country, and spread among distant nations a respect for its character and people—nay, more,—leave behind him a name that stimulates thousands of his countrymen to acts of heroism and daring. Such feelings in its masses constitute the foundation of a nation's greatness.

According to all accounts the bay of Panama is never ruffled by a storm. It is truly in the Pacific Ocean; and no difficulty has ever occurred in transporting the passengers and freight from it to the main steamers which lie off at the islands before mentioned, some three miles out. The steamers on both the Atlantic and Pacific sides may be well described as floating palaces, and are well and ably commanded, the officers being not only gentlemen, but seamen. Naval discipline and regularity are kept up, and every thing conducive to comfort or security attended to. The *Colorado*, which, on the occasion of the present visit, was the receiving steamer on the Pacific side, is of three thousand seven hundred tons burden, and at night, with her tier upon tier of lights, is a magnificent sight. Her upper deck sweeps an unbroken length of fully four hundred feet, and is broad in proportion. The saloons and staterooms are of corresponding dimensions; and she accommodates with ease twelve or fifteen hundred passengers. Her commander, Commodore Watkins, is a splendid specimen of a fine old English admiral, and apparently a great favorite. About six miles down on the left of the Bay are the site and ruins of the ancient city of Panama destroyed in 1661 by the buccaneers under Morgan, who was a consummate pirate, robber, and rascal, though he was an Englishman. The history of the "Brethren of the Coast" or buccaneers, teems with the most eventful incidents, and shews an organization for pillage and robbery, unparalleled before or since,—so much so, as from its extent and power on some occasions to have extorted from the civilized nations of that day recognitions and negotiations which ought never to have been extended to acknowledged outlaws and freebooters. The Bay is covered with pelicans and other sea birds, and is filled with the most voracious sharks. It makes one's blood run cold to see the great brutes stealthily swimming around without a ripple on the water, or anything to indicate their approach but the silent cutting of the dorsal fin just above the water. Woe to the person who plays his hand in the water as the boat moves along! If he reaches the shore it will be with one arm less than when he left it. A "header" in the Pacific with all its temptations would be about the last plunge a man would take. The Aspinwall House at Panama, is a fair, comfortable hotel where you got capital claret for breakfast instead of tea, and fried plantains instead of butter; but it is not of the character it would be, if the travellers over the Isthmus were more than mere birds of passage. Ordinarily you do not go into Panama, but embark directly on arrival of the cars at the station and pier. This is speaking of the travellers from New York to San Francisco; those from or destined for ports in South America, or elsewhere, of course 'await the arrival or departure of their respective steamers. From the increased communication with the ports to the South, and from Australia and New Zealand, it is computed that one large steamer arrives at, or departs from Panama every day. It is not uncommon to meet travellers who have come from Lima, or Valparaiso to Panama thence to San Francisco, thence to China, thence to Singapore, Ceylon, and the Red Sea, across Egypt, up the Mediterranean to Trieste, or Marseilles, thence through Germany, or France, to England, thence to New York, and back to Lima, performing the entire circuit of the globe,—and many of these travellers very young men, too. An immense advantage. Such an intercourse with the world brushes off a good deal of the *littleness* of a man's mind, and teaches him what an insignificant item individually he is. 'Tis a pity some of the young swells of New Brunswick could not be sent abroad a little before they fancy themselves great men.

It would be impossible to state what will be the effect upon the trade of the Isthmus from the opening of the new line from San Francisco to China, which commenced in January last: speculations as to the future seem preposterous, when one looks at the strides which commerce has taken during the last twenty years.

Our time however is limited. We must retrace our steps for Aspinwall again. Good-bye, good-bye, old Panama. May the prosperity of your coming years rival the glory of your past.

Up to February 1852, the terminus at Navy Bay had been without any distinctive appellation. It was then proposed that it should be formally inaugurated as a city and called "Aspinwall" to commemorate the services of that distinguished promoter of the Road, and founder of the Pacific line. Every lover of fair play will give it that designation. Some foreigners still persist in calling it "Colon", but it is little known as such. The place, the island of Manzanilla, was not fit for a mangy dog to kennel in until the American took hold of it, and made it what it is; and it is but right that his name should go down to all future time with its growing prosperity and importance.

A day's sport on the Chagres may not be uninteresting to some parts of the audience. The river abounds with alligators, and at one or two places where the line crosses the river, or runs parallel with it, they may sometimes be seen lying on the banks basking in the sun, locking at a distance, and in the rapidity of your own motion in the cars, more like great logs or old trunks of trees than anything else. They range from twelve to twenty feet in length, and are very unpleasant customers either on shore or in the water if you unexpectedly get too near them; though in the first instance if you are seen or heard approaching, they will always endeavour to escape. Their motions are extremely quick, and on the slightest indication of danger they roll or scramble from the bank to the water almost in the twinkling of an eye. It seems incredible that such huge clumsy looking animals could move so rapidly, and apparently with such little effort. In swimming they sink down, and there is nothing to indicate their presence: should you fall overboard,—good-bye. Gatoon is one of the native settlements, about eight or nine miles from Aspinwall on the bank of the river—on the left descending bank, the Railway being on the right: there is no bridge or ford, the water very deep, and the current strong. The only mode of crossing is in canoes. It must be borne in mind that all the observations now and hitherto made are to be considered with reference to the season, the close of the month of August,—the rainy season lasting from June to October. The keeper of the station opposite Gatoon is a quiet intelligent Vermonter, Mr. Schwartz. His neat little cottage is in the midst of a small garden, perhaps half an acre, nicely fenced,—abounding with every species of tropical fruit, cocoas—mangoes—bananas—pine apples—oranges—citrons, etc.: a little different from the beech nuts and pine cones of his native state. However, he is a right good fellow, and a mason to boot. You may leave the train at his verandah. With some difficulty a canoe is found, and a native to paddle. It is a wretched "dug out" about twelve feet long and eighteen inches wide. It is very ticklish, and cants with the slightest move: it requires great care to get into it without upsetting, and with the native and two sportsmen, is overweighted. As the head is slowly canting off into the stream, you observe to your friend Mr. Schwartz standing on the bank, "this is rather ticklish in a river abounding with alligators." "Oh!" he replies "the danger is not so much from alligators as from ground sharks: the river is full of them, and if you upset they pull you down immediately." Great thunders! what a pleasure! By a convulsive effort your ball cartridges fly out of your pocket, your rifle is laid down in the bottom of the canoe: a shaky fit comes over you, and there you sit as still as a mouse with a cat looking at him. It is a great pleasure. Slowly you work against the strong current—the canoe seems more rickety than ever. "Ah," says the native, "there him alligator, shoot him! Shoot him!" Egad, the sensation is he'll shoot *you!* "Spectators of two Hemispheres, shouts Balboa, behold me! I'll get out of this canoe as fast as I can." And so we do; the native was mistaken about the alligator that time. We get over to Gatoon—see the pretty girls with the scant clothes—and manage to get a good canoe double the size, and then start off as plucky as young Highlanders. The river takes a bend—the scenery becomes more lovely and more wild. There are hardly any settlers here, none on the left side, a few ranches only at scattered intervals on the right, a few cows in the enclosures around, grazing on the steep hills. The vegetation is of the rankest character, the trees standing out from the very water—no beach—no landing place on the steep bank—the water five-and-twenty or thirty feet deep at the margin, and rushing along with its swift current carrying occasionally large trees and other vegetable matter—very muddy—the clouds scudding wildly above—the whole scene dark and gloomy, with a most Plutonian aspect; but the birds are beautiful,—the blue heron—the white ibis—the black and yellow turpiale—the parrots fly high in flocks above, shrieking their wild discordant notes—and the eagle and the hawk soar along. The cocoa-nut trees are by thousands around covered with fruit; and the small lizards and inguanas are seen running along. You have worked up against the current some four or five miles—the river is about two hundred yards broad—hist! what is that in the rent on the steep bank on the opposite side? It looks like an old log. Gently! Work up and across, and drop down. Ha! there is no shaking now,—there's sport! Click! as the hammers go back not a word—not a breath. Slowly you drop down, nearly opposite—not thirty yards off—a low branch intervenes—no movement—'tis a log. A sudden movement,—a round black face, and two black, bead-like eyes without any white about them stare at you. Quick as a flash, the monster glides to the water—but quicker than a flash, your rifle peals upon the air, and a long line of blood bubbles up from the rushing stream. That fellow's done for !

Altogether, it is the wildest and most exciting sport a man can have. A good deal depends upon the day. On a bright, warm, sunny day, they are seen in great numbers, but, as a general thing, they do not turn out before ten, and retire about four. We are mistaken in supposing there is any great pleasure about the water in these warm latitudes. Basking in the sunshine, and bathing in the tepid stream, is a myth. Between alligators, and sharks, and stinging nettles, and electric eels, an ordinary man dare not take a swim. Even at Aspinwall, inside of the wharves, in ten feet water, you are cautioned against going in ; and the sharks may be seen at any time rising to the garbage thrown over from the steamer. The natives and residents, however, do not seem to fear them ; and it may be presumed that persons living there for any length of time, become so familiarised with these dangers, as to cease to have any dread of them.

But here, for a moment let me pause to pay a tribute of respect to the memory of a young and gallant friend. Of the two sportsmen who were out on that occasion the youngest and the best has passed away.* Cut down by the fever on his second return voyage after the present, he only lived long enough to reach his home, and die in the midst of his family and friends. Of a stalwart frame of temperate habits, a strong and powerful constitution, in the prime of life, of affluent means, of high education, and social position, his seemed to be the promise of a long career, both of utility and pleasure. Who would have thought that so soon that career would have terminated? Apparently the strongest of all the party who went out in that ship, he was the first to fall. He leaves behind him the memory of a generous disposition, and a noble heart—

> " There have been tears, and breaking hearts for thee
> And mine were nothing, had I such to give,"

But there are few my young and gallant friend who knew thee, who will not sorrow o'er your untimely end.

The Republic of New Grenada, of which Panama is one of the constituent provinces, is a confederation of eight states, and is the most important of the South American Republics. Its estimated area is about four hundred and eighty thousand square miles,—greater than the Canadas, Nova Scotia, and New Brunswick put together. Its greatest length is eight hundred, and greatest breadth four hundred miles.* It is diversified with mountains of the loftiest character, and plains of great extent and fertility; its rivers numerous, broad and deep; its temperature ranges from the heat of the torrid zone to the cold of the regions of perpetual snow and ice; its population may now be estimated at three millions. Its productions are all that may be expected from so varied a country. Rice, cotton, tobacco, cocoa, sugar, fruits, wheat, maize,—almost everthing that can be used for food. Its mineral resources are great: but its manufactures are at a very low ebb. Its total annual exports are estimated at fourteen millions three hundred and fifty thousand dollars. The capital of the united confederacy is Bogot , a city of sixty thousand inhabitants, situated on a broad plateau, eight thousand six hundred and fifty-five feet above the level of the sea. It will astonish many here present to learn that in New Grenada by law a free public school is established in every parish throughout the republic, and that in all, there are over eight hundred public schools in that country. The average rise of the tide at Panama is about twelve feet, while at Aspinwall it is little more than one. About nine miles to the south east of Panama is the beautiful and productive Island of Toboga, the rendezvous of the British Pacific Steamship Navigation Company. The position of this Island is very commanding as respects the trade of the Pacific with the Atlantic by the Isthmus. It is singular how old John Bull tumbles into strategic points in case of difficulties with other nations. Gibraltar and Malta command the Mediterranean. The little barren useless rock of Perrim, lies in the mouth of the Red Sea, and watches over the trade of the Gulf of Persia, and the transit to the East. Ceylon quietly lies resting on the road to India, and Hong Kong hangs like a little cloud in front of China. Capetown takes care of the South of Africa, and Halifax and the Bermudas form the rendezvous for the fleets in the North

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* Dr. Lewis Coxe, of Philadelphia, Surgeon of the Chauncey.

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*Estimated area of New Brunswick is	27,700	square miles,
" " of Nova Scotia	19,500	"
" " of Lower Canada	210,000	"
" " of Upper Canada	180,000	"
	437,200	

Atlantic. Vancouver's Island quietly looks into the Columbia. The Falkland Islands are within the shadow of Cape Horn: and here just as the commerce of the world seems centering towards the Isthmus, the old red cross of St. George suddenly floats from the Island of Taboga in the chops of the Bay of Panama. Truly did Webster speak of the magnitude and the power of England. Her merchant statesmen are far seeing. The little Island reigns the mistress of the seas,—and long may she do so.

Under one of the conditions of the contract made with the Railway Company, it is said the Government of New Grenada has given notice of its intention at the close of the first period of twenty years, after the completion of the Road, now about nine years hence, to pay the five million dollars, and take possession. This it is rumored has been done at the instigation of an English company, who propose to pay a bonus to the Government in addition to re-paying that amount, and to take the Road off the Government's hands. This may be strictly according to law, but it is hardly fair or just, certainly not generous, and it may well be doubted whether it will be advantageous to the country, or the route. At present the route is extremely popular, the management has been most liberal, and Englishmen of all classes speak of the courtesy with which they have been treated. The officers of Her Majesty's ships on that station are given free passes, and national civilities interchanged. It is very questionable whether half a dozen directors sitting in some dark office in London with the impression that the world is a very small place, but London a large one, will manage matters with the same liberality, or the same courtesy. Better let the Americans have the Road: they have managed it well, and they deserve to keep it.

The observations hitherto made both of the country and the climate, were all the impressions made and written at the time. It may well be questioned whether greater experience of both would not necessitate a modification of opinion. A week or ten days hardly suffice to form very sound conclusions. The loss of the *Evening Star* and the death of Dr. Coxe were subsequent events which may well justfy the doubt. Several of the officers besides, afterwards had the fever, but though severe it did not prove fatal. But at any rate whether right or wrong, such were the impressions of the moment.

The time limited for a "paper" has expired, so also has our leave of absence. Our steamer's head is turned northward again, and the shades of evening are clothing with increasing obscurity the receding shores.

> Slow sinks more lovely, ere his race be run,
> Along these Southern hills the setting sun,
> Not as in Northern climes obscurely bright,
> But one unclouded blaze of living light.

Faintly, and more faintly still the dim outlines of the land melt away. Night comes stealing on, and the mind awakes at last to the stern reality that the dream is at an end, that we are homeward bound,—to the dull routine of daily toil, and the monotony of an ordinary existence. Good-night, good-night.

> Thou glorious mirror, where the Almighty's Form
> Classes Itself in tempests ; in all time
> Calm or convulsed,— in breeze, or gale, or storm,—
> Icing the Pole, or in the torrid clime
> Dark heaving, boundless, endless and sublime,—
> The image of eternity—the throne
> Of the Invisible. Even from out thy slime
> The monsters of the deep are made. Each zone
> Obeys thee. Thou goest forth, dread, fathomless, alone !
> Time writes no wrinkles on Thine azure brow
> Such as Creation's dawn beheld, Thou rollest now !