

The Democratic Sentinel

RENSSELAER, INDIANA.

J. W. McEWEEN, PUBLISHER.

PANAMA CANAL WRECK

ENGULFS MANY GREAT MEN OF FRANCE.

Branches Amounting to Over Sixty Millions—Machinery Valued at \$90,000,000—Rotting—Vegetation Covering the Intended Route—Thousands Starving.

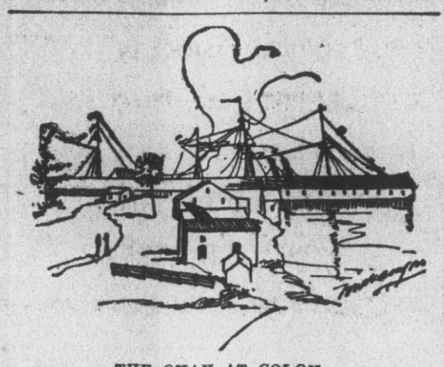
The Crisis in France.

The exposure of the corruption, mismanagement and stealing in Panama canal affairs has aroused the indignation of Frenchmen to a pitch that threatened to overthrow the government and replace republicanism with monarchy. The ministry was hurled from power unceremoniously, and those displaced deem themselves fortunate in escaping with this chastisement.

The scheme to build the isthmus canal called for so much capital that Frenchmen of all classes were appealed to for subscriptions. The

and the most heartless of foes to the thousands who trusted him only to be ruined thereby.

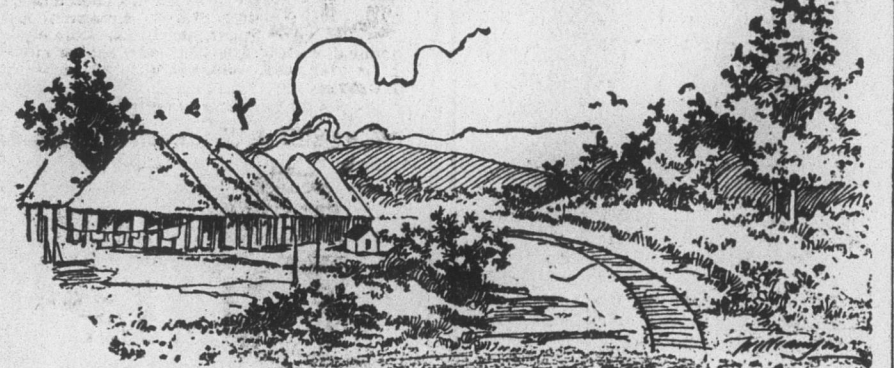
Irretrievable Ruin. Now that the Panama Canal scheme has been proved to have been a gigantic swindle, the parallel of which may not be found in history, an inventory, as it were, of the work done on the canal has been made, and the result is alike astounding, scandalous and profoundly sad. Apart from the financial loss, which is enormous,



THE QUAYS AT COLON.

mous, and the corruption, alike shameful and monumental, there has been frightful loss of life, and even now thousands of misguided laborers are living on the isthmus, a prey to fever and sometimes starvation, hoping that the work will be resumed and that they may earn enough money for support or to take them back to their homes.

France expended 1,300,000,000

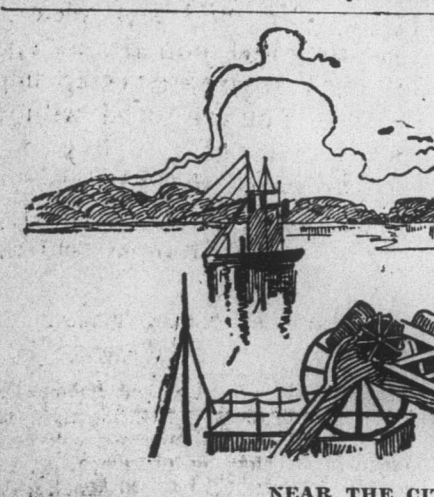


A PANAMA RAILROAD.

small farmers and shopkeepers were enlisted and the response became national in character. The assurance from government officials that the enterprise would pay and that De Lesseps, who built the Suez canal, would repeat on a larger scale his success in uniting the waters of the Atlantic and Pacific in the center of this continent, was a bait that took exceedingly well.

As a consequence, francs by the hundred millions poured into the canal treasury until \$260,000,000, as Americans reckon money, was invested.

To insure this result the Parisian and provincial press were paid \$4,000,000 to advocate the proposition. To make sure of the passage of the bill through the Chamber of Deputies \$10,000,000 was given to the members who influenced legislation to that end. In addition some \$19,000,000 was used in advertising the scheme. In various ways some \$60,000,000 was squandered after this fashion. The balance, \$200,000,000, was spent on the construction of the canal, at least half being wasted by mismanagement. The abandonment of the project was decided only when



DE LESSEPS' RESIDENCE AT COLON.

there was no more money to expend, and this stoppage compelled De Lesseps and those associated with him to acknowledge the canal a failure, with no hope of realizing a farthing for the tens of thousands who had invested the savings of a lifetime in the project.

The report shocked France, while it amazed the multitude who had been kept in ignorance of the progress of the enterprise, precipitated a panic on the Bourse and all Paris went wild over the confusion. In the Chamber of Deputies the Government was scored unmercifully and the Ministry dismissed from power. Baron de Reinach, the leading banker after Rothschild in Paris, who lent his name to the scheme, was so overcome with remorse that he committed suicide. He was worth \$60,000,000, but this did not exempt him from the torture that drove him to self-destruction.

So desperate had popular feeling become that it would have required but little to convert the republic into a monarchy. The only argument that counted against it was that Frenchmen were swindled under the empire about as much as they had been under the republic, and that the meditated change would not have secured the desired end. Consequently the most aggravated part of the crisis has been passed without recourse to such a doubtful measure. Yet Parisians admit that were there a Napoleon to appeal to the empire would be re-established.

De Lesseps, who was once the idol of his nation, is now held in loathing, with none so poor as to do him reverence. The colossal failure of the canal is laid at his door and he is the most despised man in France to-day. The great engineer has been transformed into the greatest of swindlers.

Were it an ordinary, well-behaved river it might be easily managed. But it is a wild, wayward, untamed river, like the people of the country through which it flows. A heavy tropical rain comes, and it rises forty feet in twelve hours. What to do with so much water, for it flows into the canal as well, then becomes a problem that has vexed the best engineers in the world. The difficulty has been obviated partly by an intricate system of dams and locks, but no one can say whether it would have lasted or would have subsided the Chagres in its wildest moments.

The canal, as originally intended, would have been 30 feet deep, from 200 to 250 feet broad at the top, and about 100 feet broad at the bottom. On the Atlantic side are 18 or 20 miles of canal, dredged to a depth of 16 feet by the American Construction and Dredging Company, and there are partial excavations and lines traced by the French all the way to Panama. At Colon, lying in the water, is a huge pile of granolithic blocks, 70,000 in number. They were brought from the West Indies at a total cost of about 8 cents a block. They were intended for banking up the canal, but were dumped off the ships into the water years ago, and have been lying there ever since, a monument to the recklessness and corruption of the Panama scheme.

The eighteen or twenty miles of partially completed canal will soon become nothing but a muddy ditch. The banks are caving in, and every time it rains huge masses of earth are washed into the canal. In a few years the canal, except where cut through the solid rock, will be filled up entirely by these heavy washings, and the vegetation will begin to grow again where the dredging machines tore it away.

Beyond Resurrection. Remaining on the isthmus are many Europeans who still believe that the work will be resumed. But this is extremely improbable. Many calculations have been made as to the amount of money it would require to complete it. None fall under \$200,000,000. Some run as high as \$750,000,000, and a few go so far as to say that the canal could be built at all so that it will return a fair interest on the investment. But there is another difficulty. The concession from Colombia, under which the canal was to be built, expires next February, and even if the concession should be renewed, whence will come the capital needed for the prosecution of the work? The French people will give no more, and the capitalists of other countries are rather shy of Panama.

Thus far only the financial loss has been considered. But there is another question that appeals to humanity. Negro laborers are now on the isthmus a prey to disease. At one time there were 60,000 negroes at Colon. They led a careless, merry life, and saved not one cent from their earnings. When work ceased they were unable to return to their homes, and they are still on the isthmus, less the thousands who have perished. Some have become outlaws, and infest the localities on either side of the canal route.

In a short time the route of the canal will be covered with tropical vegetation, in which wild animals will make their lairs.

Perhaps the greatest refinement in fattening is exhibited in the manner of feeding ortolans. The ortolan is a small bird, esteemed a great delicacy by Italians. It is the fat of this bird which is so delicious; but it has a peculiar habit of feeding, which is opposed to its rapid fattening—that is, that it feeds at the rising of the sun. Yet this peculiarity has not proved an insurmountable obstacle to the Italian gourmards.

The ortolans are placed in a warm chamber, perfectly dark, with only one aperture in the wall. Their food is scattered over the floor of the chamber. At a certain hour in the morning the keeper of the birds places a lantern in the office of the wall; the dim light thrown by the lantern on the floor of the apartment induces the ortolans to believe that the sun is about to rise, and they greedily consume the food upon the floor. More food is now scattered over it, and the lantern is withdrawn.

The ortolans, rather surprised at the shortness of the day, think it their duty to fall asleep, as night has spread his sable mantle round them. During sleep, little of the food being expended in the production of force, most of it goes to the formation of muscle and fat.

After they have been allowed to repose for one or two hours, in order to complete the digestion of the food taken, their keeper again exhibits the lantern through the aperture.

The rising sun a second time illuminates the apartment; and the birds, awaking from their slumber, apply themselves voraciously to the food on the floor, after having been lulled, which, they are again enveloped in darkness. Thus the sun is made to shed its rising rays into the chamber four or five times every day, and as many nights follow its transitory beams.

The ortolans, thus treated, become little balls of fat in a few days.

Dangerous Jumping. It is one thing to jump from a great height into open space such as that of the sea, and it is another thing to jump down one hundred and twenty feet into a well. The feat may be seen performed any day at Delhi in India. So proficient are the men and boys who leap down the distance, both into a tank from the top of a mosque and into a narrow well, that while descending they purposely spawl about in the air and display queer antics; but the moment they reach the water they suddenly straighten out their bodies, and plunge down, arrow-like, with scarcely a splash. A dozen men and boys can be got at any hour to perform this feat for the modest fee of about three pence a leap.

This is Probably a Fable. Of Esop, the "fabulist," it is written that he was a person of extremely luxurious tastes, and that he once had served at a banquet a dish of singing birds at an expense of \$4,000.

Insane Horse. Burlington, N. J., has a horse that has been declared insane.

STARCH AND STARCHING.

The Flemish Woman by Whom they Were Introduced into English.

Troy, the greatest laundry town in the world, will be especially interested, says the Times of that city, in an article on starch written by William Elliot Griffiths and published in the current number of Harper's Bazar. Mr. Griffiths informs us that it was Queen Elizabeth of England who introduced fashions that established the laundry on a permanent basis and created starch factories. She not only enlarged the ruff, multiplied undergarments, increased the lady's inventory and the bride's trousseau, but it was she who began the fashion of the farthingale or crinoline. This wheel-shaped arrangement puffed out the dress like a balloon, and right royal was the rustle of the stiffened skirts as the Queen and her ladies moved about. So great was the demand for starch to stiffen properly the ruffs, collars, cuffs, and crinoline that it seriously affected the price of wheat. Complaints were loud and long that bread was being taken out of the mouths of the people. The potato was then unknown or too much of a novelty. Its virtues and potencies of supply to the laundress and the alleged sugar-maker were then unsuspected. To whom were the English and their doughty Queen indebted for this wonderful addition to the resources of civilization and of personal neatness? It is not their own invention, but the gift of the Low Countries. It came in with the ruffs, which also were imported, to the amazement of the common folk. Elizabeth was unable to monopolize starched ruffs, for presently the gentlewomen of England began to send their daughters and nearest kinswomen to Mrs. Dinghen to learn how to starch. Would the reader know who Mrs. Dinghen was—she who first made English ladies so fine and British housemaids so neat? We bless the memory of Mrs. Dinghen every time we are daintily served in an English home. The daughter of a knight of Flanders and driven out by Spanish oppression, she with her husband found refuge in London. Being probably penniless, she so turned her hand that the pounds soon flowed in. While Mrs. Boonen starched for the Queen, Mrs. Dinghen van den Plasse, as her full name was, taught starching to the ladies. Her price was £5 for teaching how to starch, but £20 for showing "how to starch starch." In a little time she got an estate, being greatly encouraged by gentlemen and ladies. She was "the first to teach starching in those days of impurity," adds the historian, with pathos and appreciation of the previous facts. "Blessings on Mrs. Dinghen van den Plasse!" says Mr. Griffiths. And every Troy laundress responds "Amen!"

HERE'S WISDOM. The following notes on domestic economy are selected from the answers given at a recent examination of girls between twelve and sixteen years of age:

"Cheese is as wholesome as 83 pounds of beef. Beef is a useful article of food, obtained from different animals, such as the cow, sheep, pig, etc.—the lean of beef belongs to the animal kingdom, and the fat to the vegetable kingdom. Butter is good for the brain. Milk is called a model food because it models the form of the child. Without eating potatoes we would become very delicate, because potatoes are very necessary to sustain human life. Stewing is very different from boiling; when we want a nice dinner we stew a roast of beef. Pot-au-feu is mashed-up meat. Cretins are generally served with green-pea soup. If a man lives without food for a considerable time, say sixty days, he will die at the end of a month; or, if the constitution is delicate, he may only live for a week, or less. The body wastes away by the continual working of the bones together, and as this process goes on every day, the bones get thinner and smaller. Carbonaceous foods give the bones the elasticity which they consist.

"Lawn is a soft stuff made from the wool of the lawn, an animal of the America. It is also part of the flesh of the cow or sheep, the rib part. Shoddy is a drink made from a mixture of ale and sugar. It is the leather before it goes through the process of making into boots and shoes, and for this reason is called shoddy. It is the flesh near the foot of any animal. It is a kind of whisky. Winey is the wool off an animal which lives in America; the lamen is its name. Calico is a good heat conductor, because it catches fire very easily. If a print dress is dried outside, it must be careful not to be left in the sun. Calendered means turned from one kind of species into another. It is things which are the shape of a calendar like our bodies. It means preserved with sugar. It means taking the dirt out of water. It means increased or getting heavier. It is a medicine or drug. It is boiling anything by means of steam. It means chewing the food well to make it fit to enter the body.

How the Blacksnake Fights. "You wouldn't believe me," said old Jacob Bloom, of Laurel Run, to a gang of woodsmen the other day, "you wouldn't believe me if I'd tell you the blacksnake is boss among snakes in this country, but it's a fact. A blacksnake will whip any other kind of a snake you can trot out and not half try."

Some of the boys laughed and said they didn't think a blacksnake would be in it with a rattlesnake at all. There was a large rattlesnake in the camp which the woodsmen kept in a box with a glass cover on to amuse themselves with after working hours. Jim Brewer, of this place, who happened to be there at the time and heard Mr. Bloom's observations, chipped in and said:

"I'll bet a blacksnake would not last long if you'd put him in the box with that rattler."

"Wouldn't!" exclaimed Bloom. "Why, he'd choke the rattler to death before he'd knowed what happened to him, an' in' out to convince you of the fact I'll go out an' capture a blacksnake and show you."

The subject was then dropped and the boys forgot it, but about 4 o'clock

A PERPETUAL CALENDAR.

It Can Be Easily Made and Makes a Pretty Gift for a Friend.

A calendar of this kind will make a pretty gift for a friend, and to one whose fingers can readily handle the brush and paint in delicate colors the task of making it will be both simple and pleasant. Upon an oblong section of white celluloid are painted a spray of yellow chrysanthemums and a butterfly, and to the sections are attached three strips of wide, yellow satin ribbon of equal lengths, the ends being pointed and tipped with yellow tassels. Upon the shortest strip are painted in white the days of the week, abbreviated. The mid-strip, which is the longest, shows the dates; and upon the third strip are painted the names of the months, also in white and abbreviated. A pany made of silk, selected in tints to correspond with those of the flowers and stiffened with crinoline, is adjusted over each strip, so that it may be slipped up or down to mark the day, date or month, thus making the calendar a perpetual one.

CHINESE DRUMMERS IN WIGS. Almost-Eyed California Merchants Doing Without High-Priced White Labor. The Chinese have discovered another way of competing with white men. For years the merchants in Chinatown, particularly those manufacturing cigars and clothing, have employed white men at large salaries to drum up interior trade. The merchant, realizing the strong feeling against his countrymen, knew that it would be hard for him to do business personally with white merchants. Many of the interior merchants, while they were ready to patronize the Chinese firms, did not like the fact known, and when a Chinaman dressed in his national costume called upon him he was inclined to avoid being seen with him. With the white drummer, however, the San Francisco Call says, it was different. The latter could register at any of the hotels, and after selling a man a bill of goods, could invite the customer to drink or take dinner with him, an invitation none would accept from a Chinaman.

A few months ago, however, the Chinese merchants began to discharge their high-salaried white drummers and travel on the road themselves, or filled the vacancies with their own countrymen. Little Pete, of jury-oribery fame, who is a heavy producer in Chinatown, was one of the first to inaugurate the new custom. He fitted a Chinese employe out in American clothes, furnished him with a well-fitted wig and sent him out on the road. The venture was a success, and Little Pete soon found his business progressing as well as when he employed the white drummer.

In his American dress the general appearance of the Chinaman, which is so objectionable to the whites, was almost hidden. In this attire, and with no queue visible, the interior hotel-keeper made no objection to him, and he was therefore allowed to extend the same business courtesies to the white customers as the white drummers.

Other Chinese firms soon adopted the new custom and now there are nearly fifty disguised Chinamen traveling up and down this State as drummers. The presence of numerous Chinamen wearing wigs and American clothes has been noticed lately in this city, but few could explain a reason for it.

Miles. The measurement, in English yards, of the different lengths of a mile in several countries is as follows: Arabian mile, 2,148; Austrian mile, 8,296; Bohemian mile, 10,137; Brabant mile, 6,082; Burgundian mile, 6,183; Danish mile, 8,244; Dutch mile, 6,395; English mile, 1,760; English mile, geographical, 2,025; English mile, nautical, 6,080; Flemish mile, 6,889; German mile, long, 10,126; German mile, short, 6,859; German mile, geographical, 8,100; Hamburg mile, 8,244; Hanoverian mile, 11,559; Hessian mile, 10,547; Hungarian mile, 9,113; Irish mile, ancient, 2,240; Italian mile, 2,025; Lithuanian mile, 9,780; Oldenburgh mile, 10,820; Persian mile, 6,086; Polish mile, long, 8,100; Polish mile, short, 6,071; Prussian mile, 8,237; Roman mile, 1,628; Russian, verst, 1,165; Saxon mile, 9,904; Scotch mile, ancient, 1,984; Spanish mile, 4,635; Swedish mile, 11,700; Swiss mile, 9,153; Tuscan mile, 1,808; United States mile, 1,760.

Sleep Daytimes, Probably. The buffaloes in Sumatra, according to an English traveler, in fear of their enemy, the tiger, take refuge at night in the rivers, where they rest in peace and comfort with only their horns and noses sticking above the water.

Safer to Travel than Not. According to the statistics of the Interstate Commerce Commission a railway passenger stands one chance in 10,823,153 to be killed while traveling.

Marriage. The marriage ceremony practiced by the people of Borneo is said to be very short and simple. Bride and groom are brought out before the assembled crowd with great solemnity and seated side by side. A hotel nut is then cut in two by the medicine woman of the tribe, and one-half is given to the groom. They begin to chew the nut, and then the old woman, after some sort of incantation, knocks their heads together and they are declared man and wife.

HUMOR OF THE WEEK.

STORIES TOLD BY FUNNY MEN OF THE PRESS.

Many Odd, Curious, and Laughable Phases of Human Nature Graphically Portrayed by Eminent Word Artists of Our Own Day.

A FITTING tribute—the check for the tailor.—Washington Star.

A BALKY horse is not worth its wait in anything.—Troy Press.

JIG-DANCING music is the kind that reaches the sole.—Yonkers Statesman.

A GIRL gives her lover a mitten, we suppose, because a pair is 'out of the question'.—Binghamton Leader.

THE best idea of a Sabbath day's journey is obtained when one tries to run through a Sunday newspaper.—Lowell Courier.

"WELL," said the impatient street-car conductor to the corpulent party trying to catch the car, "come ahead or else go afoot".—Lampoon.

SHE—And so you broke every one of the good resolutions you made a year ago? He—Yes, but I can make more just as good next month.

LITTLE DOT—Sister gave me her brass ring. Little Dick—How do you know it's brass? Little Dot—"Cause she gave it to me.—Good News.

Mrs. McCANTY—An' ye've raised quite a big family, Mrs. Murphy? Mrs. Murphy (with pride)—Seven polacemins, Mrs. McCanty.—Tid-Bits.

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