

GREAT DANGER LINE

Central America and Lesser Antilles
Full of Volcanoes.

Gigantic Craters Along the Line of
the Proposed Nicaragua Canal
—Once Fiery Now Are Emerald
Gems.

[Special Costa Rica Letter.]

FROM where the eighty-second degree of west longitude touches the Pacific coast of Colombia, 2,300 miles due south from the city of Cleveland, draw a line straight north-westward 2,500 miles to where the twenty-fifth degree of north latitude crosses the Pacific shore of Mexico, 2,200 miles from New York city, and count the once fiery, now emerald, gems, which jewel that belt.

Near the beginning of that line is Mont Blanco. Its head rises 9,560 feet above the Caribbean sea, which seems to one who looks down from its crest to be scarcely more than a stone-throw away. A mere step, say 15 or 20 miles farther, along our line another mountain lifts its head a hundred feet higher than that of Blanco. Then come many mountains of little less height, before Turrialba rises, a majestic sentinel at the southern extremity of that broad and fertile plain which stretches 325 miles to the northern shore of Honduras, and forms the larger part of three republics.

Across this plain flows the Rio San Juan, draining northeastern Costa Rica and all the basins of the great lakes of Nicaragua. It is along this river and through the larger of the two lakes that the proposed ship canal would be made, should that route be accepted by the United States.

Turrialba is 11,000 feet in height, and standing shoulder to shoulder with it is Irazu, 11,480 feet high. At its foot sits the beautiful city of San Jose, clean and provided with electric lights, tram cars and telephone and telegraph lines, ice plants and water supply, hotels and cafes, blooming parks and a magnificent theater, with other conveniences, comforts and luxuries. A thousand feet higher, on the flank of Irazu, is the solid old city of Cartago, long the capital of the republic. If Irazu should burst its bounds, as did

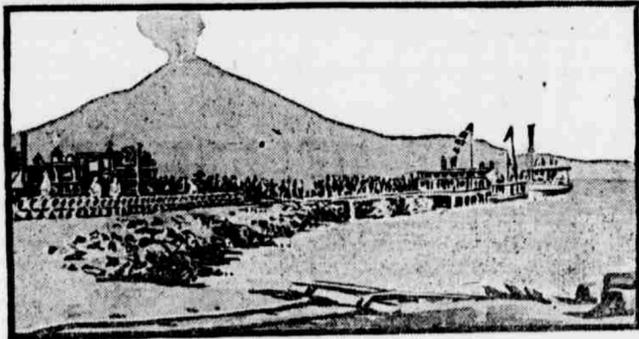
cific, and plainly seen from both, is La Loma del Tigre; but it is insignificant in size—only 1,030 feet in height—compared with the immense, symmetrical bulk of the smoking giant, bearing its white banner 5,700 feet above the lake which laps three sides of its base.

History says that in days before Columbus a large town was on the shore where now a small village is at the edge of the lake. But the mountain labored, and brought forth such evident signs of distress or of rage that the people fled, with goods and household gods, to where Leon now stands, none too securely, in the broad val-



CATHEDRAL AT MANAGUA.
(Famous Central American Church
Cracked by Earthquake.)

ley, not so far away that the bulk of the huge smoker cannot be plainly seen from the streets. They might have gone much farther and still have kept in sight their one-time idol; for one may stand on the crest of Cerro de Hule, in Honduras, and look across a valley 18 miles to Tegucigalpa, the capital city, gleaming white in the afternoon sun; then turn his back to the city and see in Salvador, a little west of south, and 75 miles distant, the smoke rising from San Miguel. Then almost due south he will see Coseguina, full 85 miles away; and 120 miles to the south-southeast he can see the steam rising from the crest of Momotombo.



GENERAL VIEW OF MOMOTOMBO, A FAMOUS FIRE SPITTER.

Pelee and La Soufriere, the destruction of life would appal the world.

Within sight of the 32,000 people who dwell in San Jose are the peaks of the volcanoes of Barba, 9,290 feet, and of Poas, 8,680 feet in altitude. Poas carries in its crater a little lake, such as was in Pelee until, perhaps, some seam in the rock opened to let the water to the fires raging beneath, and thus in an instant made of a pretty and peaceful pond the means of the most awful destruction man has known since the fatal day of Atlantis.

Tenorio and Miravalles, La Vieja and Orosil are near the line, before it touches Lake Nicaragua. There it passes close to the volcanic island of Solentiname, near the head of the Rio San Juan and the line of the proposed canal; passes through the volcano of Madera and the perfect cone of the volcano of Ometepe, then through El Zapatero and that vast ruin which, in a sudden rage, hurled its entire roof nearly or quite ten miles, to fall in fragments and make in the lake a reef of islets, some of which afford farms for those who dwell in contentment on those proofs of the power of the most prodigious and destructive force this world has known.

Following the line one sees to the left the south wall of another volcano, a vast low crater, burnt, desolate, lying south of the ancient Indian town of Masaya, which dreams away its hot and dusty days at the edge of another crater, in which is a lake of pure water some 200 feet below the level of the town. A dozen miles westward is the capital city of Managua, nestling like a hen in a hot and dusty roadway, at the edge of Lake Managua, and at the foot of the tiny volcano of Tiscapa. Behind the wall of the crater, only 200 or 300 feet high, is a deep pool of strongly alkaline waters, in which the dirty linen of the town is washed.

The steamer which carries one from Managua to Momotombo, 30 miles along our line, skirts the point of Chiltepe, which has in its crater a lake of sweet, cool water. Rounding the point one has in full view the cone of the great Momotombo, its snowy plume forever streaming far out over the perfect curve of its southwestern slope. Between the lake and the Pa-

strung closely along the line are a score or more of dead little volcanoes, Telica, Viejo and Corcovado, pushing their shoulders high above the others. Then comes Coseguina, standing on or forming the promontory which in part shuts in the great bay of Fonseca. Coseguina has been a most quiet mountain ever since, in 1836, it burst and startled by its noise even the City of Mexico, nearly a thousand miles away. Through three days the hammering of its explosions terrified four republics, and in that time the volcano covered three republics with a pall of ashes that, over much of Honduras at least, was inches in depth.

It would be tedious, and useless, to attempt to count all the volcanoes which dot the line between Coseguina in Nicaragua and Colima in Mexico, for they are too many, and the once savagely fiery hearts of most of them are dead and cold. But from Colima, now threatening violence, eastward to the shore of the bay of Campeche is a short arm of the mighty Andean cross, the only east and west range of volcanoes in all America. In that arm are set seven great volcanoes, the grandest being Popocatepetl, 17,300 feet in altitude.

Of especial interest just now is that part of the great American volcanic system which lies in the sunken valley in which are the lakes of Nicaragua and their outlet, for there is the line along which will be the Nicaragua ship canal, if it shall be made. Within the last century a dozen of those volcanoes have belched lava and steam and dust, and earthquakes have been of almost monthly occurrence.

Little injury has been done by earthquakes in that region. It is true that Leon, in Nicaragua, has been badly shaken several times; and no longer than two years ago the massive ornaments were tumbled from the towers of her churches, and wide gaps were opened in their walls, as like seams were opened in those of the queer, black sandstone church of Managua, 40 miles' distant.
PAUL BITE.

ARE HARD DRINKERS

Many Congressmen Indulge Too
Freely in Wet Goods.

Total Abstainers Are Few and Far
Between—Interesting Talk with
an Old Washington Hotel
Clerk.

[Special Washington Letter.]

"THAT man is one of our most valuable guests, although he only pays \$40 per month," said a hotel clerk, pointing to one of the older members of the house of representatives. Continuing he said:

"The proprietor was very angry with me when I told him the low rate I had made, and insisted that I should change it to \$75 per month. I told him that I knew my business as a room clerk better than he did. That man spends upwards of \$100 each month at our bar, buying drinks for himself and for his friends.

"He is a strange sort of man, and I knew exactly how to take him when he came asking for rates last November. I had entertained him at another hotel. He is stingy about his room and board, and stingy about his clothing, always having a cheap tailor or buying ready-made clothes but he is a spendthrift when it comes to gratifying his appetite for whisky. Moreover, he wants jolly drinking fellows around him, and he treats the crowds, no matter how big they may be." Then, swelling himself with pride and conceit, the clerk said:

"There are very few hotel clerks who have the sense to think of the bar room and billiard room in making rates for their guests. I'd rather take in a drinking man at a low rate, than a temperance man at a high rate. There is more profit in liquor than in food and hence it's better for the house to have guests of that sort. The boss realizes that now, and he lets me make rates to suit myself for the guests, because I know all of the congressmen, and nearly all other public men, and I know their appetites."

The member of congress who has the distinction of being pointed out as a statesman who spends money enough for whisky every month to support a small family in luxury has been sent to the national house of representatives again and again by his constituents, until he is now regarded as one of the foremost men of his party, and his whisky-soaked brain has had much to do with the legislation of this republic.

The speaker of the house of representatives wields more power, in some respects, than any other man in our republic. And yet the writer has seldom seen that power conferred upon any man whose brain is entirely and absolutely free from alcoholic contamination. The growth of the temperance spirit in our land will continue until public sentiment will make ineligible to high office any man whose thinking machinery is made abnormal by alcohol.

For a little more than a quarter of a century the writer has watched national legislation, and in all of that time there has been but one chairman of the committee on ways and means who was absolutely free from



"SIZED UP" BY THE CLERK.

alcoholic influence, and that was Nelson Dingley, of Maine. And yet the chairman of that committee is the man upon whom primarily depends all legislation concerning the raising of revenue for the expenses of our great and growing government. Speaking out of experience, and out of the recollections of those who have been here for half a century, it may be added that Nelson Dingley was the only absolutely non-alcoholic chairman during half of the years of the existence of our government.

Of course it would not be right for the reader to infer that all the other chairmen were drunkards. On the contrary, only one of them was given to excessive use of liquor. But all of the others used liquor to some degree. One of them, a man in whom the people had great confidence and for whom they developed great affection, never took anything stronger

than wine, and very little of that. So, while it would not be right for one to infer that they were all drunkards or extremists, it is true that all of them have at times been somewhat influenced by at least a trace of alcohol.

There are causes for all effects, here is a reason for the use of whisky by statesmen, although there is no necessity for it. One of the causes of this condition rests with the people. They send to congress the same men too many times. After four or five years of public service the representatives begin to think that they have life mortgages on their positions. They first become indifferent, and then independent. After awhile they form groups of favored sons. They pat each other



HAVING A HIGH OLD TIME.

on the back, and walk to the bar together. The man from Massachusetts meets the man from California, and they regard each other as special favorites and great men of their sections. Mutual admiration societies are formed. Then they join or establish clubs. Thus they have meeting places for all-night drinking bouts, playing cards for money like professional gamblers, and repeating the performances Sundays, when all other places are closed by law.

Now that it is time for the people to choose their candidates for congress it might be well for them to inquire concerning the moral lives of their representatives. Good and upright men ought to be kept in congress as long as they live, because the longer they remain the more capable they become. But the great and good men are very few. The immoral are many. They should be weeded out.

Taste of power increases appetite for position. Members of the house of representatives all aspire to the senate. Therein the people make many mistakes, by sending representatives to the senate after they have been sent to Washington long enough to contract luxurious habits, as well as acquaintance with the leading lobbyists for trusts and corporations. Rotation in office is a good thing. Men who hold office long become shamefully indifferent to the rights of their people.

The personnel of the senate should be changed oftener. One term of six years is enough for an ordinary statesman. They who are elected for two successive terms, making a total of 12 years, are too far removed from the plain people. Of course, it may be said of them, as it has been said of the representatives, the exceptionally able and good men ought to be kept in position as long as they live, but the people should be very sure that their public servants are wholly worthy before bestowing upon them such honors.

What is said of the house of representatives may also be said of the senate. There is not a member of that body who is reputed to be a total abstainer. Nor is there a member there who has the reputation of being a lost victim of the demon of the still. So far as temperance is concerned the senate has greatly improved during the past 20 years.

The hotels here are run during the sessions of the congress for the purpose of making as much money as possible, just as seaside and mountain resorts are managed during the summer season, and high prices are charged—exorbitant prices. But the better the spender at the bar, the better the prices for room and board.

The man who was pointed out as one who spends upwards of \$100 per month at the bar is not lonely. There are others. Every hotel has its coterie of liberal statesmen who drink or buy that amount every month. To give their names would shock the communities at their homes, where they lead exemplary lives. But it must be remembered that, as the whole country improves, the representatives of the people improve. We are going forward instead of backward, after all.
SMITH D. FRY.

Of Course It Was.

Yeast—I was in a book store this morning, and saw a copy of a book called "A Girl's Birthday," just published.

Crimsonbeak—I suppose it was marked down?—Yonkers Statesman.

MAKING A FARM BRIDGE.

The Structure Here Described Has
Withstood the Freshets of Two
Rainy Springs.

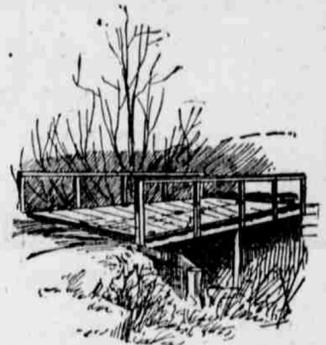
We have recently built a new bridge across the creek on our farm. This creek is the center of a wide ravine-pasture, and the peach orchards are on the high ground on the farther side. A good bridge is therefore a necessity to us. The difficulty, however, has been to get a bridge which would not be exorbitant in cost and yet which would be capable of withstanding the spring freshets. The entire creek bottom-land is often overflowed, and ordinary bridges are quickly undermined or else they float away onto some other fellow's land. But I think the problem is now solved.

As stone is scarce in our part of the country (and as we are not millionaires) a wooden bridge was the only thing to consider. The span of the creek-bed proper is about 16 feet, and the bill for the material footed up as follows:

| | |
|----------------------------------|------|
| Three 6x6x18 pine stringers..... | 3 00 |
| Plank rail (2x4's), nails..... | 7 75 |
| Paint..... | 45 |
| Labor..... | 2 25 |
| Eleven cedar posts..... | 1 10 |

Total.....\$14 25
The first thing done was to sharpen and drive three cedar posts on each side of the creek-bed, and three in the center of the bed. (I have placed black dots on the accompanying cut, showing the location of these posts.) Next, using some old planking from a former bridge, the outer side of each approach was planked up vertically from the creek-bed to the top of the posts. Then the short spaces between bank and abutment were filled in with old logs, rubbish, sod and dirt—making a nicely graded, inclined approach on each side of the creek. The inclined approaches were necessary because we desired to have the bridge floor as high as would be conveniently possible, so as to have it above the height of the ordinary spring overflow.

Next, the stringers were put on and firmly nailed to each abutment and to the central supports. We tried in



DURABLE FARM BRIDGE.

every way possible to anchor the bridge so securely that it would "stay put." To prevent the undermining and washing away of the dirt approaches, two protecting "wings" were added at an angle on the up-stream side. These wings were planked up vertically, and held in place by two extra cedar posts and by masses of sod filled in behind.

The planking for the floor was then spiked into place—leaving a narrow space between each two planks for the purpose of drainage after rains. In laying this plank the overlap was all put on one side, putting down the other side straight (by line) so as to necessitate the sawing off of but one edge. Sawing off 18 feet of plank ends is no fun, as I can testify, and if we hadn't laid one edge straight there would have been 36 feet of trimming to do.

Surfaced 2x4's made the railing along each edge, and, although this railing may not be absolutely necessary to a farm bridge, it makes it safer and certainly adds a great deal to the appearance. The rails and supports are painted white, and the finished structure has a neat, "comfortable" look which is entirely satisfactory to the builders.

The last thing done was to spike to the bridge floor on each side, an incline-plank to help smooth the approach. We can't afford to bump fruit needlessly when hauling it across our own bridge. This bridge has now withstood the freshets of two spring seasons. It is still secure and in working order.—Walter E. Andrews, in Ohio Farmer.

TIMELY DAIRY NOTES.

The udder and its possibilities are born with the cow.

The milk can only be influenced through the blood.

Souring milk does not add to its cream-rising possibilities.

A dairyman must be a business man as well as a producer.

Souring cream does not particularly affect the flavor of the butter.

True cream rising consists in keeping the milk as sweet and fluid as possible.

Nice fluidity, so that the cream pours evenly and smoothly, is the test of right condition in churning.

Cream, if too thick, should be thinned out before the churn starts.

—Indianapolis Journal.