

The canal across the plain of Leon could be very easily constructed, the greatest elevation in the way being less than 100 feet tall. The latter is the plan proposed by Louis Napoleon in 1847. The first mentioned, however, is regarded as the most heroic method, and seems likely to produce the best results, because when once completed there are not so many uncertain elements to deal with.

Lake Nicaragua constitutes a very large reservoir, thus making a sure water supply for the canal leading from it and one that is easily controlled. It is 110 miles long and about thirty-five miles broad, and of an average depth of ten fathoms. The animal life within the lake presents some curious features, as there is free access to it from the ocean, and among the specimens that seem somewhat out of their element are sharks that frequently ascend the San Juan river to the lake, and it is even said that a considerable number of the man-eaters make their home in the fresh water of the lake. On every side of the unsalted sea there is a dense growth of valuable timber that would be an acquisition to the ship-building interests to the southward. But little is known of the industrial resources of that region, though it may be judged from all the indications patent to the superficial observer that the country possesses natural richness that would well pay for development. Nicaragua is a land of antiquities. The ruined churches and cathedrals erected by the Spaniards when they held sway recall the strained glory of that time, but the remains of massive idols and of architectural piles rivaling in majesty those remarkable achievements that mark the valley of the Lower Nile are scattered over the land and make most fascinating studies for the student of antiquities. The natural scenery of the country is most beautiful. Vegetation is of tropical luxuriance, and the surface characteristics of the land are such as to afford a great variety of interesting features. Huge volcanic cones thrust their apexes into the sky from bases covered with dense forests of tropical timber. There are valleys and plains where agriculture is carried on in an unthorough way, but which seem to offer inducements for better cultivation. In spite of the country's apparent age, modern civilization has only got a foothold, but there seems to be no good reason why it should not rapidly advance.

The total population of the state of Nicaragua is about 400,000, a very small portion of which is white. Probably more than one-half of the inhabitants are pure Indians, and there is a considerable number of mixed blood. The city of Leon is the largest in the country, having some 30,000 inhabitants. On the fertile plain about that town are many American settlers engaged in farming and stock-raising. The city of Masaya ranks next in importance with a population

of about 14,000. Then come Granada with 12,000 people, and Managua, the generally recognized capital, with 10,000. Rivas, the old capital, is now a town of 8,000 inhabitants, but it is on the line of the proposed ship canal, the construction of which will restore its old time importance. These cities are in the region that would be traversed by the routes mentioned above, all but Rivas, however, being on the route proposed by Napoleon, and which is not likely to be adopted because nearly twice as long as the other, about 300 miles.

The climate of Nicaragua is not really so unhealthy as many suppose. The mortality rate is high, but the irregular life led by the people is more responsible for this than the climate. Moderation in eating and drinking, abstention from the use of intoxicating liquors and reasonable care as to bathing and exposure insures as good health as is ordinarily enjoyed elsewhere, unless one has ailments that suffer aggravation in a warm, moist climate. The lives of most of the people are marked by diurnal indolence and nocturnal festivities, and liquor is freely indulged in. A night's debauch frequently ends fatally, and as such carousals are common the mortality bills are charged with deaths that might have been prevented by the exercise of ordinary care. There is quite an American colony in Leon. Rivas is being filled with Americans. In those places the climate is accounted more healthful, but decent living is probably the cause of the difference. The Atlantic coast is much warmer than the Pacific.

The Pacific coast is greatly interested in the matter of getting an inter-oceanic canal across the isthmus. On the great staples of the northwest, grain and lumber, a direct advance in price would be experienced by shortening the route to Europe and making it practicable to reach the markets of the eastern states by water without doubling Cape Horn. It would facilitate trade with our southern neighbors and encourage the development of a rich country. The progress of the scheme will be watched with solicitude.

Contract has been let for the mineral palace at Pueblo, Colorado. It will be one of the largest and handsomest buildings in the west, and will cost \$250,000. The Egyptian style of architecture will be followed. The object of this building is to maintain within it a permanent exhibit of the minerals of the state, collected from its mines, as well as minerals from every portion of the world. When the collection is ready for exhibition its intrinsic value will be enormous. In the nature of things the collection will never be completed, as additions will no doubt constantly be made, even if the palace be maintained as proposed for centuries.