

# THE... PANAMA CANAL

How Uncle Sam is Tackling the World's Most Gigantic Engineering Feat.

Ten Thousand Men Digging Through a Mountain Range on the Isthmus to Connect Two Mighty Oceans. Largest Force at Work on the Culebra Cut.

From the Atlantic to the Pacific the Canal Will Be Fifty Miles Long and at Least Forty Feet Deep—Many Dams to Be Built and a River's Course May Be Changed.

Sanitary Conditions Being Successfully Maintained—Towns and Cities Properly Served. Pure Water Drawn from the Mountains—Employees Well Housed and Fed—Suitable Hospitals and Medical Attendance Provided.

THE United States government is doing many big things these days—maintaining the integrity of China, keeping the "open door" in the Orient, protecting the smaller republics of the western hemisphere and acting as a mediator in securing peace in the far east. But vital she is doing nothing larger than the attempt to connect the Atlantic and Pacific oceans by a waterway through the isthmus of Panama. This is admitted to be the most gigantic engineering feat ever undertaken by man. Longer canals have been made. The Suez ditch, for example. But none of them has presented the difficulties that are encountered at Panama. Digging through a mountain range is a new proposition. In Lesseppe was successful in making the Suez waterway. Yet he fell down on Panama. It remains for Uncle Sam to do what France failed to do. Will he succeed? Who, knowing his history and spirit, can doubt it? If faith, grit and determination can overcome the passive resistance of nature he will overcome. He has conquered a continent, won in five wars and for the first time in history has made representative government shine in Panama. What is the more constructing of a canal fifty miles long to compare with these larger accomplishments? Of course he will win. The American people are a unit on this uncertain, and when the American people unite opposition might as well get out of the way. This is not boasting; it is simply the will and the consciousness of ability to perform. The Panama canal will be built. The nation is pledged to reach that goal. It has set its hand to the task, and every American should have too much pride in his country to see it fail.

**World's Great Highway.**  
Almost since the discovery of the new world men have dreamed of uniting the two oceans. The scheme was definitely broached in the early part of the sixteenth century. Now, in the beginning of the twentieth, the thing is to be done. A problem large enough to engross the attention of men for 400 years is large enough for a great nation to undertake. A result that will benefit all the continents of the earth is sufficiently important that no possible effort should be neglected for its accomplishment. Prophetic minds have foreseen that some day, and no very distant day at that, the greatest civilization the world has known is to fringe the shores of the Pacific. That ocean, rather than the Atlantic, is to be the world's great highway. The Panama canal will be the gate to the Pacific. Its completion will open the door to a new era.

These are the larger aspects of the case, and a thing is never really seen until it is seen at its best. It is from this higher viewpoint that the American people should behold the undertaking. The vexatious details of sanitation, engineering, shaping of rivers and digging the waterway must of course be accentuated, but these should never obscure from our sight the final goal. This is really a great thing we have set out to do. It will benefit all mankind. It will be a mile post in history. It will make for the future. What are a few comparative little small obstacles that they should stand in the way of this larger goal?

**Pacific Civilization.**  
It is not without interest that much of American history for the last decade has had to do with this future Pacific

civilization. Our part in it is to place in Hawaii, China and the Panama canal all links in this direction. The opening of Alaska, the Lewis and Clark expedition, the building up of our Pacific fleet, what are all these but part of the same general scheme? Walt Whitman, with his cosmic vision, saw much of this thing that is now shaping. Perhaps John Hay, with his far-ighted statesmanship, had the same object in view. At any rate, it is plainly coming, and is bringing it about no one step will be more important than the construction of the Panama canal.

Passing from the general to the particular, the present status of the work on the canal can be simply told. There are about 10,000 men now employed, most of whom are engaged in the actual digging of the big ditch. The largest force of these is at work on what is known as the Culebra cut, which was started by the French under Lesseppe. This cut is across the mountain, where the largest amount of excavating must be done. The canal crosses the range at its lowest point, but even at this the hills are in the neighborhood of 300 feet above the level of the sea. The French cut is about half of the way, and the Americans have taken up the work where they left off. Now all this may look easy on paper, but that first 150 feet of the French cut was a job that exhausted the French nation, and the climate and the grafting altogether did it and that was the least difficult end of the work. Digging out the bottom of a mountain range is a harder proposition than digging out the top of it, and it is the bottom half of the contract that we have on our hands.

**No Time Being Lost.**  
The shaking of that other 150 feet is not all that will have to be done, however, for the ditch itself must be at least forty feet in depth. This is supposing of course that the canal is to be a sea level affair, a point that is by no means settled. Most of the engineers favor that plan, but congress must make the decision. It is estimated that it would take \$80,000,000 more to build a sea level canal than one with locks at the sixty foot level, and it is practically certain that it will not go above the sixty foot level, and it will require at least two years' additional time. The work that is now being done is such that would have to be done whatever the level. Thus no time



1—HOTEL FOR CANAL WORKMEN. 2—SITE OF ATLANTIC ENTRANCE TO THE CANAL. 3—STARTING IN THE CULEBRA CUT. 4—CULEBRA HILL, NORTHERN END OF THE CUT.

is being lost, and Uncle Sam can hear the evidence and arguments of the engineers, after which he can render his verdict.

**Many Dams to Be Built.**  
The cut through the mountains is only a small part of the work. In addition, many dams have to be made, and one river that occasionally goes on a rampage will either have to be domesticated or persuaded to go in some other direction. The proposition is to dig a tunnel through the mountains and make this river run into the other ocean. But, then, turning an adult river from one ocean to another is only a trifling proposition for your Uncle Sam, and to tackle, as for the dams, the contemplated one at Bolio is to be abandoned for the simple reason that bedrock is a couple of hundred feet farther down than was intended, and a dam that is not founded on the eternal rock is like the house built on the sand. It would fall, and great would be the fall of it.

One of the chief difficulties with which the French had to contend was the climate. Panama is hot, malarial, damp, discouraging and generally a tough proposition for civilized white men to run up against. As for the natives, they are used to it and they are so generally so account that it does not too much matter as to them. They are too lazy to dig a ditch even for sewage, much less a ship canal. So it is absolutely necessary for Anglo-Saxons to do the work or at least to oversee it. As before stated, it was the climate and grafting that quered the French. But what is climate to a Yankee? If it does not suit him, he can get it over. This is what he has been engaged in doing at Panama. True, the sun is as hot as ever, but it is not the sun that kills. It is the bad water, the unsanitary conditions, the failure to take precautions in safeguarding health. These things the Americans are in a fair way of overcoming. First, they have done what it never seems to occur to a

tropical native... to provide for... and other... they have provided proper rates and regulations for protecting the physical wellbeing of employees; fourth, they have provided suitable hospitals and medical attendance. The result is that the death rate is only an infinitesimal part of what it was under the French regime.

**Immense Progress Made.**  
Another great work done by the American commissions has been in looking after the proper housing and feeding of the men. This has been a gigantic task in itself, but is now well under way. There is a railroad to run, which belongs to Uncle Sam, as well as a steamship line from Colon to New York. The railway proper is only about forty-five miles long, but it has numerous spurs and sidetracks amounting to about 200 miles in all. There has been all the French machinery, much of which had been allowed to rust and go to ruin, to renovate or throw into the scrap heap, as the case seemed to warrant. In addition to all of this, there has been an immense amount of silencing to do. All these different departments of the work are organized, and immense progress has been made under each head. Taken all in all, there is nothing discouraging out the situation to the date. The only things that can defeat the work or very materially retard it are riot and grafting, and the president has shown a very vigorous tendency to discourage both. He seems to think that the only way to dig a canal is to dig it, and as he is the boss of the whole job it may reasonably be expected that the dirt will fly.

**About Fifty Miles Long.**  
The canal winds somewhat and its fifty-five miles in length. With the dredging in the sea it will be about fifty miles all told. So far as the plans have been perfected, it will probably be 150 feet wide at the bottom and at least forty feet deep. If built at the sixty foot level several locks will be necessary. If at sea level one lock only will be required. This one lock, which will be near the Pacific entrance, will be for the purpose of slanting out the high lands on the Pacific side; the variation there being twenty feet as against only about four feet on the Atlantic side. The two entrances to the big ditch will be near

the cities of Panama and Colon, the termini of the present Panama railway. As to the time required to complete the undertaking, who can tell? The engineers say eight years, three years for sea level and ten years for the sea level canal. To do the thing actually may take longer. The American people must make up their minds to see the thing through whatever time is needed. The same holds true as to expense. The engineers have figured on \$230,000,000 for a sea level ditch and considerably less for a lock canal. It may be more than that. It is one thing to build on paper and another to build on earth. But the American people have made up their minds to stay by the task regardless of expense—provided always that the money does not go into the capacious pocket of the grafter.

At present we can rest in the assurance that the canal will be constructed. Come what may, Yankee pluck and grit will see the thing through. Faith will remove mountains, and Uncle Sam has faith. Besides, he has dynamite, steam shovels and vim. No dinky little mountain range 300 feet high can stand before a combination like that.

**The Order of Gonts.**  
The Independent Order of Gonts, a New Jersey fraternal organization which was incorporated recently at the statehouse in Trenton, has its office at Montclair, says a special dispatch from the New York Times. The order is formed for the relief of its members to pay death benefits and to promote fraternal interests of its members.

**New Way to Fight Mosquitoes.**  
A Memphis (Mo.) man has discovered a new way to get rid of mosquitoes, says the Kansas City Star. He says to rub alum on your face and hands. When the mosquito takes a bite it picks its brains so it can't sting. It sits down in a damp place, tries to dig the pucker loose, catches its death of cold and dies of pneumonia.

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**WILD MAN OF THE MOUNTAINS.**  
An Aborigine Investigator met a savage but Unobtainable Dish.  
An explorer in the wilds of northern Australia writes: "While at work one day Mr. Hingston found an aborigine dwelling which revealed evidences of architectural design seldom displayed by Australian aborigines. It was evidently a multi-chambered structure, in shape about sixteen feet long and four feet high. It was built of layers of straw intermixed with a good stiff clay. Small openings as windows were numerous all round the sides. The door was the only drawback. This was a mere burrow hole about one foot from the ground, and one was compelled to crawl in on all fours to enter this primitive type of mansion. When we cleared the river we anchored at Maria Island. Seeing some of the blacks on the beach we went to interview them. They were apparently frightened, however, and abandoned the canoes on which they were at work and cleared into the bush. Care was taken not to interfere with their possessions, and pipes and tobacco were left where the natives could find them. Tambling about we came upon an open space of considerable extent marked by a large square with stone, on which were placed three or five feet high, five or six hollow posts, which were stuffed full of human bones. All the posts were painted red. We doubtless stumbled upon a sacred spot. There were some nice skulls, but not a thing was interfered with."  
"A few miles up the river we struck a big camp of natives, but they cleared into the bush as soon as they caught sight of us. We waited some time at the camp, and the blacks returned, satisfied that we did not intend mischief. The usual presents of tobacco and pipes were given, and they were received with the greatest satisfaction. Indeed, we became perfect friends for the time being. To seal the friendship, or, perhaps, it may have been the native fashion of 'looking toward' our great buck came to me with a wooden vessel shaped like a canoe in his hand and full of honey. I noticed on the top a ball of grass. The chap held the honey to me, but I shook my head, so he took the ball of grass, whisked it about in the air and popped it into his mouth. After sucking it dry he put it back into the honey, and when nicely soaked, offered it to me again. He evidently wished me to follow his example, but I passed. There was a fine iguana on the fire, just nicely cooked. This I did try, and it was really good—just like chicken."

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— "Yes!"  
— "Yes!"  
— "Very enjoyable; I saw an interesting account of it in last evening's Post."  
— "Didn't you? Well, why don't you read The Chicago Evening Post?"

It is said charity begins at home. As a matter of fact there is a good deal of complaint because charity does not begin at home.

When a man gets married he is apt to think everybody should give him a present, but how he hates to give wedding presents when his friends get married!—Aitchison Globe.

Strength of Muscles.  
You must, some time, try to open the shell of a fresh water mussel or a sea clam. You will find one the size of your hand has great strength, although both his muscles may not be larger than those of one of your fingers. I have often seen a boy pick up a mussel and insert his fingers before the shell was quite closed, thinking he would open it again. Few boys can succeed. They usually have had pulling to get their fingers free. A big mussel can bite hard. Were it not that the edge of the shell, in big specimens, is smooth and thick, a boy might get his fingers cut to the bone.—St. Nicholas.

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