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WORK ON THE PANAMA CANAL LIKELY TO STOP.

Recent reports from Panama indicate that work will shortly cease on the line of the proposed canal, and, unless the difficulties in the way have been greatly exaggerated, a further loan asked of the deluded investors, for the most part poor people, would be a cruel wrong, because only serving to postpone impending disaster and raise hopes that cannot be realized. All the work done for a twelvemonth, and even longer, has consisted of the dredging of soft material by contractors paid by the cubic yard; men not in anywise identified with the project, and having no interest in either its success or failure. Meantime the projectors have been considering the really formidable problems on the solution of which depends the final accomplishment of the work. Foremost of these is the control of the torrents that at various periods pour down the sides of the mountains, and which, if unchecked, make all hope of maintaining a canal vain, and still another is the obstacle interposed by a mountain which has been found to be moving slowly into the very path of the canal. Add to these the deadliness of the climate and the important difference between the mean level of the two oceans which the canal is designed to connect, and it is not surprising that the engineers in charge of the enterprise, skilled engineers as they are, have not been able to discover a practical means of accomplishing their purpose. Now, when it is too late, the French investors will realize that the unfavorable reports from the United States which have followed the work from its very inception have not been animated by ungenerous motives. At the International Canal Congress, which met in Paris, May 15, 1879, Admiral Ammen and Captain Selfridge, of our navy, and the accredited representatives of the United States, declared that the route by way of Panama was impracticable. Both these officers are identified with a series of careful surveys made across various parts of the isthmus, including Panama, and their opinion was supported by that of many other engineers who preceded them on the isthmus. But the French were inexorable. Lieut. Lucien N. B. Wyse, of the French republican navy, had made a reconnaissance across the isthmus, and the French engineers, led by De Lesseps, who, it may be said without prejudice to his fame, has won more victories in the line of diplomacy than in that of engineering, showed a hasty willingness to accept Wyse's conclusions, though they were opposed by the experience of older and more experienced men than he.

Bad management was apparent at the very start of the enterprise, and if the two officers of the company who recently came hither from Panama on their way homeward are to be believed, this bad management has continued up to the present. Large quantities of material, as unnecessary as it was costly, have been constantly sent out, only to rot or rust in the swamps or on the sides of the hills. As many as fourteen locomotives, too heavy for use on the temporary lines constructed along the soft dump mounds, are at the present time rusting and corroding in the various sections, and apparatus and tools in vast quantities, whose design or weight precludes its use, is strewn along the highways or remains unpacked upon the shores of the port.

Reports say that both the French and United States governments will be asked in turn to take up and carry out the project of a canal at Panama, but it is not likely that either will do so. No doubt strenuous efforts will be made to reorganize the present company, if these negotiations fail, and to secure more capital. There is little probability, however, that much more money will be expended on this unfortunate scheme, where already several thousand human lives have been sacrificed and over \$275,000,000 expended, and all for nothing!

HOW WAS THE UNEBI'KAN LOST?

The disappearance of the new Japanese cruiser Unebi'Kan, while on a voyage from Europe to Japan, is exciting much interest on the other side of the ocean, especially among naval officers and ship builders. A model ship she was, being both fleet of foot, strong in battery and buoyancy. She was built in France by a famous designer, and officered and manned by Frenchmen, with a dozen Japanese to make up the complement, two of whom were experienced officers, drilled in European naval schools. She arrived safely at Singapore late last November, and departed thence for Yokohama on the 3d of the following month. What course she took from Singapore can only be conjectured; and the English, who generally follow one course with steamers—the direct one which leaves the Paracels Islands either on the starboard hand or to port—incline to the opinion that her commander, through error of judgment, followed the course *via* the Palawan passage, and either foundered in the monsoon, which reports say was, at the time, more than usually fierce, or came to grief in the passage itself, which contains no end of reefs.

Against the former we have the fact that the Frenchman brought his ship safely through a terrific gale some days out from Port Said, and that the Unebi'Kan proved herself a really admirable seaboat. From

all accounts, her powerful engines forced her through the seas with rare precision, and she would seem to have been as staunch and stiff as a church steeple withal. There is no reason why, knowing the power of his engines, her commander should not have taken the direct but far more boisterous route east or west of the Paracels; and for the same reason, if more familiar with the eastern or Palawan passage, he would seem to have been justified in taking that, even though he heard at Singapore, as no doubt he did, that the southeast monsoon was blowing with unwonted violence.

To the minds of many who have sailed with big guns, the fact, as reported, that the cruiser "carried two 35 ton guns well up above her water line" will have an important significance. Had one of these broken adrift while the ship was laboring in the heavy seas, it is not likely that any amount of good seamanship on the part of her commander would, under the circumstance of their unshipshape setting, have sufficed to save her. The rush of such a gun to one side at a critical moment might, with the leverage exerted by its mate in the same direction, be enough to capsize the ship in the same manner as the British ironclad Captain was capsized; though the latter was masted, and the Unebi'Kan was not. The course taken and the track made by the Frenchman from Cherbourg to Singapore shows him to have been a close and careful navigator, and, though not of that class of old sea dog having a face like a lion and the paws of a bear, evidently possessed good judgment and a sailor's instinct. The stability of the modern cruiser, especially this type, which is much shorter in the beam than the big war ship, and is good for nineteen knots an hour in a smooth sea, is of unusual importance at present, because it is thought to be the most efficient yet constructed. But if the beam is insufficient for the size of the present battery, or the center of gravity is too high up for weathering critical moments of wind and sea, the information cannot come too soon; and besides the humane desire to learn the fate of the officers and crew of the ill-fated Unebi'Kan, the naval world will await with impatience the solution of the mystery hanging over the disappearance of the Unebi'Kan.

INFECTION FROM DAIRY PRODUCTS.

The subject of purity and healthfulness of milk and its products has received much attention from medical and sanitary authorities during the past year, and some very remarkable results of investigations are now being made public. It has been found that milk may be the vehicle of very serious contagion, and that the diseased condition of the cow may so affect its milk as to make it the disseminator of acute disease. Coincident with this work, a contemporary has collected from all over this country and Canada the opinions of professional authorities on the subject of the milk of distillery swill-fed cows. The opinions are generally adverse. The subject is of special interest at the present period. Legislation adverse to artificial butter has been carried and is now in force. From the investigations we allude to, it appears that there is every chance that artificial butter or oleomargarine is the safer product of the two.

A lecture on the etiology of scarlet fever was recently delivered by Dr. E. Klein, F.C.S., before the Royal Institution in London. The principal theme of the paper was the relation of scarlet fever to milk supply. The possibility of the dissemination, and even origin, of the disease from this source was considered at length. Recorded cases are quoted to prove its possibility. The lecturer treats it as a certainty that milk has thus caused the spread of scarlet fever.

Experiments by V. Galthier, a French scientist, have been published. These were directed to tubercular sickness. Dairy produce from cows affected with tubercular disease was the subject of the investigations. Prof. Galthier found that such articles of diet could communicate phthisis or consumption to poultry and swine, and could become thus directly or indirectly a serious menace to man.

Within the last few years a number of outbreaks of disease have been traced with great certainty to dairies as the center of contagion. So well proved have these cases seemed, that they have originated special popular names for the sicknesses thus occasioned. Thus milk typhoid, milk scarlatina, and milk diphtheria have come to be recognized. In a number of accurately recorded cases, an outbreak of some specific disease has been noted. The general history in all was identical. The spread was limited to a certain number of families. The medical officers found that all the families thus affected were supplied with milk from the same dealer. Then, on examining the stables or dairy whence the milk came, the source of contagion was manifest. A case of scarlet fever would be found in the family or among the employes, or some of the residents possibly had diphtheria. In a number of instances such conditions were established. At the present time the English health authorities consider these cases proved. They form the basis for a somewhat disquieting suspicion affecting our milk supply. The means of guarding against the trouble in its source are not simple, owing to the extended range of