

bor, and the mechanical resources of Europe at no great distance; but, notwithstanding these advantages, the work, planned on an estimate of \$40,000,000, cost \$110,000,000, on a reduced cross-section, before it was opened.

The physical conditions on the isthmus are the precise reverse of those in Egypt, and the cost of every item of work was enormously greater. A material increase was inevitable, even with the most careful and economic management. The scarcity and diminished effectiveness of labor, losses from disease and sickness, the interference and burden of the heavy rainfall, would at least have doubled the cost, and to these drawbacks were added political disturbances and local acts of violence, with a home administration of unparalleled extravagance.

The old company left behind it assets that have been reasonably computed as amounting to \$60,000,000 or \$70,000,000, including the ownership of the Panama railroad, and estimating the actual value of the work done and the immense plant collected—much of it in readiness to use.

With this as a basis, and with a working capital of \$12,000,000 or \$15,000,000 restitution money recovered from bankers, contractors and others who had unlawfully obtained possession of it, a new company, with a total change of personnel and methods, has been for three years pursuing an extended system of engineering research into the particulars affecting construction and cost—boring, gauging, leveling, experimenting and computing—with the purpose of effecting a thorough study and making final plans and estimates before again submitting the project to public consideration. At the same time a considerable amount of actual work has been done, as set forth in the annual printed reports, and a force of between 3,000 and 4,000 men been kept at work, mainly at the Culebra pass, but with preparations for extending the work to other points.

Pending the completion of the studies in the field, an engineering commission has been formed, to whom the finished plans and estimates are to be submitted for consideration and report; and if this commission, which, it may be stated, includes a distinguished American engineer, Gen. Abbott, of the United States army, shall confirm the results of the latest examinations and find the proposed constructions practicable and adequate, and the estimates sufficient, the project is to be made public and endeavor made to secure the financial aid to carry the enterprise to a conclusion.

The reports state that this is to be done during the present year.

A LITTLE REPUBLIC TO BE EXPECTED.

It was not until 1841 that Costa Rica made any pretensions to independent sovereignty. Since then she has enjoyed almost continuously the blessings of peace. For the last thirty years she has not suffered the shock of a pronunciamento; and her presidents have been elected by ballot under constitutional regulations. She has never interfered in the affairs of her neighbors, although her good offices have often been exercised in the settlement of their differences. It was through her aid that Walker and his fellow filibusterers were overcome and driven from Nicaragua; and, although there have been frequent misunderstandings, she has never engaged in a war. It is also remarkable that although the percentage of foreigners among her population is larger than that of any of the neighboring states, no claim has ever been presented to Costa Rica for damages or injury caused by the arbitrary acts of her authority against a citizen of another nation. Elisee Reclus, the famous savant, in his "Geographie Universelle," calls Costa Rica "a model republic;" and in many respects she sets an example worthy to be followed by the other Latin-American states.

Costa Rica suffers from a scanty population; for, although it has increased 50 per cent. in 15 years, the total does not exceed 300,000. But, next to Uruguay, the little country has the largest amount of foreign commerce per capita of any of the American states. In the United States, according to recent calculations, foreign trade averages \$26.52 per capita; Costa Rica shows an average of \$68.66.

Coffee is the chief product of the country, Costa Rica having been the first of the Central American states to develop its culture. A large quantity of fruit is shipped to the United States, with which a weekly steamship connection exists. Most of the coffee goes to Europe; not more than one-third of it to the United States. The greater part of Costa Rica's imported goods come from England, France and Germany. This is chiefly due to the fact that her importing and exporting merchants are Europeans, and exchange their invoices for bills of lading for coffee exported to the European market. Recently, however, quite a number of Americans have settled in Costa Rica, and the relations between the two countries will thereby be much benefited.

The educational system of Costa Rica is more extensive and better sustained than that of any other of the Central American republics. The primary schools are free, and are supported by the government under a system similar to that of the United States. A compulsory education law is in force, except in the very sparsely settled districts, where its operation would be a hardship to the people. The reports of the bureau of education at Washington show that there is a larger percentage of the population attending school in Costa Rica than in any other American country except Uruguay, and that the number and improvement of the schools have kept pace with the advancement of the country in other respects. In 1886 there were 260 primary and secondary schools, with an average attendance of 20,000 pupils. In 1897 there were 353 schools, with an average attendance of over 30,000. There were colleges for both sexes, as well as a national university supported by the government, with faculties of law, medicine, surgery and engineering, which is attended also by students from the neighboring states. The government pays for the tuition of a certain number of students at foreign universities as an encouragement and reward for those who distinguish themselves in their studies, and to provide instructors for its own schools in branches of science and art that are undeveloped in Costa Rica.

Costa Rica was the first of the Central American states to extend the telegraph and the telephone to all its centers of population, and to introduce electric lights, underground sewers and other modern improvements into its cities. The people are progressive and proud of their achievements. They love peace and order; and, although there are occasional political disturbances, it is more difficult to start a revolution in Costa Rica than in any other country between the Mexican border and the isthmus. Property is safe; the presence of foreigners is welcome, and the government offers liberal inducements for the investment of capital and the settlement of its public lands.

The resources of the country are similar to those of Nicaragua. There is an abundance of timber and mineral deposits; the valleys have a deep and fertile soil for agriculture; while on the northern frontier is a large area of grazing land capable of sustaining millions of cattle. The water power is abundant and convenient, and by and by Costa Rica will increase her wealth by the introduction of mechanical industries; but labor is so scarce and the

cultivation of the soil so profitable that thus far these opportunities have been neglected.

With the exception of the United States, Costa Rica is the only country in America that maintains the gold standard of money; and it has an excellent foreign credit, which has been secured by the punctilious observance of its obligations, the prompt payment of its interest and the honest and economical management of its finances. Rafael Yglesias, the president, has just been elected to a second term, according to the custom of the country; and if he continues the wise administration of affairs that hitherto has marked his career the immediate future promises rapid advancement for the little republic.—Wm. Eleroy Curtis, in *The Forum*.

WOMAN'S SUFFRAGE IN NEW ZEALAND.

In New Zealand women have the right to vote for members of the legislature. The law extending suffrage to them went into effect in 1893. The population of Christ church (census of 1891) was 31,454. The first election under the law was held in November, 1893. Number of men who voted, 6,313; number of women who voted, 5,989. These figures ought to convince us that women are not as indifferent about politics as some people would have us believe. In New Zealand, as a whole, the estimated adult female population was 139,915; of these, 109,461 qualified and registered their names on the rolls—78.23 per cent. of the whole. Of these, 90,290, went to the polls and voted. Do men ever turn out better than that in America or elsewhere?

Here is a remark to the other sex's credit, too—I take it from the official report: "A feature of the election was the orderliness and sobriety of the people. Women were in no way molested."

In the New Zealand law occurs this: "The word person whenever it occurs throughout the act includes women." That is promotion, you see. By that enlargement of the word, the matron with the garnered wisdom and experience of 50 years becomes at one jump the political equal of her callow kid of 21.—Mark Twain, in *More Tramps Abroad*.

A PROPHECY FOR FREE CUBA.

Mr. Charles F. Lummis, who has made careful investigations of conditions in Central America and Mexico, has recently written, and the Harpers have published, "The Awakening of a Nation; Mexico of To-Day." Even to most of those who have had the utmost confidence in the ability of the

mixed races of Spanish America to govern themselves, and to create out of the ruins of Spanish tyrannies self-controlled, self-respecting nations, some of Mr. Lummis' statements must be as surprising as they are gratifying. Mr. Lummis says:

To-day Mexico is—and I say it deliberately—the safest country in America. Life, property, human rights are more secure than even with us.

From a state of anarchy, tempered by brigandage—wherein it was better to be president than to be right, and better to be a revolutionist than either—she has graduated to be the most compact and unified nation in the new world. She has acquired not only a government which governs, but one which knows how to govern—and contemporaneously a people which has learned how to be ruled.

• Two Scotchmen out hunting discovered a couple of bear cubs in a cave at the end of a passage formed by a cleft in a mountain side. In order to prevent a surprise by the elder bruin, who was out on a foraging expedition and liable to return at any moment, Sandy stationed himself at the passage entrance, where the bear could not pass except between his legs, while his friend hurried to get the cubs fixed so as to carry them away conveniently. He had hardly got to work when he heard a scuffle and an angry growl in the passage. "What's the matter, Sandy?" he cried, in alarm. Sandy replied, apparently under a very severe strain: "Ye'll ken if the tail breks." So will the robbers of the people "ken if the tail breks."—E. Corkill, in *The New Earth*.

Good roads are the means through which can be done in rural districts much that settlements may try to do. Open the country neighborhoods to the visits of mail carriers and to the free exit and interchange of produce and personality, and the isolation which makes the village lad flee to the city and shuts the farmer in to his own thoughts and his family away from human company, and the problem of the country will be well on the way to solution.—Chicago Commons.

The president and his administration, according to the Tribune, have been giving some advice to the press which we sincerely hope it will take to heart. They acknowledge the successes of American journalism, but remark, en passant, as it were, "that self-laudation and exaggeration detract from rather than add to the brilliancy of these achievements." These observations have a wider reach than the president gives them. In boasting of themselves and their exploits the journals cannot help

boasting of everything American under the sun, so that in reading their "war articles" we sometimes feel as if we were seated around an Indian council fire listening to Sitting Bull or Hole-in-the-Day telling of his exploits, telling what a "big Injun" he is, what a man for taking scalps and making enemies run.—New York Evening Post.

The Singapore Free Press says that the people of the Philippines, though they are little known, are intelligent to a degree, and are claimed to be in advance of the Japanese and to be quite capable of guiding their own destinies.

Occasional Customer—"Luigi, I want a pair of shoestrings." Street Merchant—"No shoestring! Flagga! Fi' cent. Remember ze Maine!"—Chicago Tribune.

Wife (to her husband)—"I say, my dear, how badly the tailor has put this button on your waistcoat. This is the fifth time I have had to sew it on again."—Tit-Bits.

Who is the infidel? 'Tis he
Who puts a bound on what may be;
Who fears time's upward slope shall
end

On some far summit—and descend;
Who trembles lest the long-borne light,
Far-seen, shall lose itself in night;
Who doubts that life shall rise from
death

When the old order perisheth;
That all God's spaces may be cross't
And not a single soul be lost—
Who doubts all this, who'er he be,
This is the infidel. 'Tis he.
—Sam Walter Foss, in *The Arena*.

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