

## CHAPTER IV

### SAN LORENZO AND PANAMA

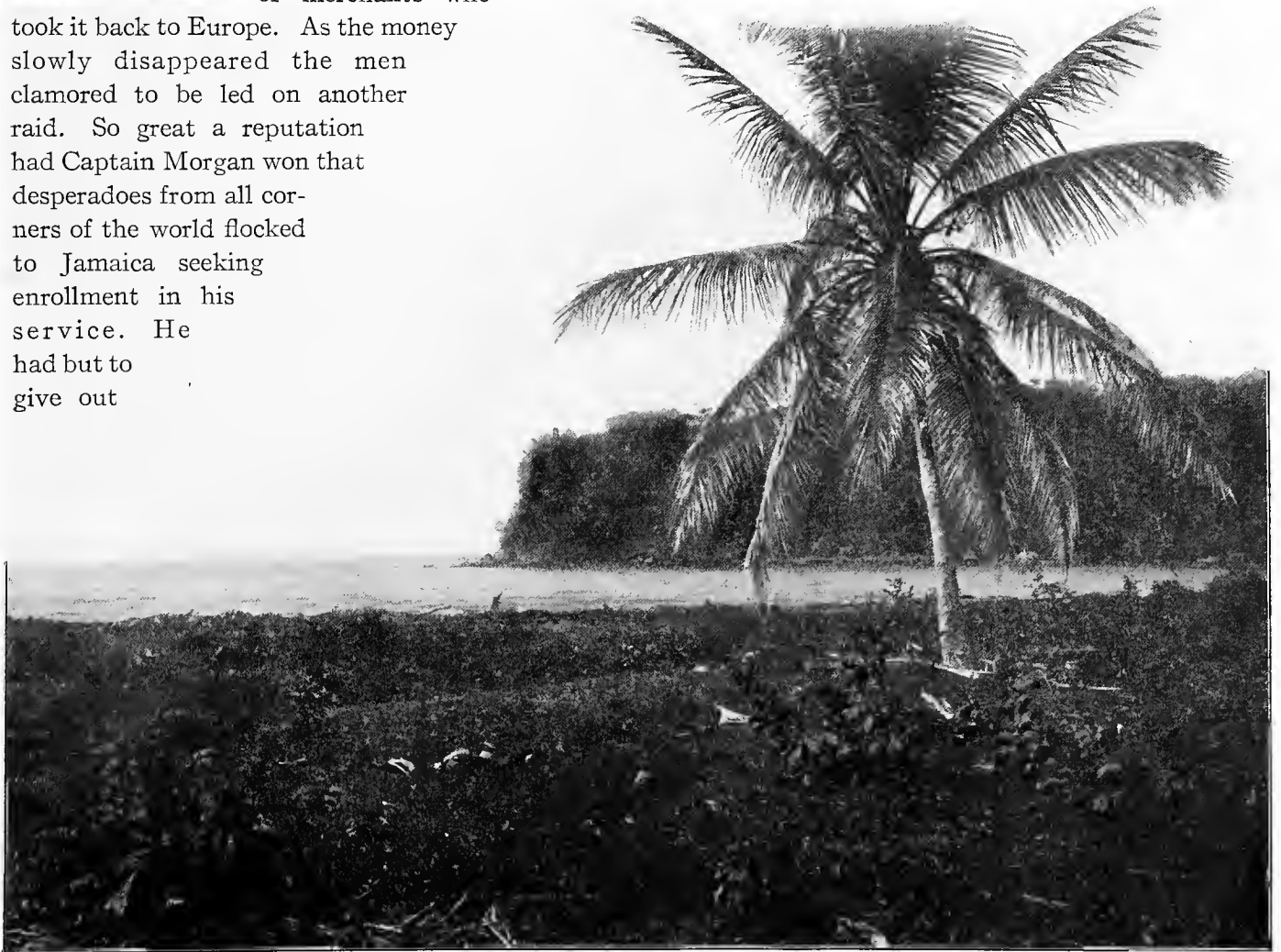


TWO years of the joys of Port Royal emptied the pockets of the buccaneers. The money that passed from hand to hand over the gambling tables went thence into the pockets of the hordes of women from Spain, France and even England who flocked to that den of thieves, and from them into the coffers of merchants who

took it back to Europe. As the money slowly disappeared the men clamored to be led on another raid. So great a reputation had Captain Morgan won that desperadoes from all corners of the world flocked to Jamaica seeking enrollment in his service. He had but to give out

the tidings that he planned a new raid to have as fine an assortment of picturesque cutthroats begging for enlistment as ever appeared outside the pages of a dime novel.

Designating the south side of the island of Tortuga as a rendezvous, he wrote certain gentry whom Esquemeling in a matter of fact way calls "the ancient and expert Pirates there abiding", asking their coöperation. By the 24th of October, 1670, he had gathered together 37 ships fully armed



MOUTH OF THE CHAGRES RIVER

San Lorenzo stands on the brow of the cliff. The watch tower may be seen faintly uplifted

and victualled, with 2000 fighting men besides mariners and boys. The chief ship mounted 22 great guns and six small brass cannon.

With this force Morgan first attacked the island of San Caterina, expecting to capture there some Indian or Spaniard who would guide him to Panama,



MOUTH OF THE CHAGRES FROM THE FORT

The upper picture shows the sea beach on the Pacific Coast littered with drift-wood

by the Chagres River route, probably in order to take with him heavy artillery which could scarcely be dragged through the jungle. The first step toward the navigation of the river was the capture of Fort Lorenzo which stood on a high bluff at its mouth. Against this famous fort-

for the sack of that city had been determined upon in preference to either Vera Cruz or Cartagena, because it was richer. The people of the island were in no condition to resist the overwhelming force of the English, but the governor begged Morgan to make a sham attack in order that his credit and that of his officers might be maintained at home, and accordingly much powder was ineffectively burned. It sounds like a cheap device, but it has been frequently employed in war when resistance was obviously futile, and some deference to uninformed home opinion was prudent.

Having secured his guides, by the easy process of putting on the rack all the Indians captured until one was found willing to lead the raiders through his native land, Morgan determined to move on Panama

ress, therefore, he sent Col. Bradley (or Brodley as he is sometimes called) with four ships and about 400 men, while he himself remained at St. Catherine to conceal from the Spaniards his ultimate design against Panama.

The visitor to Colon should not fail, before crossing to the Pacific side of the Isthmus, to visit the ruins of the Castle of San Lorenzo. The trip is not an easy one, and must usually be arranged for in advance, but the end well repays the exertion. The easiest way, when the weather permits, is to charter a tug or motor boat and make the journey by sea—a trip of two or three hours at most. But the Caribbean is a tempestuous and a treacherous sea. One may wait days for weather permitting the trip to be made in comfort, and even then may find a stormy

afternoon succeed to a calm morning. For this reason it is essential that a seaworthy boat be procured and, if not essential, very desirable that the company be not subject to the qualms of seasickness.

To my mind the more interesting way to visit the ruins is to take the railroad out to Gatun, and there at the very base of the roaring spillway, board a power boat and chug down the sluggish Chagres to the river's mouth where stands the ancient fort. The boats obtainable are not of the most modern model and would stand a slender chance in speed contests. But in one, however slow, you are lost to all appearance of civilization five minutes after you cast off from the clay bank. At Gatun, the canal which has been carried through the artificial lake made by damming the Chagres River, turns sharply away from that water course on the way to the new port of Balboa. The six or eight miles of the tropical river which we are to traverse have been untouched by the activities of the canal builders. The sluggish stream flows between walls of dense green jungle, as silent as though behind their barrier

only a mile or two away there were not men by the thousands making great flights of aquatic steps to lift the world's ocean carriers over the hills. Once in awhile through the silent air comes the distant boom of a blast in Culebra, only an infrequent reminder of the presence of civilized man and his explosive activities. Infrequent though it is, however, it has been sufficient to frighten away the more timid inhabitants of the waterside—the alligators, the boas and the monkeys. Only at rare intervals are any of these seen now, though in the earlier days of the American invasion the alligators and monkeys were plentiful. Today the chief signs of animal life are the birds—herons, white and blue, flying from pool to pool or posing artistically on logs or in shallows; great cormorant ducks that fly up and down mid-stream, apparently unacquainted with the terrors of the shotgun; kingfishers in bright blue and paroquets in gaudy colors. The river is said to be full of fish, including sharks, for the water is saline clear up to the Gatun locks.

I know of no spot, easy of access, on the Isthmus where an idea of the beauty and the terror of the jungle can be better gained than on the lower Chagres. The stout green barrier comes flush to the

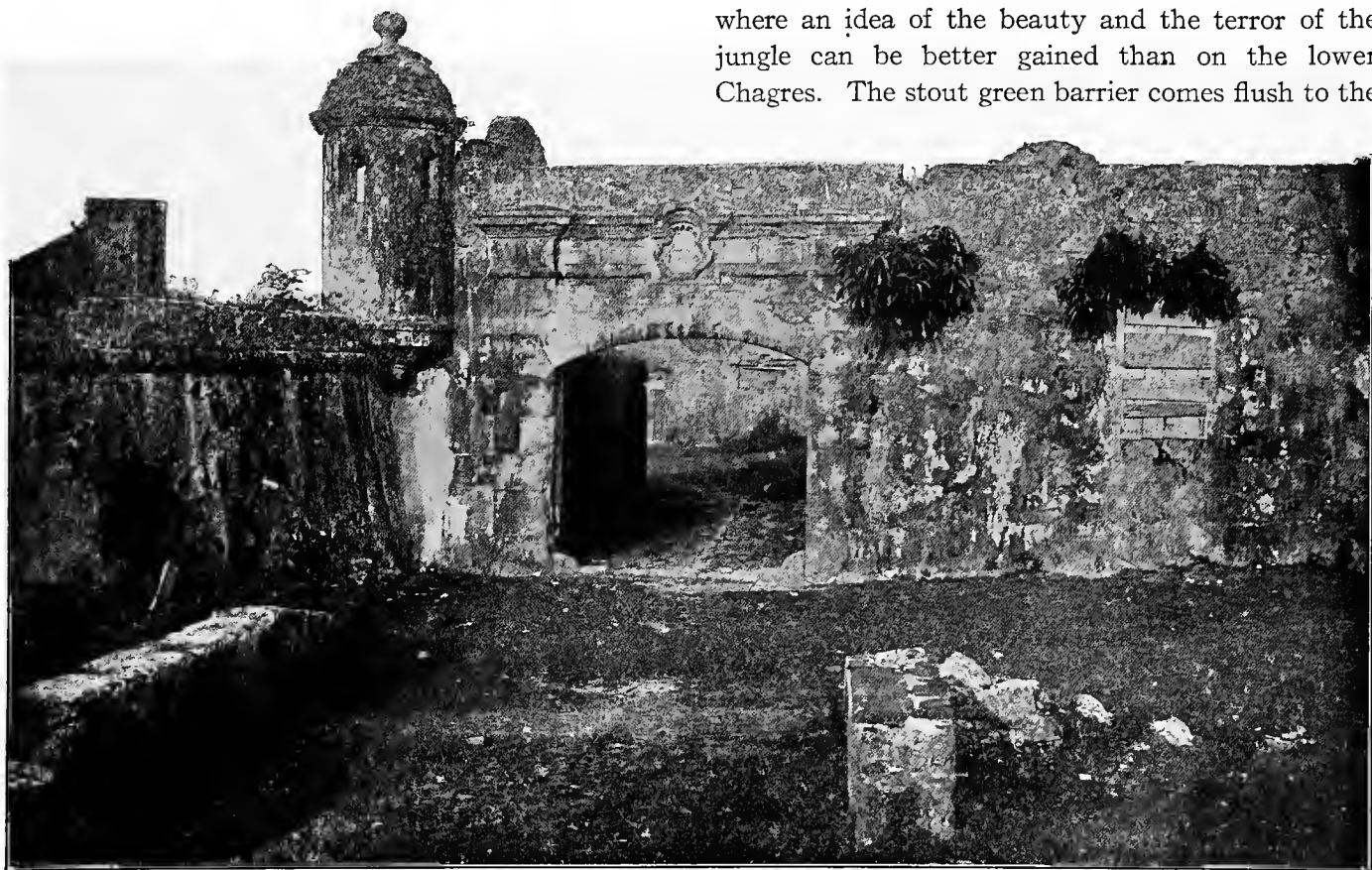


Photo by T. J. Marine

#### THE SALLY-PORT AT SAN LORENZO

An unusual picture because of the clearing away of the jungle. Ordinarily the walls are hidden

water's edge, the mangroves at places wading out on their stilt-like roots into the stream like a line of deployed skirmishers. That green wall looks light, beautiful, ethereal even, but lay your boat alongside it and essay to land. You will find it yielding indeed, but as impenetrable as a wall of adamant. It will receive you as gently as the liquid amber welcomes the fly, and hold you as inexorably in its beautiful embrace when you are once entrapped. The tender fern, the shrinking sensitive plant, the flowering shrub, the bending sapling, the sturdy and towering tree are all tied together by lithe, serpentine, gnarled and unbreakable vines which seem to spring from the ground and hang from the highest branches as well. There are not enough inches of ground to support the vegetation so it grows from the trees living literally on the air. Every green thing that can bear a thorn seems to have spines and prickles to tear the flesh, and to catch the



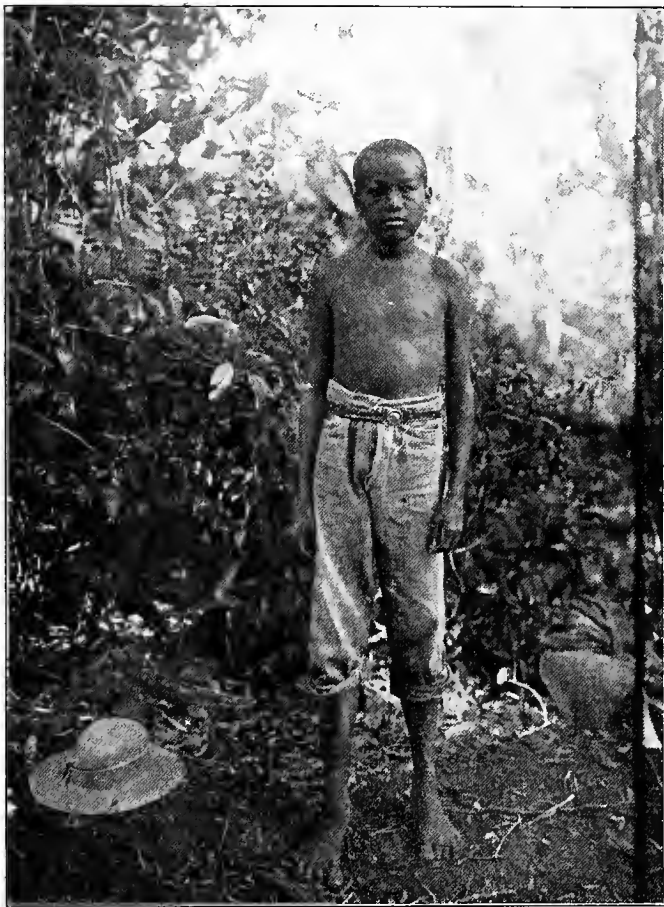
close to the river's brink to great yellow blossoms on the tops of trees so tall that they tower over the forests like light-houses visible for miles around. Orchids in more delicate shades, orchids that would set Fifth Avenue agog, are here to be had for a few blows of a machete. It is a riot and a revel of color—as gay as the decorations of some ancient arena before the gladiatorial combats began. For life here is a steady battle too, a struggle between man and the jungle and woe to the man who invades the enemy's country alone or strays far from the trail, shadowy and indistinct as that may be.

“A man ought to be able to live quite a while lost in the jungle,” said a distinguished magazine writer who was with me on the upper Chagres once. We had been listening to our guide's description of the game, and edible fruits in the forest.

“Live about two days if he couldn't find the trail or the river's bank,” was the response of the

most of his traveling by canoe. On our trip to the river's mouth we passed many in their slender cayucas, some tied by a vine to the bank patiently fishing, others on their





OUR GUIDE AT SAN LORENZO

the river from the ruins we have come to see and the uninitiated among us wonder why. It appears however that the descendants of the natives who so readily surrendered dominion of the land to the Spaniards are made of sterner stuff than their ancestors. Or perhaps it was because we had neither swords or breastplates that they reversed the 16th century practice and extorted tribute of silver from us for ferrying us across the stream in cayucas when our own boats and boat-men would have given us a greater sense of security. Landed in the village we were convoyed with great ceremony to the alcalde's hut where it was demanded that we register our names and places of residence. Perhaps that gave us a vote in the Republic of Panama, but we saw no political evidences about unless a small saloon, in a hut thatched with palmetto leaves and with a mud floor and basket work sides might be taken for a "headquarters". Indeed the saloon and a frame church were about the only signs of civilization about the town if we except a bill posted in the alcalde's

office setting forth the mysterious occult powers of a wizard and soothsayer who, among other services to mankind, recounted a number of rich marriages which had been made by the aid of his philters and spells.

We made our way from the village attended by volunteer guides in the scantiest of clothing, across a little runway at the bottom of a ravine, and so into the path that leads up the height crowned by the castle. It was two hundred and fifty years ago, almost, that the little hollow ran with a crimson fluid, and the bodies of dead Spaniards lay in the rivulet where now the little native boys are cooling their feet. The path is steep, rugged and narrow. Branches arch overhead and as the trail has served as a runway for the downpour of innumerable tropical rains the soil is largely washed away from between the stones, and the climbing is hard.

"Not much fun carrying a steel helmet, a heavy leather jacket and a twenty-pound blunderbuss up this road on a hot day, with bullets and arrows whistling past," remarks a heavy man in the van, and the picture he conjures up of the Spanish assailants on that hot afternoon in 1780 seems very vivid. Although the fort, the remains of which are now standing, is not the one which Morgan destroyed, the site, the natural defenses and the plan of the works are identical. There was more wood in the original fort than in that of which the remains are now discernible—to which fact its capture was due.



THE AUTHOR AT SAN LORENZO



LOOKING UP THE CHAGRES FROM SAN LORENZO

The villagers every now and then cut away the dense underbrush which grows in the ancient fosse and traverses and conceals effectually the general plan of the fortress from the visitor. This cleaning up process unveils to the eye the massive masonry, and the towering battlements as shown by some of the illustrations here printed. But, except to the scientific student of archæology and of fortification, the ruins are more picturesque as they were when I saw them, overgrown with creeping vines and shrubs jutting out from every cornice and crevice, with the walls so masked by the green curtain that when some sharp salient angle boldly juts out before you, you start as you would if rounding the corner of the Flatiron Building you should come upon a cocoanut palm bending in the breeze. Here you come to great vaulted chambers, dungeons lighted

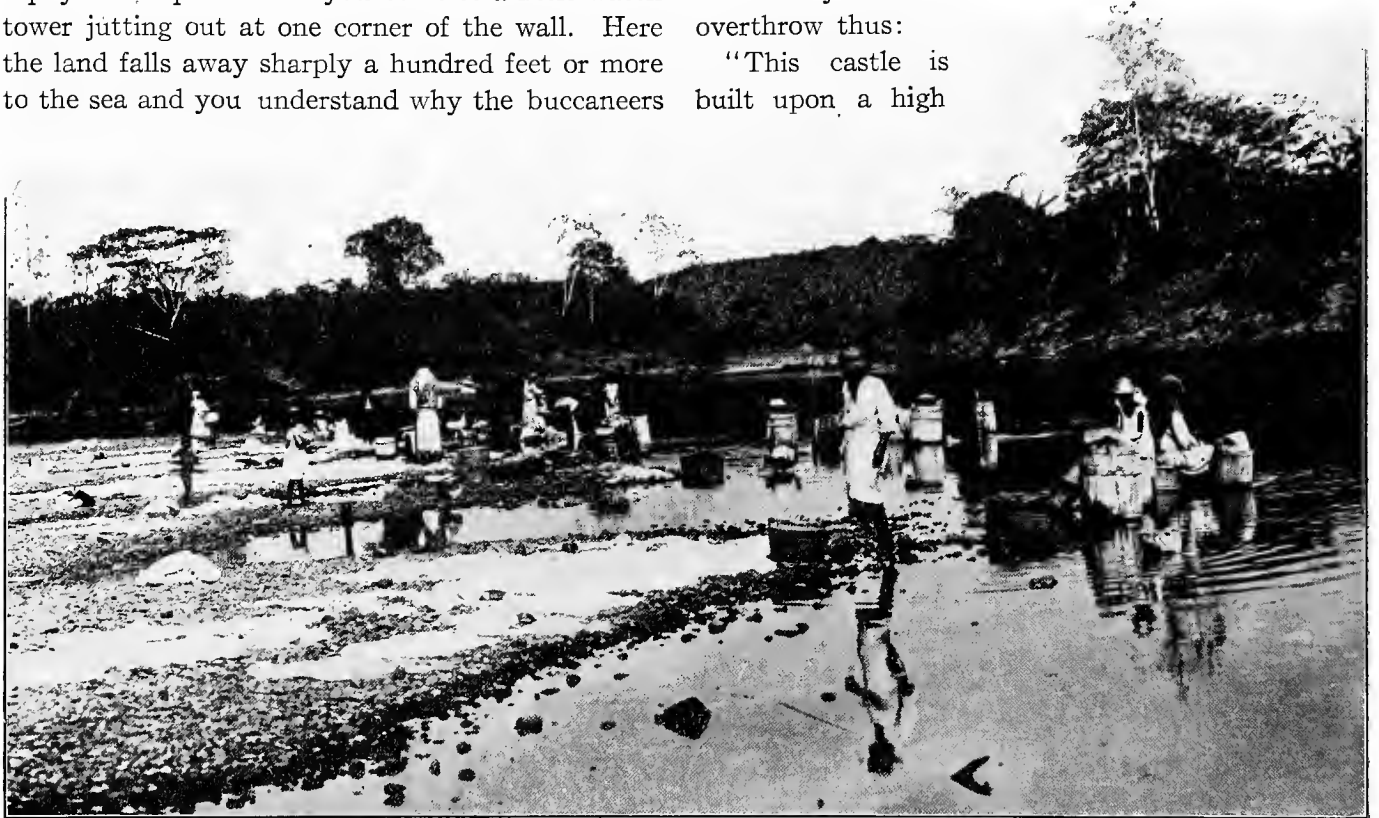
by but one barred casemate where on the muddy ground you see rusty iron fetters weighing forty pounds or more to clamp about a prisoner's ankle or, for that matter, his neck.

The vaulted brick ceiling above is as perfect as the day Spanish builders shaped it and the mortar betwixt the great stones forming the walls is too hard to be picked away with a stout knife. Pushing through the thicket which covers every open space you stumble over a dismantled cannon, or a neat conical pile of rusty cannon balls, carefully prepared for the shock of battle perhaps two hundred years ago and lying in peaceful slumber ever since—a real Rip Van Winkle of a fortress it is, with no likelihood of any rude awakening. In one spot seems to have been a sort of central square. In the very heart of the citadel is a great masonry tank to hold drinking

water for the besieged. It was built before the 19th century had made its entrance upon the procession of the centuries, but the day I saw it the still water that it held reflected the fleecy clouds in the blue sky, and no drop trickled through the joints of the honest and ancient masonry. Back and forth through narrow gates, in and out of vaulted chambers, down dark passages behind twenty-foot walls you wander, with but little idea of the topography of the place until you come to a little watch tower jutting out at one corner of the wall. Here the land falls away sharply a hundred feet or more to the sea and you understand why the buccaneers

they found the garrison reënforced until it nearly equaled the English. So slight was the disparity in numbers that it seems amazing that the English could have sustained the rigors of the assault. It was, of course, impossible to attack the castle on its sea front, and the invaders accordingly left their boats about a league from the castle, making their way painfully through the jungle toward the place of action. Esquemeling describes the fortification which they were to overthrow thus:

“This castle is built upon a high



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were forced to attack from the landward side, though as you were scaling that toilsome slope you wondered that any race of humans ever dared attack it at all.

In their story of the assault on Fort Lorenzo, as indeed in the narrative of all the doings of the buccaneers, the historians have followed the narrative of Esquemeling, a young Dutch apothecary who joined the sea rovers as a sort of assistant surgeon, and wrote a book which has kept his memory alive, whatever may have been the effect of his surgery on his patients. News of the advance of the English had reached the Governor of Panama so that when the assailants reached the battlefield

mountain, at the entry of the river, and surrounded on all sides with strong palisades, or wooden walls; being very well terrepleined, and filled with earth; which renders them as secure as the best walls made of stone or brick. The top of this mountain is in a manner divided into two parts, between which lies a ditch of the depth of thirty feet. The castle itself has but one entry, and that by a drawbridge which passes over the ditch aforementioned. On the land side it has four bastions, that of the sea containing only two more. That part thereof which looks towards the South is totally inaccessible and impossible to be climbed, through the infinite asperity of the mountain.



"The North side is surrounded by the river, which hereabouts runs very broad. At the foot of the said castle, or rather mountain, is seated a strong fort, with eight great guns, which commands and impedes the entry of the river. Not much lower are to be seen two other batteries, whereof each hath six pieces of cannon to defend likewise the mouth of the said river. At one side of the castle are built two great store-houses, in which are deposited all sorts of war-like ammunition and merchandise, which are brought hither from the inner parts of the country. Near these houses is a high pair of stairs, hewed out of the rock, which serves to mount to the top of the castle. On the West side of the said fortress lies a small port, which is not above seven or eight fathoms deep, being very fit for small vessels and of very good anchorage. Besides this, there lies before the castle, at the entry of the river, a great rock, scarce to be perceived above water, unless at low tide."

If the English had hoped to take the garrison by surprise they were speedily undeceived. Hardly had they emerged from the thicket into the open space on which stands now the village of Chagres than they were welcomed with so hot a volley of musketry and artillery from the castle walls that many fell dead at the first fire. To assault they had to cross a ravine, charge up a bare hillside, and pass through a ditch thirty feet deep at the further

bank of which stood the outer walls of the fort made of timber and clay. It was two in the afternoon when the fighting began. The assailants charged with their usual daredevil valor, carrying fire-balls



*Encls. by Duperly & Son*

TROPICAL FOLIAGE ON THE CARIBBEAN

along with their swords and muskets. The Spaniards met them with no less determination, crying out:

"Come on, ye Englishmen, enemies to God and our King; let your other companions that are behind come too; ye shall not go to Panama this bout."

All the afternoon and into the night the battle raged and the assailants might well have despaired of success except for an event which Esquemeling thus describes:

"One of the Pirates was wounded with an arrow in his back which pierced his body to the other side. This instantly he pulled out with great valor at the side of his breast; then taking a little cotton that he had about him, he wound it about the said arrow, and putting it into his musket, he shot it back into the castle. But the cotton being kindled by the powder occasioned two or three houses that were within the castle, being thatched with palm leaves, to take fire, which the Spaniards perceived not so soon as was necessary. For this fire meeting with a parcel of powder blew it up, and hereby caused great ruin, and no less consternation to the Spaniards, who were not able to account for this accident, not having seen the beginning thereof."

The fire within the fort not only disconcerted its defenders but greatly aided the assailants, for by its flames the Spaniards could be seen working their guns and were picked off by the English sharpshooters. The artillery of the invaders made breaches in the walls and the debris thus occasioned dropped into the ditch making its crossing practicable for a storming party. Though the gallant governor of the castle threw himself into the breach and fought with the greatest desperation, he was forced back and into his citadel. There a musket

shot pierced his brain and the defense which was becoming a defeat became in fact a rout. Spaniards flung themselves from the lofty cliffs upon the rocks below or into the sea rather than trust to the mercy of their conquerors. All but thirty of the garrison of 314 were slain, not one officer escaping, and only a few escaped to steal up the river and through the jungle carrying to Panama the dismal tale of the fall of its chief outpost.

Nor did the English win their triumph easily. Their force was in the neighborhood of 400, of whom more than 100 were killed and 70 wounded. A round shot took off both legs of Colonel Bradley and from the wound he died a few days later. The church of the castle was turned into a hospital, the Spaniards were made to bury their own dead, which was done by dropping them over the cliff into the sea, and word was sent to Morgan that the way was clear for his march upon Panama.

We may for a time turn aside from Buccaneer

Morgan and his ravenous raid to consider the later history of the two strongholds—Porto Bello and San Lorenzo—which lie to the east and west of Colon. It was not the rude shock of war which reduced them to the state of desolation and ruin in which visitors now find them—though of such shocks they certainly experienced enough. Morgan on his return from Panama blew up San Lorenzo and left it a wreck, but the Spaniards rebuilt it stronger than ever and



NATIVE PANAMA WOMAN



ON THE UPPER CHAGRES



A CHARACTER OF COLON

it long continued to mount guard over the entrance to the Chagres. So too with the forts at Porto Bello. But about 1738 one Edward Vernon, after whom it is said Mount Vernon, the home of Washington, was named, rose in the English parliament and declared that he could take Porto Bello with only six ships. Parliament took him at his word, commissioned him admiral, gave him seven ships and dispatched him on the enterprise. Being a gentleman of spirit and a true sport, Admiral Vernon, on approaching the Isthmus, sent one of his ships into other waters, "disdaining to appear before Porto Bello with one ship more than he had engaged to take it with." Success came to him with ease. Only four of his ships were engaged and the only considerable loss was among a landing party which stormed the lower battery of the Iron Fort. The Spaniards showed but little stomach for the fight, and it is worth noting that in the recurrent affrays in the West Indies and Central America the English whipped them with the same monotonous certainty with which the latter had beaten the Indians. Any one desiring to draw broad generalizations as to the comparative courage of nations is welcome to this fact.

After refitting at Jamaica, Admiral Vernon, with a somewhat larger fleet, proceeded against San Lorenzo. Again his triumph was easy, for after a leisurely bombardment to which the Spaniards replied but languidly, the white

flag was displayed and the English entered into possession. The warehouses in Chagres were plundered and the fort blown up. The spluttering war between England and Spain in which these actions occurred became known as "the war of Jenkins' ear." A too zealous guarda costa lopped off the ear of a certain Captain Jenkins who, though unknown to fame prior to that outrage, so made the welkin ring in England, even exhibiting the mummified member from which he had been thus rudely divorced, that Parliament was forced to declare a war in retaliation for his ear or have its own talked off.

The buccaneers and pirates really caused the final abandonment of Porto Bello and San Lorenzo, though not by direct attack. They made trade by the Caribbean and along the Spanish Main so perilous that the people of the Pacific coast found it more profitable in the long run to make the voyage around the Horn or through the Straits of Magellan. The economics of trade are unvarying. It seeks the cheapest before the shortest routes, and one of the studies of our canal authorities will be to so fix their tolls that they will



WOMAN OF THE CHAGRES REGION

not, like Morgan, L'Olonais and others, frighten trade away from the Isthmus.

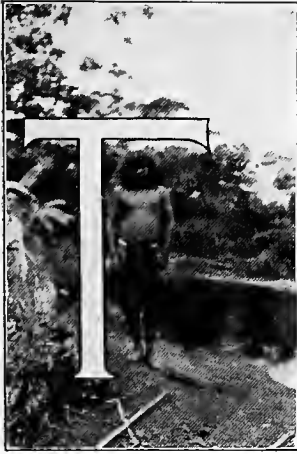
Though the forts were rebuilt to their original strength in 1751, they never regained importance. Porto Bello disappeared when the Royal Road to Panama lost its traffic, and the Chagres only resumed a brief importance in 1844 when the Royal Mail Steampacket Co. made San Lorenzo a port of call. When Colon, however, appeared as a port

and the terminus of the Panama railroad, the fate of all other ports on the Atlantic side of the Isthmus was sealed. Left to brood over the days of their greatness—though indeed they never repelled any serious attack—the Iron Fort and San Lorenzo were abandoned by their Columbian garrisons and given over to the insidious and irresistible conquest of the jungle. Picturesque and dignified, they well repay the visit of the tourist.

“Still standeth San Lorenzo there,  
Aye, faithful at his post,  
Though scoffing trees in every breeze  
Their prime and vigor boast;  
His garrison is but the shades  
Of soldiers of the past,  
But it pleaseth him, alone and grim,  
To watch unto the last.”

# CHAPTER V

## THE SACK OF OLD PANAMA



THE week after the fall of San Lorenzo, Morgan with his full force appeared at the mouth of the Chagres River. Before leaving St. Catherine he had dismantled the forts and burned all the houses for no particular reason except the seemingly instinctive desire of a buccaneer to destroy all that he could not steal. At once he began his preparations for the ascent of the Chagres to its head of navigation, where, disembarking, he would take the trail for Old Panama. Cruces, which was the point of debarkation, had grown to a considerable town at this time, being the point of transshipment of goods destined for Nombre de Dios, or Porto Bello, from the mules that had brought them thus far, to the boats that would float them down to tide water. The town, an inconsiderable hamlet of thatched huts, remained in 1913, but

the time of Morgan's raid Esquemeling writes of the city:

"There belonged to this city (which is also the head of a bishopric) eight monasteries, whereof seven were for men and one for women; two stately churches and one hospital. The churches and monasteries were all richly adorned with altar-pieces and paintings, huge quantity of gold and silver, with other precious things. . . . Besides which ornaments, here were to be seen two thousand houses of magnificent and prodigious building, being all of the greatest part inhabited by merchants of that country, who are vastly rich. For the rest of the inhabitants of lesser quality and tradesmen, this city contained five thousand houses more. Here were also great numbers of stables, which served for the horses and mules, that carry all the plate, belonging as well unto the King of Spain as to private men, towards the coast of the North Sea. The neighboring fields belonging to this city are all cultivated and fertile plantations, and pleasant gardens, which afford delicious prospects unto the inhabitants the whole year long."

the rise of Gatun Lake



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Correal fixes the number of private houses as between seven and eight thousand. The pious Thomas Gage whom we have seen haggling for rooms at Porto Bello visited Panama about 1538 and even then credits it with five thousand inhabit-

The country round about Panama was then, and still is, arable and well-fitted for grazing. The rural population was but small, more meager indeed than one would think would have been necessary for raising vegetables for so considerable a town.

In the back country were great numbers of Cimmaroons, or escaped slaves who are described as living in communities, ruled over by a black king. They went naked and were armed with bows and arrows, spears, darts and machetes. They lived on plunder and as when captured were they killed, or, at the best, enslaved anew, they fought with great desperation. Merchandise trains were their chief victims, though they often raided cattle ranches, or cut off individuals in the outskirts of the city. The English supplied them with weapons and could always be sure of their aid against the Spaniards, who had been their masters and whom they hated.

The harbor was wretched, useful only for small vessels which at high tide could come straight to the seawall, being left there by the receding tide, high and dry, so that by quick action they could be unloaded before the waters returned. A very considerable part of the food of the town was fish brought thither by Indians from Taboga and nearby islands.

Such was the town which Morgan raided. Because of the colossal disaster which befell it, a disaster without parallel since the days when the Goths and Vandals swept down over the pleasant plains of Italy, there has been a tendency to magnify the size, wealth and refinement of Panama at

the time of its fall. But studied calmly, with no desire to exaggerate the qualities which made it so rich a prize, Panama may fairly be described as a city of about 30,000 people, with massive churches, convents and official buildings of masonry, with many stately houses of the type esteemed luxurious in the tropics, and peopled largely by pure-blooded Span-



CASA REALE OR KING'S HOUSE

Its heavy walls show that it was planned for defense but the Spaniards abandoned it

ants, and at least eight cloisters of nuns and friars. Unfortunately the good evangelist found that "the Spaniards are in this city much given to sinne, looseness and venery," for which reason, or perhaps because he "feared much the heats," he made haste to leave the town and left us none of those graphic descriptions of which his pen was capable.

iards of the better type. It was too early a date for the amalgamation of races now so much in evidence on the Isthmus to have proceeded far, and the ancient records show that the Spaniards of substance in the town had mainly come thither from Seville.

Morgan started up the river from San Lorenzo, where he left 500 men to serve as a garrison, on the 18th of January, 1761. His force comprised 1200 men in five boats with artillery and thirty-two canoes. The raiders planned to live on the country and hence took small store of provisions—an error which nearly wrecked the expedition. The first day they covered about eighteen miles. This was by nature made the easiest part of their journey, for this stretch of the Chagres is deep, with but a slow current and much of the way they may have been aided by the incoming tide. If the chronicler who fixed their distance covered at eighteen miles was correct, they must have pitched their camp the first night not very far from where Gatun Dam now rears its mighty bulk across the valley and makes of the Chagres a broad lake. Their troubles however came with their first nightfall. Leaving their boats and scattering about the surrounding country they found that the Spaniards had raked it clean of provisions of every sort. The Indian villages were either smoking ruins or clusters of empty huts, the cattle ranches were bare of cattle, and even the banana and yam patches were stripped. By noon on the second day, according to Esquemeling, "they were compelled to leave their boats and canoes by reason the river was very dry for want of rain, and the many trees that were fallen into it." Henceforth at that point the Chagres River transformed into a lake will be in the neighborhood of forty feet deep the year round. Apparently, however, the abandonment of the boats was only partial, the main body of troops marching through the woods while others waded, pushing the boats over the shallows as is done today. The advance was continued in this fashion, partly by water and partly through the jungle, all with the greatest difficulty, at a snail's pace and on stomachs daily growing emptier. Twice they came upon signs that the Spaniards had prepared an ambush for them, but becoming faint-hearted had fled. Thereat the buccaneers grumbled mightily. They were better at fighting than at chopping paths through the jungle,



*Photo by Burtis & Elliott*

THE RUINED TOWER OF SAN AUGUSTINE



WAYSIDE SHRINE ON THE SAVANNA ROAD

and were so hungry that if they had slain a few Spaniards they would quite probably have cooked and eaten them. For six days they struggled with the jungle without finding any food whatsoever, then they discovered a granary stored with maize which they ate exultingly. Leather scraps became a much prized article of food, just as in a very different climate Greely's men in the Arctic circle kept alive on shreds cut from their sealskin boots. Of leather as an article of diet Esquemeling writes:

"Here again he was happy, that had reserved since noon any small piece of leather whereof to make his supper, drinking after it a good draught of water for his greatest comfort. Some persons, who

never were out of their mothers' kitchens, may ask how these pirates could eat, swallow and digest those pieces of leather, so hard and dry. To whom I only answer: That could they once experiment what hunger, or rather famine, is, they would certainly find the manner, by their own necessity, as the pirates did. For these first took the leather and sliced it in pieces. Then did they beat it between two stones, and rub it, often dipping it in the water of the river to render it by these means supple and tender. Lastly they scraped off the hair, and roasted or broiled it upon the fire. And, being thus cooked, they cut it into small morsels, and eat it, helping it down with frequent gulps of water, which by good fortune they had near at hand."

Once only did they meet with any resistance; that was near Cruces where several hundred Indians ambushed them in the jungle, and while avoiding any direct combat, killed several with arrows. As the Indians fled they cried out in Spanish, "Ho, ye dogs! Go to the savanna; to the savanna," from which, as from like warnings uttered by stragglers, the invaders concluded that battle was to be given them on the broad plain before the city.

It had taken six days for the expedition to reach Cruces—a trip which could readily be made today by train to Camboa and thence by cayuca in five or six hours. Arrived there they prepared for the last stage of the journey, for there they finally left their boats and took up the Royal Road. Cruces is eight miles from Panama, and at the moment of Morgan's descent upon it, was at the period of its greatest prosperity. Of its rise to greatness and its final disappearance under the rising waters of Gatun Lake I shall have more to say in the chapter concerning the Chagres River. The English found the frame houses already ablaze, and the larders swept clean, the Spaniards having followed their invariable custom of leaving no food for the invaders. Some wretched dogs and cats which hung about the deserted dwellings were killed and eaten, and in the storehouses a number of jars of wine were found, upon drinking which the buccaneers became deathly sick. They claimed it was poisoned, but more probably their stomachs, which had been struggling to digest leather scraps, were in no condition for the strong wines of the tropics.

From this point onward the invaders saw many of



their enemies, but the Indians only offered active resistance, firing upon the advancing column from ambushes, and at one or two made a determined stand. As the invaders were strung out in single file along a narrow road (Esquemeling complains that only ten or twelve men could walk in a file) it would have been easy to so impede their progress, and harass them with attacks from the bush, as to defeat their purpose wholly. For it is to be remembered that the English were almost starved, footsore and weary, dragging cannon along the rocky roads and bearing heavy equipment under the scorching sun. But the Spaniards contented themselves with shouting defiance and daring the invaders to meet them "a la savanna." At the first danger of a fight they ran away.

Gaining on the ninth day of their march the top of a hill, still known as "El Cerro de los Buccaneeros" (The Hill of the Buccaneers), the pirates had the joy of seeing for the first time the Pacific, and thus knowing that Panama must be at hand. Upon the plain below they came upon a great body

of cattle. Some historians say that the Spaniards had gathered a great herd of savage bulls to be driven upon the English lines in expectation of putting them to rout. The tradition seems doubtful, and to any one who has seen the mild and docile bulls of the Panama savannas it is merely ridiculous. However the cattle came there it was an ill chance for the Spaniards, for they furnished the hearty food necessary to put fight again into the famished bodies of the buccaneers. Esquemeling's description of the banquet on the plains is hardly appetizing:

"Here while some were employed in killing and flaying cows, horses, bulls and chiefly asses, of which there was greatest number, others busied themselves in kindling of fires and getting wood wherewith to roast them. Thus cutting the flesh of these animals into pieces, or gobbets, they threw them into the fire, and half carbonadoed or roasted, they devoured them with incredible haste and appetite. For such was their hunger that they more resembled cannibals than Europeans at this banquet, the blood many



ARCHED BRIDGE AT OLD PANAMA, ALMOST 400 YEARS OLD  
There was no Horatius to hold this strait path against the invaders

times running down from their beards to the middle of their bodies."

Gorged to their gullets, the cutthroats lay down to rest. Morgan had a sharp watch kept, and sounded at least one false alarm that the men might not sleep to securely. But the Spaniards on the eve of their crushing disaster left their foes to rest in peace except for a noisy cannonade which did no damage, and shouts of "Corros! Nos Veremos"—"Dogs! We will see you again," which they certainly did, finding the meeting most unpleasant.

On the morrow, the tenth day after leaving San Lorenzo, and either the 18th or 27th of January, 1671, for contemporary writers differ about the date, the attack on the city began. The buccaneers disappointed the Spanish at the very outset by not taking the road which lay plain and open to them and which was well commanded by the Spanish batteries and ambushades, but came upon them through the woods. This violation of the rules of the game embarrassed the Spaniards from the very first.

But even so, they had every advantage on their side—except courage. They largely outnumbered

the assailants, though the estimate of the hostile generals differ greatly, as they always have in history. We must reasonably suppose that in a battle on the issue of which directly depended their lives, the lives and honor of their womenfolk, their

homes, their fortunes, their liberty and the continued existence of their city the people of Panama would have turned out to a man. Yet the President of Panama reported to the Spanish court that he had but 1200 men, mostly negroes, mulattoes and Indians, armed with fowling pieces and his only artillery three wooden cannon bound with rawhide. Dr. C. L. G. Anderson, to whose painstaking study of the old Spanish chroniclers all present-day students of Panama history must be largely indebted, says, and reasonably, "The Spanish army was made up not merely of



Photo by Prof. Otto Lutz

FOLIAGE ON THE CANAL ZONE

merchants, planters and servants, but contained besides many regular troops; veterans of the wars in Flanders, Sicily and other countries of Europe." Whatever the precise figures may have been there is no question that the assailants were largely outnumbered by the defenders who, fighting for wives and children, homes and firesides, might have been



THE CHAGRES ABOVE SAN LORENZO

expected to show desperate valor. Instead of which the buccaneers put the Spaniards to rout in two hours' fighting on the plain to which the pirates had been so scornfully invited.

The Spanish plan of battle savored largely of the theatrical. As the circus opens its performance with a grand entry of mounted performers, so the Spaniards ushered in the fight with a grand charge of cavalry. Admirable cavalymen, they are said to have been, well mounted on trained cattle ponies and in all about 400 strong. Unhappily there appeared to have been no preliminary study of the English position, and a morass impenetrable by horsemen guarded its flanks. Only in front could the English line be reached and there the trained marksmen of the buccaneers, or cattle hunters, dropping on one knee, picked off the Spanish horsemen before they could close. The cavalry hardly reached the buccaneers' first line though they charged twice with the utmost gallantry. An infantry charge that followed was beaten back with like slaughter. Seeing this the Spaniards are said to have resorted to a device as ridiculous in its outcome as it was in its conception. This was the driving against the buccaneers' lines of a herd of a thousand bulls driven by fifty vaqueros. With great shouting and cracking of whips the herd was urged against the invaders. But the Central American bull as a ferocious beast is a disappointment—

which perhaps explains the placidity with which Panama agreed to the request of the United States that it abolish bull fighting. If not vicious, however, they can be obstinate, and about as many bulls charged into the already shattered Spanish lines as upon the buccaneers. Morgan showed quick wit by ordering his men to let the bulls pass, but kill the vaqueros, and so, with the exception of a few bovines who lingered to rend the British flags, being enraged by their scarlet hue, the greater part of the herd trotted off to a quieter part of the savanna where they might placidly graze while the foolish men who had sought to drag them into the quarrel went on killing each other. This virtually ended the Spanish defense. After another charge the defenders of the city gave up any effort at organized opposition to the invaders and fled into the city, or to the shelter of the neighboring jungle. The English, exhausted with their long march and the shock of the battle, did not immediately follow up their advantage but rested for some hours. There is much conflict of authority on the question of loss in the battle. Morgan claimed to have lost only five men killed and ten wounded, and fixed the Spanish loss at about 400. Esquemeling says there were 600



IN THE CRYPT OF OLD SAN AUGUSTINE

Spaniards dead upon the field beside the wounded and prisoners. Whatever the comparative losses the Spanish defeat was decisive, nor did the survivors regain sufficient morale to offer any effective opposition to the buccaneers as they moved upon the city.

One would think that the final defense would have been dogged and desperate in the extreme. The Spaniards knew what to expect in the way of murder, rapine, plunder and enslavement. They had the story of Porto Bello fresh in their memories, and, for that matter, they had enjoyed such fruits of victory themselves too often to hug the delusion that these victors would forego them. Nor even after the decisive thrashing they had sustained on the plain need they have despaired. On three sides Panama was defended by the sea and its inlets, and on the fourth could only be approached along a single road and over an arched bridge, the sturdy masonry of which still stands, and forms a favorite background for photographic groups of tourists. Though not walled, as was its successor, Old Panama had a great plenty of heavy masonry buildings, the ruins of which show them to have been constructed with a view to defense. The churches, the eight convents, the official buildings and many of the private residences were built of stone with heavy barred windows and, if stoutly defended in conjunction with barricades in the streets, might well have balked the invaders of their prey. But the Spanish spirit seemed crushed by the defeat of their choice

effort to conceive the wretched plight of the 30,000 people of this city, subjected for three weeks to the cruelty, cupidity and lust of the "experienced and ancient pyrates" and the cutthroats of all nationalities that made up the command of Morgan. Little more than a thousand of the raiders could have remained alive, but all the fighting men of the city were slain, wounded or cowed into unmanly subjection. After the first riotous orgy of drunkenness and rapine—though indeed Morgan shrewdly strove to keep his men sober by spreading the report that all the wine had been poisoned—the business of looting was taken

cavalry on the savanna, and three hours sufficed for the English to make themselves masters of the whole city. During the fighting flames broke out in several quarters of the town, some think set purposely by the assailants, which was denied by Morgan. However caused, the fires raged for days, were still smoldering when the buccaneers left three weeks later, and consumed nearly all except the masonry edifices in the city.

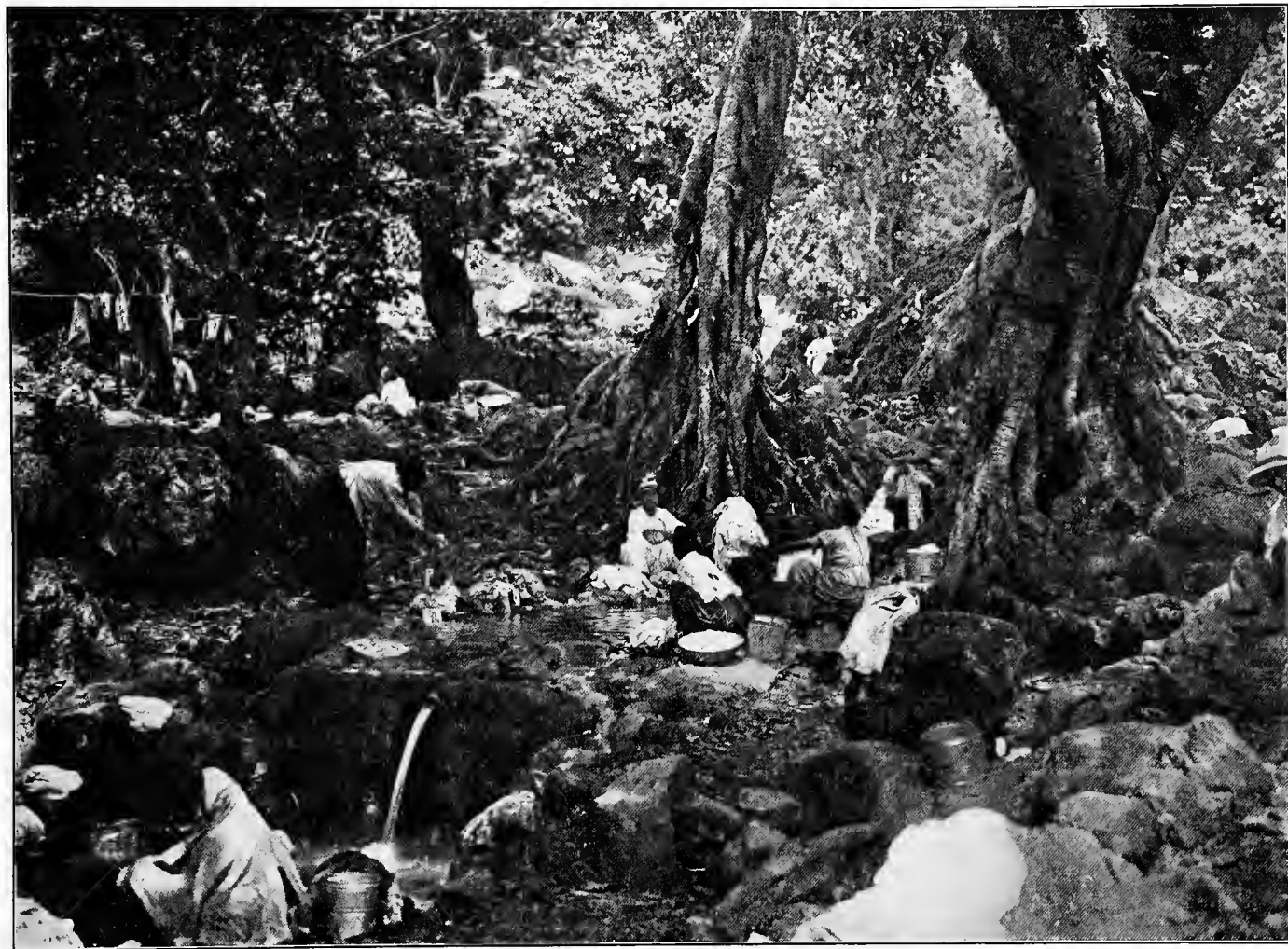
Imagination balks at the



A WOMAN OF OLD PANAMA

up seriously. First the churches and government houses had to be ransacked for precious ornaments and treasure, and herein the robbers met with their first serious disappointment, for on the news of their coming much of the plate had been put on ships and sent out to sea. A brig aground in the harbor was seized by Morgan and sent in pursuit, but the delights of the Island of Taboga,

From ceremonial plate to the seamstress's thimble; from the glittering necklace to the wedding ring, everything was raked together into the great common store of plunder. What was easily found was not enough. Wells were searched, floors torn up, walls ripped open and, after all other devices had been employed, prisoners were put to the torture to make them reveal the hiding places of their own and



WASH DAY AT TABOGA

then as now a pleasure resort, proved superior even to the avariciousness of the Spaniards, and they lingered there over wine cups until the treasure ships had vanished. Rumors still linger that much of the treasure had been buried at Taboga, and that one richly freighted ship had been sunk some place nearby. But frequent treasure-hunting expeditions have come home empty handed.

After raking the government buildings from garret to vaults the pirates turned to the private houses.

others' valuables. Capt. Morgan led in this activity, as indeed he appears to have been the most villainous of all his crew in the mistreatment of women. After all that could be gathered by these devices had been taken the several thousand prisoners were informed that if they wanted to retain their lives and regain their liberty they must pay ransom, fixed in amount according to the standing in the community and the wealth of the captive. Of course the community was gone and the buccaneers

had taken all of the wealth, but the luckless prisoner was expected to pay nevertheless and a surprising number of them did so. With all these expedients for the extraction of wealth from a subju-



A STREET IN CRUCES

gated town, the buccaneers were fain to be satisfied, and, weak from wounds and revelry, according to Esquemeling:

“On the 24th of February, of the year 1761, Captain Morgan departed from the city of Panama, or rather from the place where the city of Panama did stand. Of the spoils whereof he carried with him one hundred and seventy-five beasts of carriage, laden with silver, gold and other precious things, besides 600 prisoners more or less, between women, children and slaves.”

So they plodded back to San Lorenzo whence they had started on their piratical expedition. It affords a

striking illustration of the strictly business methods of these pirates that before reaching the castle Morgan ordered a halt, and had every man searched for valuables, submitting himself to the inquisition.

So thorough was the search that even the guns were shaken, upside down, lest precious stones might be concealed in their barrels. However the buccaneers came to jeer at Morgan's apparent fairness in being searched with the rest, and putting his personal pilferings into the common lot as a piece of duplicity. For the loot of the Panama expedition has been reckoned at several millions of dollars, and indeed a town of that size, famous for wealth and at a period when the amassing of gold and jewels was a passion, should certainly have produced that much. But when it came to the vital operation of dividing the spoils the ordinary fighting men found that for their four months'



BREAKING WAVES AT OLD PANAMA

campaign, they received about \$100 apiece. “Which small sum,” says the literary apothecary Esquemeling, who was “buncoed” with the rest, “they thought too little reward for so much labor and such huge and manifest dangers they had so often exposed their lives unto. But Captain Morgan was deaf to all these and many other complaints of this kind, having designed in his mind to cheat them of as much as he could.”

Henry Morgan was indeed a practical pirate, who, had he but lived four hundred years later, could have made vastly more money out of a town of 30,000 people by the mild devices of franchises and bonds, than he did out of Panama with murder, the rack, robbery and rapine for his methods. After setting the example of loyally putting his all into the common store, he assumed the duty of dividing that store. This accomplished to his liking, and knowing that idleness breeds discontent, and that discontent is always hurtful to capital, he set his men to work pulling the Castle of San Lorenzo to pieces. While they were thus engaged, one dark night with favoring winds he hove anchor and with four ships, filled with his English favorites, and laden with the lion's share of the booty, he sailed away from Chagres and from buccaneering forever. He left behind all the French, Dutch and mongrel pirates—those ancient and experienced ones. He left them some of the poorer ships—much as an efficient gang of street railway looters leave some rusty rails and decrepit cars to a town they have looted—but saw to it that none was left that could possibly catch up with his fleet.

So the deserted buccaneers first fought awhile among themselves, then dispersed. Some in an amateurish way sacked the town of Keys in Cuba. Others went to Campeche and Honduras. Esquemeling with a small band went up to Bocadel Toro, now



OLD BELL AT REMEDIOS, 1682

the Panama headquarters of the United Fruit Company, whence he made his way back to Europe. There he wrote his "History of the Buccaneers," which became one of the world's "best sellers," and in which he gave his Captain Morgan "the worst of it"—a species of satisfaction which is often the only recourse of the literary man who gets tangled up with Big Business.

As for Captain Morgan, he was made much of at Jamaica, where the crown's share of the proceeds of his piracy was cheerfully accepted by the governor. But in England there was some embarrassment, for there was no war with Spain and the complete destruction of a Spanish city by a force bearing British flags was at least embarrassing. So by way of showing its repentance and good intent the government announced its purpose to suppress buccaneering and all piracy, and to that end created Henry Morgan a baronet and put the commission in his hands—much as we have



THE BEETLING CLIFFS OF THE UPPER CHAGRES



THE ROOTS REACH DOWN SEEKING FOR SOIL

excellent road laid and maintained by the Republic of Panama. If you go by horseback the old trail which the pirates used is still traceable and at low tide one can ride along the beach. For the majority the drive along the road, which should be taken in the early morning, is the simpler way, though there was promise in

been accustomed to put politicians on our civil service commissions, and protected manufacturers on our tariff boards. So as *Sir Henry Morgan* this most wholesale robber and murderer Central America ever knew ended his days in high respectability.

While the ruins of Old Panama compare but unfavorably with those of Porto Bello or San Lorenzo, their proximity to the city of Panama make them a favorite point of interest for tourists. Half a day is ample to give to the drive out and back and to the inspection of the ruins themselves. The extended area over which they are scattered testifies to the size of the obliterated city, while the wide spaces, destitute of any sign of occupation, which intervene between the remaining relics, shows clearly that the greater part of the town must have been built of perishable materials easily swept away at the time of the fire, or slowly disintegrating during the flood of years that have since rolled by. The tower of the Cathedral of St. Augustine alone among the relics still remaining affords any suggestion of grandeur or even of architectural dignity.

To reach the ruins you take a horse, a carriage or an automobile for a ride of about five miles over an

1913 that within a few months a trolley line would still further simplify the trip.

From Balboa, the Pacific opening of the Panama Canal, and the newest of the world's great ports, to the ruins of Old Panama, founded in 1609 and obliterated by pirates in 1671, by trolley in two hours! Was ever the past more audaciously linked to the present? Were ever exhibits of the peaceful commerce of today and the bloody raids of ancient times placed in such dramatic juxtaposition?

The road to Old Panama runs through a peaceful grazing country, with a very few plantations. One or two country residences of prosperous Panamanians appear standing well back from the road, but signs of life and of industry are few. The country lies high, is open and free from jungle and in almost any North American state, lying thus close to a town of 40,000 people and adjacent to a district in which the United States is spending some millions of dollars a month, would be platted in additions for miles around, and dotted with the signs of real estate dealers. But the Panamanian mind is not speculative, or at any rate soars little above the weekly lottery ticket. So all Uncle Samuel's disbursements



in the Zone have thus far produced nothing remotely resembling a real estate boom.

However as we turn off from the main road toward the sea and the square broken tower of the old cathedral, or Church of St. Augustine, with the ferns springing from the jagged top, and vines twisting out through the dumbly staring windows, real estate and "booms" seem singularly ignoble topics in the presence of this mute spectator of the agonies of a martyred people. For even the dulling mists of the interposing centuries, even our feeling that the Spaniards suffered only the anguish and the torments which they had themselves meted out to the real owners of the lands they had seized upon, cannot wholly blunt the sense of pity for the women and children, for the husbands and fathers in the city which fell under Morgan's blight. It would be no easy task to gather in the worst purlieus of any American city today a band so wholly lost to shame, to pity and to God as the ruffians who followed Morgan. What they did to the people on whom their hands reeking with blood were laid must be left to

the imagination. The only contemporary record of the sack was written by one of their own number to whom apparently such scenes had become commonplace, for while his gorge rises at the contemplation of his own hard fortune in being robbed and deserted by his chief, he recounts the torture of men and the violation of women in a matter-of-fact way as though all in the day's work.

Driving on we come to the arched bridge which formed the main entrance to the town in the day of its

downfall. Sturdy it is still, though the public road no longer passes over it, defying the assaults of time and the more disintegrating inroads of the tropical plants which insinuate themselves into every crevice, prying the stone apart with tender fingers ever hardening. At once the bridge, none too wide for three to cross abreast, awakens wonder that no Horatius was in all the Spanish armies to keep the bridge as did he of ancient Rome. But after all the rivulet which today makes its sluggish way under the arch is no Tiber to hold the invading army at bay. Perhaps it was bigger in Morgan's time; today it would be easily



BLUFF NEAR TORO POINT

Photographing this scene is now prohibited as a United States fort is to be erected here



“WHETHER THE TREE OR THE WALL IS STOUTER IS A  
PROBLEM”

forded, almost leapt. At any rate no “Dauntless Three” like those Macaulay sung were there to stay the onrolling tide of foemen.

Hardly have we passed the bridge than a massive vine-embedded ruin on the left of the road stands mute evidence that the Spaniards had forts, if they had but possessed the courage to defend them. This is the Casa Reale, or government house. Its walls of rubble masonry are full two feet thick and have the appearance of having been pierced for musketry. If the buccaneers had any artillery at all, which is doubtful, it was hardly heavy enough to have had any effect against such a wall. Secure within the Casa Reale such a handful of men as held the Alamo against the Mexicans could have resisted Morgan’s men indefinitely. But the spirit was lacking. The stout walls of the Casa Reale stand now as evidences of the character of the defenses the people of Panama had if they but had the pluck to use them.

Continuing toward the sea the visitor next comes upon the ruins of the Cathedral, which are in so shattered a state as to justify the belief that either the invaders or the Spaniards themselves employed gunpowder to wreck so massive an edifice. The flames and the work of the vegetation could hardly have accomplished such complete destruction. The tower alone retains definite form, rising about fifty feet from a dense jungle, and lined within with vines and clinging trees that use the ancient walls as a support and hasten their disintegration in so doing. It is difficult even to trace the lines of the great church, so thoroughly have its walls been demolished. Some of the massive arches still stand all pendulous with vines.

At the water’s edge one still finds steps leading down into the sea, and the remains of the old paved road to which at high tide the boats could come with their cargoes of fish and country produce. If one happens to visit the spot at low tide the view looking seaward is as ugly as could well be imagined. The hard sand beach extends only to high water mark. Beyond that for more than a mile seaward extends a dismal range of black mud of about the consistency of putty. Near the shore it is seen to be full of round holes from which crawl unsightly worms and small crabs. E. C. Stedman puts its unsightly appearance in two lines:

“The tide still ebbs a league from quay,  
The buzzards scour the empty bay.”

Along the strand still stand fragments of the old seawall, and at a considerable distance from the Cathedral ruins you come upon another large building of which little more than the lower walls and the subterranean vaults still have form and coherence. The dungeon into which visitors usually make their way is peculiarly dark, damp and dismal, and the general air of ghoulishness is mightily enhanced by the myriads of bats that hang from the ceiling and whirl and whiz away when intruders light matches to study the moldering masonry. A most interesting feature of this crypt is the great roots of the trees and shrubs that sprung from seeds that had fallen into some crevice and found there soil enough to germinate, but not sufficient to support life as the plant grew larger. The roots twist and creep along the walls, reaching out for earth below as unerringly as a giant boa creeps sinuously through the jungle.

## CHAPTER VI

### REVOLUTIONS AND THE FRENCH REGIME

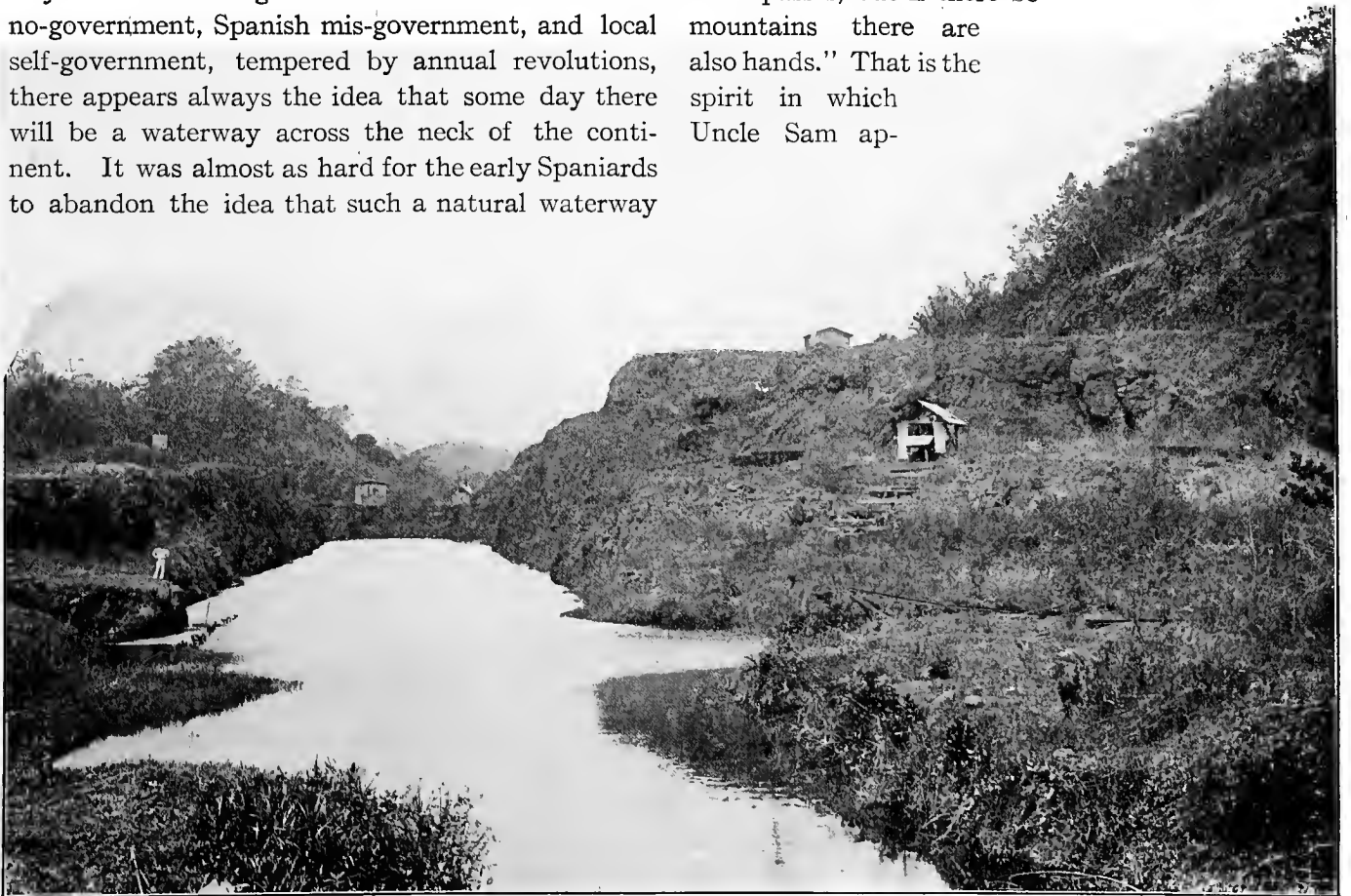


THE history of the Isthmus from the fall of Old Panama to the time when the government of the United States, without any particular pomp or ceremony, took up the picks and shovels the French had laid down and went to work on the Canal, may be passed over here in the lightest and sketchiest way. It is of Panama of the Present, rather than Panama of the Past, that

I have to tell even though that past be full of picturesque and racy incident. Curious enough is the way in which through all those centuries of lawless no-government, Spanish mis-government, and local self-government, tempered by annual revolutions, there appears always the idea that some day there will be a waterway across the neck of the continent. It was almost as hard for the early Spaniards to abandon the idea that such a natural waterway

existed as it has been in later years to make the trans-continental railroads understand that the American people intended to create such a strait.

The search for the natural waterway had hardly been abandoned when discussion arose as to the practicability of creating an artificial one. In its earlier days this project encountered not only the physical obstacles which we had to overcome, but others springing from the rather exaggerated piety of the time. Yet it was a chaplain to Cortez who first suggested a canal to Philip II of Spain in words that have a good twentieth-century ring to them, though their form be archaic: "It is true," he wrote, "that mountains obstruct these passes, but if there be mountains there are also hands." That is the spirit in which Uncle Sam ap-



SAN PABLO LOCK IN FRENCH DAYS



PART OF THE SEA WALL AT PANAMA

proached the Big Job. But when the sturdy chaplain's appeal came to King Philip he referred it to the priests of his council, who ruled it out upon the scriptural injunction, "What God hath joined together let no man put asunder," and they were backed up by a learned prelate on the Isthmus, Fray Josef de Acosta, who averred, "No human power will suffice to demolish the most strong and impenetrable mountains, and solid rocks which God has placed between the two seas, and which sustain the fury of the two oceans. And when it would be to men possible it would in my opinion be very proper to fear the chastisement of heaven for wishing to correct the works which the Creator with greatest deliberation and foresight ordained in the creation of this universe."

Doubtless the Fray de Acosta was the more orthodox, but we like better the spirit of the cleric who held the somewhat difficult post of spiritual adviser

to Cortez. His belief that "if there are mountains there are also hands" is good doctrine, and we can believe that the good father would have liked to have seen some of Col. Goethal's steam shovels biting into those mountains at five cubic yards a bite.

It seems strange that the four canal routes over the respective merits of which the Senate of the United States was engaged in seemingly interminable wrangle only a few years ago—Nicaragua, Darien, Panama and Tehuantepec—should have been suggested by Cortez in the sixteenth century. Nearly 250 years before the birth of the republic destined to dig the canal this stout explorer from old Spain laid an unerring finger upon the only routes which it could follow. Doubtless it was as well that no effort was made at the time, yet it would be unwise for us with smug twentieth-century self-sufficiency to assert that no other age than ours could have put the project through. Perhaps the labor and skill

that raised the mighty city of Palmyra, or built the massive aqueducts that in ruins still span the Roman Campagna, or carved the Colossi of the Egyptian desert, might have been equal to the Panama problem.

In 1814 the Spanish cortes ordered surveys made for a canal, but nothing came of it, and the great project lay quiescent as long as Spain's power in the Isthmus remained unshaken. More by the indifference of other nations than by any right of their own, the Spanish had assumed sovereignty over all of South and Central America. That they held the country by virtue of a papal bull—such as that may be—and by right of conquest is undeniable. But men begun to say that the Pope had given Spain something he never owned, while so far as conquest was concerned Morgan had taken from the Spanish all they ever won by force of arms on the Isthmus. He did not hold what he had taken because he was a pirate not a pioneer.

The only serious effort to colonize in the Panama region by any people, save Spaniards, was the founding of a colony of Scotch Presbyterians, headed by one William Patterson, who had occupied a Scotch pulpit. Beside theology he must have known something of finance, for he organized, and was one of the first directors of, the Bank of England. His colonization project in Panama was broadly conceived, but badly executed. Taking the rich

East India Company for a model he secured a franchise from Scotland, granting him a monopoly of Scottish trade in the Indies in return for an annual tribute of one hogshead of tobacco. Capitalizing his company for \$600,000, he backed the shares with his reputation as a founder of the bank and saw the capital over-subscribed in London. But the success woke up his rivals. They worked on the King, persuaded him to denounce the action taken in Scotland and pushed a law through the English Parliament outlawing the Scotch company in England. In every country the people interested in the established companies fought the interloper who was trying to break into their profitable demesne. But the Scotch stuck to their guns. They rallied at first about Patterson as in later years the French flocked to the support of De Lesseps. Ships were built in Amsterdam, pistols were bought by wholesale, brandy and bibles were both gathered in large quantities, and in 1768 volunteers were called for to join the expedition. Every settler was promised fifty acres of agricultural land and one fifty-foot town lot.

Politics had bothered Patterson at the outset by arraying the English against the Scotch. Now religion added to the dissension. The church and the kirk factions—or the Episcopalians and the Presbyterians—fell afoul of each other. The kirk carried the executive council and Patterson, the



THE PELICANS IN THE BAY OF PANAMA

only man who knew anything about the expedition, was permitted to accompany it only as an ordinary settler. Graft stepped in and though the colonists paid for six months' provisions they discovered when far out at sea that they had but enough for two. Moreover nobody on the ships knew where they were going to settle, for they sailed under sealed orders. When these were opened and the tidings

Spaniards from the land. But illness held the 900 colonists gripped, and malaria, the ruling pest of those tropical shores, is not wont to stimulate a militant spirit. They had settled on the Atlantic coast in the Darien region, as far from the rich traffic of the East Indies as though they were in their old Caledonian homes. Curiously enough they made no effort to get across to the Pacific,



ROAD FROM PANAMA TO LA BOCA

spread that Panama and not the East Indies was the destination, there was renewed distrust and disaffection.

The story of this luckless enterprise is short and dismal. On the voyage out forty-four of the adventurers died, and after landing the deaths continued with melancholy regularity. They were spared trouble with the Indians who, on learning that they were no friends to the Spaniards, welcomed them warmly, and urged them to join in driving the

whence only could trade be conducted, but perhaps that was as well, for the Spaniards though much broken by the recent invasion of the buccaneers would have resisted such an advance to their utmost.

So the unhappy colonists of New Caledonia found themselves on a miasmatic bit of land, remote from anything like civilization, with no sign of trade to engage their activities, an avowed enemy at their back and surrounded by Indians, the price of whose friendship was a declaration of war upon the Span-



Photo by Underwood & Underwood

THE CITY PARK OF COLON

iards. To make matters worse, the King issued a proclamation prohibiting all governors of English colonies in the West Indies from giving them aid or comfort, denouncing them as outlaws.

Disheartened, the first colony broke up and sailed away, just when the Company was dispatching two more ships from Scotland. The fugitives sailed for New York, and on one of their ships carrying 250 men, 150 are said to have died before reaching that port. As for the new colonists, they reached the deserted fort of St. Andrew, and saw the mute evidences of death and despair. From the Indians they learned the details of the story, and a great majority voted to sail away without further delay. Twelve however elected to stop, and being landed with a generous supply of provisions, kept foothold in the colony until the third expedition arrived. This consisted of four ships, which had left the Clyde with about 1300 colonists. About 160 however died on the way out, and the survivors were mightily distressed when instead of finding a thriving colony of a thousand or more awaiting them, they discovered only twelve Scotchmen living miserably in huts with the Indians.

The imaginative prospectus writer seems to have been no less active and engaging at that time than in these days of mining promotions, and many of the new colonists had come in the expectation of finding a land watered by springs, the waters of which were 'as soft as milk and very nourishing,' a land wherein people lived 150

years, and to die at 125 was to be cut off in the flower of one's youth. What they found was twelve haggard Scotchmen in a primeval forest, ill-fed, unclothed, dependent largely on the charity of the Indians, and who, so far from looking confidently forward to an hundred more years of life cried dolorously to the newcomers, "Take us hence or we perish."

The new colonists, however, had pluck. Stifling their disappointment, they disembarked and settled down to make the colony a success. According to the records they had brought five forces for disintegration and failure along with them—namely four ministers and a most prodigious lot of brandy. The ancient chroniclers do not say upon which of these rests the most blame for the disasters that followed. The ministers straightway set up to be rulers of the colony. When stockades should be a-building all were engaged in erecting houses for them. As but two could preach in the space of one Sunday, they designated two holy days weekly whereon they preached such resounding sermons that "the regular service frequently lasted twelve hours without any interruption." Nor would they do other work than sermonizing. As for the brandy, all the records of the colony agree that much too much of it and of the curious native drinks was used by all, and that the ministers themselves were wont to reinvigorate themselves after their pulpit exertions by mighty potations.

Yet the colony was not wholly without a certain



CHILDREN IN A NATIVE HUT

sturdy self reliance. Seeing it persist despite all obstacles, the Spaniards dispatched a force of soldiers from Panama to destroy it. Campbell

the East India Company, whose monopoly was threatened, the plenteousness of the brandy and the zeal of the four ministers.



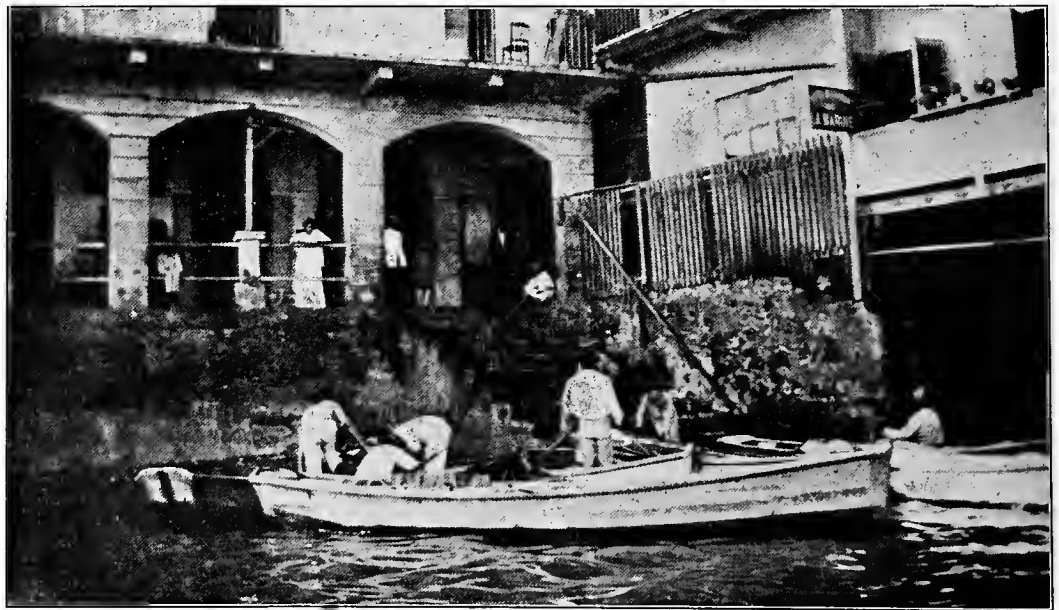
THE WATER FRONT OF PANAMA

waylaid them in the jungle and overthrew them. Then the King of Spain became alarmed and sent eight Spanish men-of-war to make an end of these interlopers—the King of England and Scotland coldly leaving them to their fate. But they fought so bravely that in the end the Spanish, though their fleet had been reinforced by three ships, were obliged to grant them capitulation with the honors of war, and they “marched out with their colors flying and drums beating, together with arms and ammunition, and with all their goods.”

So ended the effort to make of Darien an outpost of Scotland.

In the effort 2000 lives and over £200,000 had been lost. Macaulay explains it by saying, “It was folly to suppose that men born and bred within ten degrees of the Arctic circle would enjoy excellent health within ten degrees of the equator.” But Lord Macaulay forgot to reckon on the hostility of

and tyrannical. The French Revolution and the Napoleonic upheaval in Europe found their echo in South America, where one after another the various states threw off the Spanish yoke. But Panama,



THE WATER GATE OF PANAMA

then known as Terra Firma, was slow to join in the revolutionary activities of her neighbors. It is true that in 1812 the revolutionists became so active in Bogota, the capital of the province, that the seat of government was temporarily removed to Panama City. But the country as a whole was sluggish.

After the expulsion of the Scotch, the domination of the Isthmus by the Spaniards was never again seriously menaced by any foreign power. All the vast South and Central American domain was lost to Spain, not by the attacks of her European neighbors, but by the revolt of their people against a government which was at one time inefficient



Four classes of citizens, European Spaniards, their sons, born on the Isthmus, and called creoles, the Indians and the negroes, made up the population and were too diverse by birth and nature to unite for any patriotic purpose. Accordingly through the period of breaking shackles, which made Bolivar famous the world over and created the great group of republics in South America, the state of which the Isthmus was a part remained quiescent. In 1814 revolutionists vainly tried to take Porto Bello, but that famous fortress which never resisted a foreign foe successfully, beat off the patriots. Panama was at this time in high favor at Madrid because of its loyalty and the Cortes passed resolutions for the building of a canal, but went no further. But all the time the revolutionary leaven was working beneath the surface. In 1821 a field marshal from Spain, charged with the task of crushing out the revolution in Colombia and Ecuador, stripped Porto Bello, San Lorenzo and Panama of the greater part of their garrisons and took them to Guayaquil. By bribes and promises the local patriots persuaded the few soldiers remaining to desert and, with no possibility of resistance, the independence of Panama from Spain was declared. Early in 1822 Panama

became the Department of the Isthmus in the Republic of Colombia.

It would be idle to describe, even to enumerate, all the revolutions which have disquieted the Isthmus since it first joined Colombia in repudiating the Spanish rule. They have been as thick as insects in the jungle. No physical, social or commercial ties bound Panama to Colombia at any time during their long association. A mountain range divided the two countries and between the cities of Panama and Bogota there was no communication by land. In foreign commerce the province of Panama exceeded the parent state, while the possession of the shortest route across the Isthmus was an asset of which both Bogotans and Panamanians keenly realized the value.

Revolutions were annual occurrences, sometimes hard fought, for the people of Panama have plenty of courage in the field; sometimes ended with the first battle. The name of the parent state has been sometimes Colombia, sometimes New Granada; Panama has at times been independent, at others a state of the Federation of New Granada; at one time briefly allied with Ecuador and Venezuela. In 1846 the volume of North American travel across the



*Photo by Underwood & Underwood*

ENTRANCE TO MT. HOPE CEMETERY

Isthmus became so great that the United States entered into a treaty with New Granada in which we guaranteed to keep the Isthmus open for transit. That and the building, by American capital of the Panama Railroad, made us a directly interested party in all subsequent revolutions. Of these there were plenty. President Theodore Roosevelt defending in 1903 the diplomatic methods by which he "took" Panama, enumerated no fewer than fifty-three revolutions in the fifty-seven years that had elapsed since the signing of the treaty. He summed up the situation thus:

"The above is only a partial list of the revolutions, rebellions, insurrections, riots, and other outbreaks that have occurred during the period in question; yet they number fifty-three for the last fifty-seven years. It will be noted that one of them lasted nearly three years before it was quelled; another for nearly a year. In short, the experience of nearly

half a century has shown Colombia to be utterly incapable of keeping order on the Isthmus. Only the active interference of the United States has enabled her to preserve so much as a semblance of sovereignty. Had it not been for the exercise by the United States of the police power in her interest, her connection with the Isthmus would have been severed long ago."

We are apt to think of these revolutions as mere riots, uprisings somewhat after the sort of Falstaff's seven men in buckram, and savoring much of the opera bouffe. Such, to a great extent they were, and curiously enough none of them, except for its outcome, was less serious or dignified than the final one which won for Panama its freedom from Colombia, and for the United States the ten miles' strip across the ocean called the Canal Zone. That was perhaps the only revolution in history by which was created a new and sovereign state, and the issue of which was finally determined by the inability of a



CATHEDRAL PLAZA, PANAMA

The building in the center was by turns the French and the American Administration Building



AVENIDA CENTRALE

The building with the rounded corner balcony is the American Consulate

commanding general to pay the fares for his troops over forty-eight miles of railroad. Of that, however, more hereafter.

Of course, during all the revolutions and counter revolutions the idea of the canal had steadily grown. England at one time took a mild interest in it and sent one Horatio Nelson to look over the land. The young naval officer's health failed him and he returned to become in later years the hero of Trafalgar and the Nile. Later, the great German scientist, Baron von Humboldt, in the course of a famous voyage to South America, spent some time on the Isthmus, and wrote much of its natural features, enumerating nine routes for a canal including of course the one finally adopted. Louis Napoleon, though never on the Isthmus, dreamed out the possibilities of a canal when he was a prisoner in the fortress

of Ham. Had he succeeded in maintaining Maximilian on the throne of Mexico he might have made the Isthmian history very different. Among our own people, De Witt Clinton, builder of the Erie Canal, and Henry Clay, were the first to plan for an American canal across the Isthmus, but without taking practical steps to accomplish it.

Canal schemes, however, were almost as numerous as revolutions in the years preceding 1903. Darien, Panama, Tehuantepec, Nicaragua have all been considered at various times, and the last named for some time was a very close second to Panama in favor. There is reason to believe that the government of the United States deliberately "nursed" the Nicaragua project in order to exact better terms from Colombia, which held the Panama route at an exorbitant figure.



ANCON HILL AT SUNSET

The honor of actually inaugurating the canal work must ever belong to the French, as the honor of completing it will accrue to us. It is not the first time either that the French and the Americans worked together to accomplish something on this continent. Yorktown and Panama ought to be regarded as chapters of the story of a long partnership. In 1876 Ferdinand de Lesseps, with the glory of having dug the Suez Canal still untarnished, became interested in the Panama situation as the result of representations made by a French engineer, Napoleon B. Wyse. Lieut. Wyse had made a survey of the Isthmus and, in connection with Gen. Stephen Turr, a Hungarian, had secured a concession from Colombia to run ninety-nine years after the completion of the canal, with a payment to Colombia of \$250,000 annually after the

seventy-fifth year had expired. This franchise was transferable by sale to any other private company but could not be sold to a government—a proviso which later complicated greatly the negotiations with the United States.

De Lesseps was instantly interested. The honors which had been heaped upon him as the result of his successful operation at Suez were very grateful to him. The

French temperament is particularly avid of praise and public honor. Moreover, he sincerely believed in the practicability of the plan and, neither at the outset or later, did any one fully enlighten him as to the prodigious obstacles to be encountered. Lieut. Wyse had interested a group of financiers who scented in the scheme a chance for great profits, and to their project the name of De Lesseps was all important. For advertising purposes it had the value of that of Roosevelt today. To

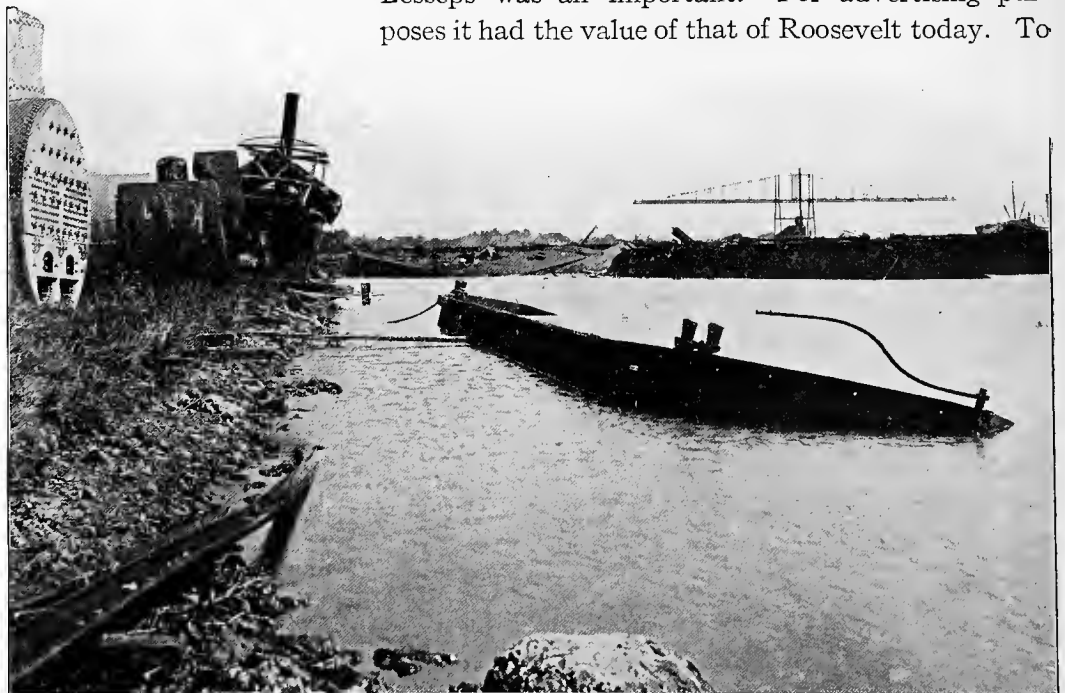


Photo by Underwood &amp; Underwood

ABANDONED FRENCH MACHINERY ON THE CANAL

launch the project successfully money was needed, and this they found. Some sort of professional approval, in addition to the De Lesseps name was desirable and this they provided by calling together an International Scientific Congress at Paris to discuss the great undertaking. One hundred and sixty-four delegates were present, of whom forty-two were engineers and only eleven Americans. It was charged at the time that the congress was more political than scientific and furthermore that it was "packed" so as to register only the will of De Lesseps, who in turn recommended in the main such measures as the syndicate putting up the money desired. However, the Congress gave

a decision which the French themselves were forced to reverse and which the United States definitely abandoned early in its work. In the French Con-



OVERWHELMED BY THE JUNGLE

a quasi-public and scientific appearance to a project which was really conceived only as a money-making proposition by a group of financiers. There was and has since been bitter criticism of the vote by which the Congress declared for a sea-level canal—

gress there were less than 100 of the 164 delegates present when the vote was taken. Seventy-eight voted for sea-level and a majority of the engineers voted against it.

In my description of the canal work the funda-



A LOTTERY TICKET SELLER

of canal the cut at Culebra is 495 feet below the crest of Gold Hill and 364 feet below the crest of Contractor's Hill opposite. The top width of this cut is over half a mile. To carry the canal to sea-level would mean a further cut of eighty-five feet with vastly enhanced liability of slides. As for the Chagres River, that tricky stream crosses the line of the old French canal twenty-three times. As the river is sometimes three or four feet deep one day and nearly fifty feet deep at the same point the next—a turbid, turbulent, roaring torrent, carrying trees, huts and boulders along with it—the canal could obviously not exist with the

mental differences between the respective advantages of the sea-level and the lock type of canal will continually reappear. At this moment it is enough to say that the obstacles to the sea-level plan are to be found in Culebra Hill and the Chagres River. In the lock type

Chagres in its path. The French device was to dam the stream some miles above the point at which the canal first crossed it and lead it away through an artificial channel into the Pacific instead of into the Atlantic, where it now empties. This task the American engineers have avoided by damming the Chagres at Gatun, and making a great lake eighty-five feet above the level of the sea through which the canal extends and which covers and obliterates the twenty-three river crossings which embarrassed the engineers of the sea-level canal.

It is fair to say, however, that today (1913), with the lock canal approaching completion, there is a very large and intelligent body of Americans who still hold that the abandonment of the sea-level plan was an error. And it is a curious fact that while De Lesseps was accused of "packing" his congress so as to vote down the report for a lock canal which a majority of the engineers voting favored, Roosevelt, after a majority of his "International Board of Consulting Engineers" had voted for a sea-level canal, set aside their recommendation and ordered the lock type instead.

Immediately after the adjournment of the International Congress at Paris the stock of the canal company, \$60,000,000 as a first issue, was offered to the investing public. It was largely over-subscribed. The French are at once a thrifty and an emotional people. Their thrift gives them instant



MACHINERY SEEMINGLY AS HOPELESS AS THIS WAS RECOVERED AND SET TO WORK



THE POWER OF THE JUNGLE

Note how the tree has grown around and into this steel dump car at San Pablo

command of such sums of ready cash as astound financiers of other nations. Their emotionalism leads them to support any great national enterprise that promises glory for *La Patrie*, has in it a touch of romance and withal seems economically safe. The canal enterprise at the outset met all these conditions, and

the commanding figure of De Lesseps at its head, the man who had made Africa an island and who dogmatically declared, "the Panama Canal will be more easily begun, finished and maintained than the Suez Canal," lured the francs from their hiding places in woolen stockings or under loose hearth stones.

It has been the practice of many writers upon the canal to ridicule the unsuccessful effort of the French to complete it; to expatiate upon the theatrical display which attended their earlier operations, and the reckless extravagance which attended the period when the dire possibility of failure first appeared to their vision; to overlook the earnest and effective



LA FOLIE DINGLER

This house, built by the French for \$150,000, was sold for \$25.00 by the Americans

work done by the Frenchmen actually on the Isthmus while riveting attention on the black-mailers and parasites in Paris who were destroying the structure at its very foundations. It is significant that none of the real workers on the canal do this. Talk with the engineers and you will find them enthusiastic over

the engineering work done by the French. Those sturdy, alert Americans who are now putting the Big Job through will take pains to give their predecessors the fullest credit for work done, for dirt moved, for surveys made and for machinery designed—a great lot of it is in use on the line today, including machines left exposed in the jungle twenty years. Hundreds of their buildings are still in use. If, after listening to the honest and generous praise expressed by our engineers, the visitor will go out to the cemetery of Mount Hope, near Cristobal, and read the lines on the headstones of French boys who came out full of hope and ambition to be cut down at twenty-two, twenty-five—all



NEAR THE PACIFIC ENTRANCE TO THE CANAL

The suction dredge is an inheritance from the French and still working



boyish ages—he will reflect that it is ill to laugh because the forlorn hope does not carry the breast-works, but only opens the way for the main army. And there are many little French graveyards scattered about the Isthmus which make one who comes upon them unawares feel that the really vital thing about the French connection with the canal was not that the first blast which it had been prepared to celebrate with some pomp failed to explode, or that the young engineers did not understand that cham-

largely by our force in carrying material for the Gatun dam. At the Pacific entrance they had dug a narrow channel three miles long which we are still using. We paid the French company \$40,000,000 for all its rights on the Isthmus. There are various rumors as to who got the money. Some, it is believed, never went far from New York, for with all their thrift the French are no match for our high financiers. But whoever got the money we got a good bargain. The estimate of our own commission



WHERE THE FRENCH DID THEIR BEST WORK

The greatest amount of excavations by the French was in Culebra Cut

pagne mixed but badly with a humid and malarial climate, but that the flower of a great and generous nation gave their lives in a struggle with hostile nature before science had equipped man with the knowledge to make the struggle equal.

Today along a great part of our canal line the marks of the French attainments are apparent. From Limon Bay, at the Atlantic end of the canal, our engineers for some reason determined upon an entirely new line for our canal, instead of following the French waterway, which was dug for seven miles to a depth of fifteen feet, and for eight miles further, seven feet deep. This canal has been used very

in 1911 values the physical property thus transferred at \$42,799,826.

Bad luck, both comic and tragic, seemed to attend the French endeavors. Count De Lesseps, with a national fondness for the dramatic, arranged two ceremonies to properly dignify the actual beginning of work upon the canal. The first was to be the breaking of ground for the Pacific entrance, which was to be at the mouth of the Rio Grande River in the Bay of Panama. A distinguished company gathered on the boat chartered for the occasion at Panama, and there was much feasting, speaking and toasting. Every one was so imbued with enthusiasm



AN OLD SPANISH CHURCH

This edifice, still standing at Nata, is said to be the oldest church in Panama

that no one thought of so material a thing as the tide. On the Pacific coast the tide rises and falls twenty feet or more, and while the guests were emptying their glasses the receding tide was emptying the bay whither they were bound. When they arrived they found that nearly two miles of coral rock and mud flats separated them from the shore where the

happened. Some fault in the connections made the electric spark impotent, and the chroniclers of the time do not record exactly when the blast was actually fired. But in the official canal paper the ceremony was described as "perfectly successful," and the reporter added that picturesque detail which Koko said "imparts an artistic verisimilitude to an other-



Photo by Underwood & Underwood

#### JUNCTURE OF FRENCH AND AMERICAN CANALS

The American Canal is the wider, and affords the more direct route to the sea

historic sod was to be turned. Accordingly, excavation was begun *pro forma* in a champagne box filled with earth on the deck of the ship. The little daughter of De Lesseps dealt the first blow of the pick, followed by representatives of Colombia. To complete the ceremony the Bishop of Panama gravely blessed the work thus auspiciously begun, and the canal builders steamed back to Panama.

Later, the same party assembled to witness the first blast at Culebra—for the French made the first attack on that redoubtable fortress, which after the lapse of thirty-five years is stubbornly resisting our American sappers and miners. But after due preparations, including wine, the fair hand of Mlle. Ferdinande De Lesseps pressed the button—and nothing





Photo by Underwood & Underwood

#### THE ANCON HOSPITAL GROUNDS

The beauty of the grounds is due to early French planning

could not, and their directors probably did not know, that the canal could never be built by a private company seeking profit. Neither could it be built by private contract, as we discovered after some discouraging experiences of our own. The French builders were at the mercy of the stock market. A hurtful rumor, true or false, might at any time shut off their money supplies. Experience has pretty thoroughly demonstrated that the confidence of the investing public cannot long be maintained by false reports or futile promises, but both of these devices the French worked until the inevitable catastrophe.

Disease on the Isthmus cooperated with distrust in Paris to bring about failure. The French in 1880 knew nothing of the modern scientific systems for checking yellow-fever contagion and the spread of malaria. The part mosquitoes play as car-

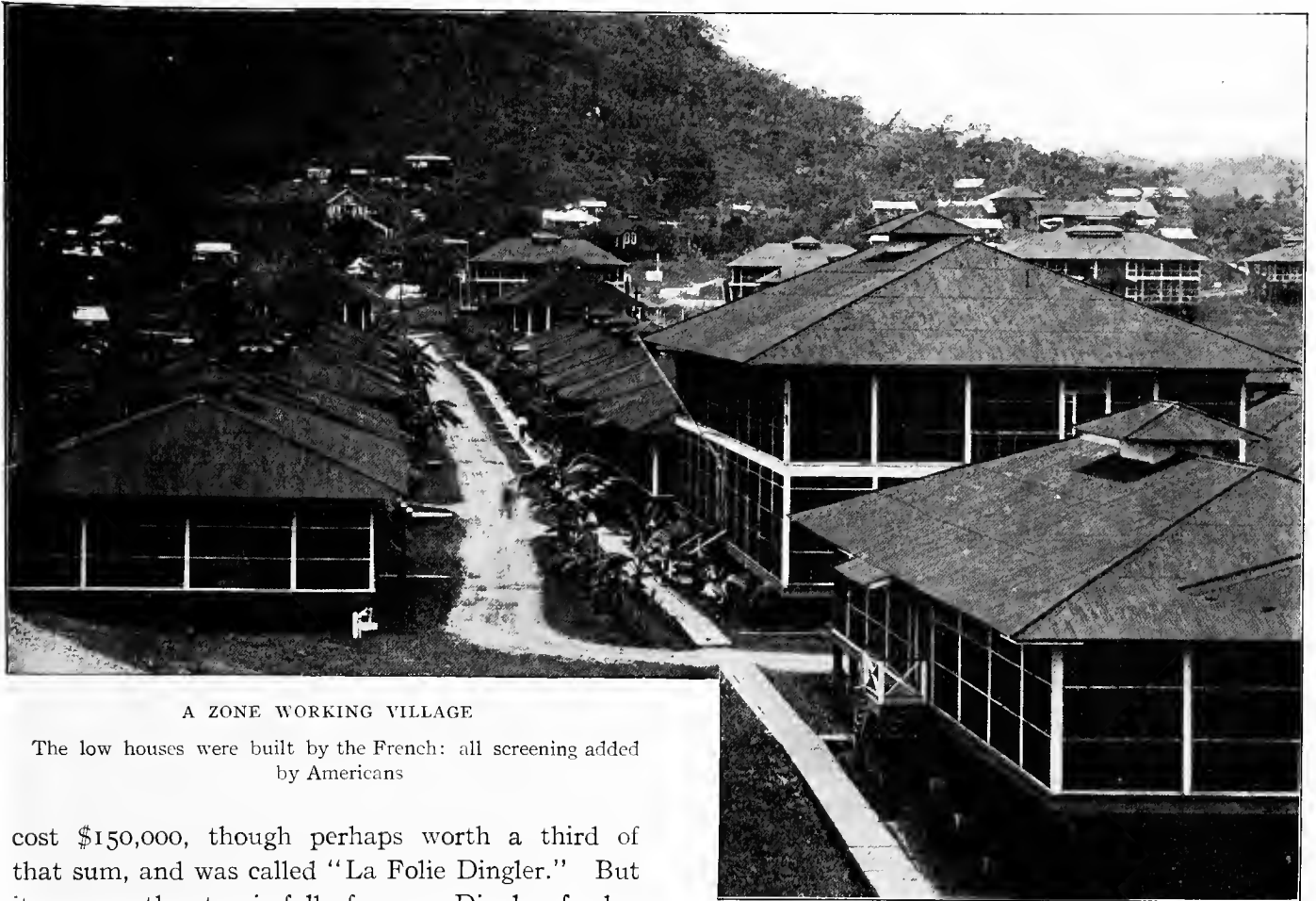
riers of disease germs was not dreamed of. Beyond building excellent hospitals for the sick, some of which we still use, and dosing both sick and well liberally with quinine, they had no plan of campaign against "Yellow Jack." As a result, death stalked grimly among them, and the stories written of his ravages are ghastly. On the south side of Ancon Hill, where the quarry has gashed the hillside, stood,

until recently, a large frame house, built for Jules Dingler, first director-general of canal work. It



#### A SUNKEN RAILROAD

Nine feet below the boat is the roadbed of the old Panama railroad



A ZONE WORKING VILLAGE

The low houses were built by the French: all screening added by Americans

cost \$150,000, though perhaps worth a third of that sum, and was called "La Folie Dingler." But it was a rather tragic folly for poor Dingler, for before he had fairly moved into it his wife, son and daughter died of yellow fever and he returned to Paris to die too of a broken heart. His house, in which he anticipated such happiness, became a smallpox hospital, and was finally sold for \$25 with the stipulation that the purchaser remove it.

A dinner was given M. Henri Boinne, secretary-general of the company. Some one remarked that there were thirteen at the table, whereupon the guest of honor remarked gaily that as he was the last to come he would have to pay for all. In two weeks he was dead—yellow fever. Others at the dinner followed him. Of the members of one surveying party on the upper waters of the Chagres—a region I myself visited without a suggestion of ill effects—every one, twenty-two in all, were prostrated by disease and ten died. Bunau-Varilla, whose name is closely linked with the canal, says: "Out of every one hundred individuals arriving on the Isthmus, I can say without exaggeration that only twenty have been able to remain at their posts at the working stations, and even in that number

many who were able to present an appearance of health had lost much of their courage."

Col. Gorgas tells of a party of eighteen young Frenchmen who came to the Isthmus, all but one of whom died within a month. The Mother Superior of the nursing sisters in the French hospital at Ancon lost by fever twenty-one out of twenty-four sisters who had accompanied her to the Isthmus.

How great was the total loss of French lives can only be guessed. The hospital records show that at Ancon, 1041 patients died of yellow fever. Col. Gorgas figures that as many died outside the hospital. All the French records are more or less incomplete and their authenticity doubtful because apprehension for the tender hopes and fears of the shareholders led to the suppression of unpleasant facts. The customary guess is that two out of every three Frenchmen who went to the Isthmus died there. Col. Gorgas, who at one time figures the total loss during the French régime at 16,500, recently raised his estimate to 22,000, these figures of course including negro workmen. Little or no

effort was made to induce sanitary living, as under the Americans, and so ignorant were the French—as indeed all physicians were at that time—of the causes of the spread of yellow fever, that they set the legs of the hospital beds in shallow pans of water to keep the ants from creeping to the beds. The ants were stopped, but the water bred hosts of wrigglers from which came the deadly *stegomyia* mosquito, which carries the yellow-fever poison from the patient to the well person. Had the hospital been designed to spread instead of to cure disease its managers could not have planned better.

It is a curious fact that, in a situation in which the toll of death is heaviest, man is apt to be most reckless and riotous in his pleasures. The old drinking song of the English guardsmen beleaguered

during the Indian mutiny voices the almost universal desire of strong men to flaunt a gay defiance in the face of death:

“Stand! Stand to your glasses steady,  
’Tis all we have left to prize,  
One cup to the dead already,  
Hurrah, for the next that dies”.

Wine, wassail and, I fear, women were much in evidence during the hectic period of the French activities. The people of the two Isthmian towns still speak of it as the *temps de luxe*. Dismal thrift was banished and extravagance was the rule. Salaries were prodigious. Some high officials were paid from \$50,000 to \$100,000 a year with houses, carriages, traveling expenses and uncounted incidentals. Expenditures for residences were lavish, and the nature of the structures still standing shows

that graft was the chief factor in the cost. The director-general had a \$40,000 bath-house, and a private railway car costing \$42,000—which is curiously enough almost exactly \$1000 for each mile of the railroad it traversed. The hospital buildings at Colon cost \$1,400,000 and one has but to look at them today to wonder how even the \$400,000 was spent,

The big graft that finally was one of the prime factors in wrecking the company was in Paris, but enough went on in Colon and Panama to make those

two towns as full of easy money as a mining camp after a big strike. The pleasures of such a society are not refined. Gambling and drinking were the less serious vices. A French commentator of the time remarks, “Most of the com-



NEGRO QUARTERS, FRENCH TOWN OF EMPIRE  
Paving and sanitary arrangements due to American régime

mercial business of Panama is transacted standing and imbibing cocktails—always the eternal cocktail! Afterward, if the consumer had the time and money to lose, he had only to cross the hall to find himself in a little room, crowded with people where roulette was going on. Oh this roulette, how much it has cost all grades of canal employees! Its proprietor must make vast profits. Admission is absolutely free; whoever wishes may join in the play. A democratic mob pushes and crowds around the table. One is elbowed at the same time by a negro, almost in rags, anxiously thrusting forward his ten sous, and by a portly merchant with his pockets stuffed with piasters and bank notes”.

These towns, which bought and consumed French champagnes and other wines by the shipload, could not afford to build a water system. Water was peddled in the streets by men carrying great jars,

or conducting carts with tanks. There were millions for roulette, poker and the lottery, but nothing for sewers or pavements and during the wet season the people, natives and French both, waded ankle deep in filth which would have driven a blooded Berkshire hog from his sty. When from these man-created conditions of drink and dirt, disease was bred and men died like the vermin among which they lived, they blamed the climate, or the Chagres River.

Amidst it all the work went on. So much stress has been laid upon the riot in the towns that one forgets the patient digging out on the hills and in the jungle. In 1912 the Secretary of the United States Canal Commission estimated the amount of excavation done by the French, useful to our canal, at 29,709,000 cubic yards worth \$25,389,000. That by no means represented all their work, for our

shift in the line of the canal made much of their excavation valueless. Between Gold Hill and Contractor's Hill in the Culebra Cut, where our struggle with the obstinate resistance of nature has been fiercest, the French cut down 161 feet, all of it serviceable to us. Their surveys and plats are invaluable, and their machinery, which tourists seeing some pieces abandoned to the jungle condemn in the lump, has been of substantial value to us both for use and for sale.

But under the conditions as they found them, the French could never have completed the canal. Only a government could be equal to that task. President Roosevelt found to his own satisfaction at least that neither private contract nor civilian management was adequate. Most emphatically, if the desire for profit was to be the sole animating force the canal could never be built at all. When the



FILTH THAT WOULD DRIVE A BERKSHIRE FROM HIS STY  
A typical scene in the negro quarters of Colon during the period of French activity in Panama



*Photo by Underwood and Underwood*

CANAL VALLEY NEAR PEDRO MIGUEL

Through the line of hills in the background extends the deepest part of the Culebra Cut

discovery that the canal enterprise would never be a "big bonanza" dawned on the French stockholders distrust was rapidly succeeded by panic. Vainly did De Lesseps repeat his favorite formula, "The canal will be built." Vainly did the officers of the company pay tribute to the blackmailers that sprung up on every side—journalists, politicians, discharged employees, every man who knew a weak point in the company's armor. Reorganizations, new stock issues, changes of plan, appeals for government aid, bond issues, followed one after another. The sea-level canal was abandoned and a lock canal substituted. After repeated petitions the French Chamber of Deputies, salved with some of the

spoil, authorized an issue of lottery bonds and bankruptcy was temporarily averted. A new company was formed but the work languished, just enough in fact being done to keep the concession alive. After efforts to enlist the coöperation of the United States, the company in despair offered to sell out altogether to that government, and after that proffer the center of interest was transferred from Paris to Washington.

The French had spent in all about \$260,000,000 and sacrificed about 2000 French lives before they drew the fires from their dredges, left their steam shovels in the jungle and turned the task over to the great American Republic.