

The Democratic Sentinel

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PANAMA CANAL WRECK

ENCULPS MANY GREAT MEN OF FRANCE.

Braves Thefts 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 pitch that threatened to overthrow the government and replace republicanism with monarchy. The ministry was hurled from power unceremoniously, and those displaced deemed themselves

PRESIDENT CARROUSSES 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 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 grandolithic 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 be 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 are.

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 subdued the Chagres in its wildest moments.

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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 cannot be built at all

so that it will return a fair interest

on the investment. But there is another difficulty. The concession 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.

Ortolans.

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 peculiarity of habit of feeding, which is opposed to its rapid fattening—that is, that it feeds only at the rising of the sun. Yet this peculiarity has not

proved an insurmountable obstacle to

the Italian gourmets.

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 lan-

tern in the orifice 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 its 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 discussed 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

the Chagres River. 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

swallow about in the air and display

queer antics; but the moment they

near 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.

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 blacksnake 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, chip-

ped 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.

Of Aesop, the "fabulist," it is written

that he was a person of extremely

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