



### CHAPTER I.

Below, a great broad stretch of ocean, calm as death, shimmering placidly beneath the sun's hot rays; above, a sky of palest azure, flecked here and there by dainty masses of soft, fleecy clouds; and far inland, a background of high hills, clothed with a tender foliage, a very baby leafdom, just bursting into the fuller life.

Toward the west the trees give way a little, letting a road be seen, that like a straight pale ribbon runs between the greenery for the space of quite a mile or so, and then reaches the small fishing village where the simple folk of Glowing Destley toil from one year's end to the other, some in careless joy, some in ceaseless labor, some, alas! in cruel weeping, because of those "who will never come back to the town."

Along the white road, that gleams threatenly in the burning sunshine of this hot midday in June, a carriage is crawling with quite an aggravating slowness—an antiquated vehicle of a type now almost unknown, but which once beyond doubt "cost money." The carriage, being an open one, enables the people as it passes through the village to see without undue trouble that the occupants of it are two girls; both very young, both singularly alike, though in distinctly different styles.

"It is charming!" says the younger girl, with a little quick motion of the hand toward the sweeping bay, and the awakening trees, and the other glories of the landscape. "All charming, far better than I ever dared hope for; and yet my mind misgives me, Vera."

She turns a brilliant glance on her sister, full of terrible insinuations, and then laughs a little. Thus animated, she is a very pretty girl, half child, half woman, as fresh as the morning, and with eyes like stars. She lifts one slender black-gloved hand, and placing it beneath her sister's chin, turns her face gently to her.

"Such a beautiful face! Very like the riant one beside it, yet unlike it, too. There is a touch of sadness round the lovely lips, a mournful curve; indeed, a thoughtfulness too great for her years is stamped on every feature. A tender, loving, yet strong soul shines through the earnest eyes, and while she smiles it is reluctantly, as if smiles all her life had been forbidden to her."

"Oh! that reminds me," said Miss Dysart. "I quite forgot to tell you of it, but the day before we left Nice, Nell Stewart said that this cousin you speak of, if he does exist at all, at all events does not do it here."

"Which means?"

"That either he won't, or can't, live with his father. Can't, Nell rather led me to believe."

"Can't it be, you may be sure," says the younger girl, restlessly. "Fancy a father whose son can't live with him! And yet, after all, virtuous astonishment on that score is rather out of place with us. I can imagine just such a father."

"Well, never mind that," says Miss Dysart, hastily.

"Very good; let us then go from here to uncle," says her sister with a little shrug. "Do you think we shall gain much by the change? This old relative of ours is, perhaps, as delightful as we could wish him, and yet I wish father had not left us to his tender mercies."

"Do not dwell on that," says Vera, with nervous haste. "Do not seek for faults in the inevitable. He is all that is left us. You know the sudden decision arose out of a letter received by father from Uncle Gregory about a year ago. When father was—was—dying—"

She pauses abruptly, and a tremor shakes her last words.

The younger girl turns quickly to look at her. There is infinite love and compassion in her glance, but perhaps a little contempt, and certainly a little impatience.

"Do you know," she says, "it may seem heartless—positively coarse, if you will—but I do not think our father was a man to excite respect, much less love or regret, or—"

"Oh! it is better not to speak like that," interrupts Miss Dysart, in a low, shocked tone. "Don't do it, darling. I know what you mean, but—"

"And I know that I shall never forgive or forget the life he led you," says Griselda, with a certain angry excitement.

"Well, that is over!" says Miss Dysart, with a quick sigh, heavily indrawn.

"What was this vendetta, this terrible lifelong quarrel that was kept up between him and father with such monotonous persistency?"

"That had to do with our grandfather's will. Papa was the eldest son, yet the property was left to Uncle Gregory; and that for no reason at all. Naturally, papa was very angry about it, and accused Gregory of using undue influence."

"Just as, and of course, there is a good deal behind that you don't know. There always is; nobody ever tells quite everything. And besides—Oh! Oh! Vera! Oh! what has happened?"

Griselda clutches in an agonized fashion at the leather side of the crazy old chariot, which has toppled over to the left side and stands in a decidedly disquieted position. The ancient driver, presumably asleep, had let the horses wander at their own sweet will, and they being old and sleepy, too, the result was that they had dragged two of the wheels up on a steep bank and nearly capsized the carriage.

"Oh, thank you," says Miss Dysart, leaning forward and addressing with earnest glance and heightened color the young man who had risen—descended, perhaps, sounds pleasanter and more orthodox—like a good angel from somewhere—the wood on their right, no doubt. A fishing rod, lying on the road where he had flung it when preparing for his ignoble battle with those poor old horses, proclaims the fact that he has been whipping the stream that gleams here and there brilliantly through the interstices of the trees.

"Oh, no," says he, lifting his hat, "you mustn't thank me. It was really nothing. Poor brutes, I think they were asleep; they— It is hot, isn't it?" This last he says hastily, as if ashamed of his animal-mention on the age of the sorry cattle in question—their horses, no doubt; and there is something wonderfully charming in the faint apologetic color that springs into his cheeks. As he finishes speaking he looks at Griselda so hard that she feels it incumbent on her to return his glance and to say something.

"We thought our last hour had come," she says, laughing softly, and looking at him a little shyly, but so prettily. "But for you, one cannot say where we should be now."

She bows to him, and so does her sister quite as graciously, and then the horses once more commence their snail-like progress, grinding through the dusty

road at the rate of three miles an hour. The little episode is over; the young man settles his soft hat more firmly on his head, picks up his rod, regards it anxiously to see that no harm has come to it, and disappears once more into the shelter of the cool wood.

Half an hour later they are at the entrance gate of Greycourt, and practically at their journey's end. Both girls, with an involuntary movement, crane their necks out of the carriage to get a first glimpse at their future home, and then turn a dismayed glance on each other. Anything more dreary, more unfriendly, yet withal grand in its desolation, could hardly be seen.

"How dark it is," says Griselda, a nervous thrill running through her, as they move onward beneath the shade of the mighty trees that clasp their arms between her and the glorious sky—thus blotting it out.

A sudden turn brings them within view of the house. A beautiful old house apparently, of red brick, toned by age to a duller shade, with many gables, and overgrown in parts by trailing ivy, and the leaves of which now glister brightly in the evening sunshine.

The coachman, scrambling to the ground, bids them in a surly tone to alight. He is tired and cross, no doubt, by the unusual work of the day. And presently they find themselves on the threshold of the open hall door, hardly knowing what to do next. The shuffling figure of a man about seventy, appeared presently from some dusky doorway, he wears a dark coat, a white cravat, and, shutting the door again behind him with a sharp haste, leaves them alone with their new relative, Gregory Dysart.

Vera, going quickly forward, moves toward an armchair at the upper end of the room in which a figure is seated. She sees an old man, shrunken, careworn, with a face that is positively ghastly, because of its excessive pallor; a living corpse, save for two eyes that burn and gleam and glitter with an almost devilish brilliancy.

"So you've come," he says, without making any attempt to rise from his chair. "Shut that door, will you? What a vile draught! And don't stand staring like that, it makes me nervous."

His voice is cold, clear, freezing. It seems to pierce the girl standing before him as if a breath of icy air had suddenly fallen into the hot and stifling room.

"Vera, I presume," says Mr. Dysart, holding out his little white hand to permit her to press it. "And you are Griselda? I need not ask what lunatic chose your names, as I was well acquainted with your mother many years ago."

"I feel that I must thank you at once, Uncle Gregory, for your kindness to us," says Miss Dysart, gravely, still standing.

"Ay, ay. You acknowledge that," says he, quickly. "I have been your best friend, after all, eh?"

"You have given us a home," continues Miss Dysart, in tones that tremble a little. "But for you—"

"Yes, yes—no one," he thrusts out his old miserly face as if astringent further words. "But for me you would both have been cast upon the world's highway, to live or die as chance dictated. To me, to me you are indebted for everything. You owe me much. Each day you live you shall owe me more. I have befriended you; I have been the means of saving you from starvation."

If so corpse-like a face could show signs of excitement it shows it now, as he seeks to prove by word and gesture that he is his benefactor to an unlimited extent. The hateful emotion he betrays raises in Griselda's breast feelings of repugnance and disgust.

"I have consented to adopt you," he goes on presently, his cold voice now cutting like a knife. "But do not expect much from me. It is well to come to a proper understanding at the start, and so save future argument. Honesty has made me poor. You have been, I hear, accustomed to lead a useless, luxurious existence. Your father all his life kept up a most extravagant menage, and, dying, left you no money. He must have done the last cruel wrong."

Griselda starts to her feet. "The honesty of which you boast is not everything," she says, in a burning tone. "Let me remind you that courtesy, too, has its claims upon you."

"Hah! The word courtesy is unpleasing, it seems," says he, unmoved. "Before we quit this point, however, one last word. You are beneath my roof; I shall expect you to conform to my rules. I see no one, I permit no one to enter my doors save my son. I will not have people spying out the nakedness of the land, and speculating over what they are pleased to call my eccentricities. They will have me rich, but I am poor, poor, I tell you. Always remember that."

Griselda's features having settled themselves into a rather alarming expression, Miss Dysart hurriedly breaks into the conversation.

"If you will permit us," she says, faintly, "we should like to go to our rooms, to rest a little. It has been a long journey."

Her uncle turns and touches the bell near him, and immediately, so immediately as to suggest the idea that she has been applying her ear to the keyhole, a woman enters.

"You are singularly prompt," he says, with a lowering glance and a sneer. "This is Mrs. Grunch," turning to Vera, "my housekeeper. She will see to your wants. Grunch, take these young ladies away. My nerves," with a shudder, "are all unstrung to the last notch."

Thus unceremoniously dismissed, Miss Dysart follows the housekeeper from the room, Griselda having preceded her. Through the huge dark hall and up the wide, moldy staircase they follow their guide, noting as they do so the decay that marks everything around.

She flings wide a door for the girls to enter, and then abruptly departs without offering them word or glance. They are thankful to be thus left alone, and involuntarily stand still and gaze at each other. Vera is very pale, and her breath is coming rather fitfully from between her parted lips.

"He looks dying," she says, at last, speaking with a heavy sigh, and going nearer to Griselda, as if unconsciously seeking a closer companionship. "Did you ever see such a face? Don't you think he is dying?"

"Who can tell?" says Griselda. "I might think it, perhaps, but for his eyes. They—she shudders—they look as if they couldn't die. What 'terrible eyes' they are! and what a vile old man altogether! Good heavens! how did he dare so to insult us! I told you, Vera"—with

rising excitement—"I warned you that our coming here would be only for evil." A moment later a knock comes to the door.

"Will you be pleased to come down stairs or to have your tea here?" demands the harsh voice of the housekeeper from the threshold.

"Here" is on Vera's lips, but Griselda, the bold, circumvents her.

"Down stairs," she says, coldly, "when we get some hot water, and when you send a maid to help us to unpack our trunks."

"There are no maids in this house," replies Mrs. Grunch, sullenly. "You must either attend to each other or let me help you."

"No maids!" says Griselda.

"None," briefly.

"And my room? Oh—is this mine, or Miss Dysart's?"

"Both yours and Miss Dysart's; sorry if it isn't big enough," with a derisive glance round the huge, bare chamber.

"You mean, we are to have but one room between us?"

"Just that, miss. Neither more nor less. And good enough, too, for those as—"

"Leave the room," says Griselda, with a sudden, sharp intonation, so unexpected, so withering, that the woman, after a surprised stare, turns and withdraws.

CHAPTER III.

A few days later the girls are sitting in the garden. It is a beautiful day. Even through the eternal shadows that encompass the garden, and past the thick yew hedge, the hot beams of the sun are stealing.

"A day for gods and goddesses," cries Griselda, springing suddenly to her feet, and flinging far from her on the greenward the dusty volume she had purloined from the musty library about an hour ago.

"Perhaps I'll never come back. The spirit of adventure is full upon me, and who knows what demons inhabit that unknown world? So, fare thee well, sweet, my love! and when you see me, expect me." She presses a sentimental kiss upon her sister's brow, averring that a "brow" is the only applicable part of her for such a solemn occasion, and runs lightly down toward the hedge.

She runs through one of the openings in the hedge, crosses the gravelled path, and, mounting the parapet, looks over to examine the other side of the wall on which she stands, after which she commences her descent. One little foot she slips into a convenient hole in it, and then the other into a hole lower down, and so on and on, until the six feet of wall are conquered and she reaches terra firma, and finds nothing between her and the desired goal of the lovely woods.

With a merry heart she plunges into the dark, sweetly scented boughs of the giant trees, with a green, soft pathway under her feet, and, though she knows it not, her world before her.

It is an entrancing hour. She has stepped short in the middle of a broad, green space encompassed by high hills, though with an opening toward the west, when this uncomfortable conviction grows clear to her that she is lost.

Her heart looks hopefully around her. Far away over there, in the distance, stands a figure lightly lined against the massive trunk of a yew, that most unmistakably declares itself to be a man. His back is turned to her, and he is bending over something, and so far as she can judge thus remote from him, his clothing is considerably the worse for wear. A gamekeeper, perhaps, or a well-something or other of that sort. At all events the sight is welcome as the early dew.

(To be continued.)

### TRANS-SIBERIAN RAILROAD.

It Runs Through a Fertile Valley and Beautiful Country.

Somehow I had formed the idea that Siberia was, in the main, a mountainous, broken, barren and even sterile country, covered with forests—which opinion, I am inclined to think, is somewhat generally entertained in the west. Nothing could be further from the fact. Of all the surprises met with in my somewhat extensive travels, Siberia is the greatest. As a whole, it contains, perhaps, the largest continuous area of level lands on the globe. Excepting spurs of the great Altai range of mountains fringing its southern border, and cutting occasionally to some distance northward into Siberia, the entire western half of the country is exceptionally level, almost to flatness.

It would not be far from the fact to say that for 2,000 miles east of the Ural mountains, and extending to the Arctic sea, Siberia is almost as level as a table ocean. In over 1,000 miles I do not believe the grade of the railroad varied 300 feet, and in many places it is as straight as an arrow, without the slightest curve, for forty or fifty miles. Indeed, there is one stretch of perfectly straight road for 116 versts, or nearly eighty miles.

Along the whole line there is the most luxurious growth of grass I have seen in any country. There are many varieties, some like the native blue stem of the West, and one variety that in appearance seemed closely allied to the Kentucky blue grass. Judging from the superb condition of the animals that graze upon them, they must all be of the most nutritious nature; it is, therefore, not only one of the finest, but by far the largest grazing region in existence. If fully utilized, I believe Siberia could furnish the beef supply for the world.

Although the winters in Siberia are very cold, they are not especially long or trying. While the extreme temperature during winter may reach a point 10 to 15 degrees lower than in Ohio or generally in latitude 40 degrees in the United States, still, as the air is very dry and there are no high winds, I have no doubt the winter season can be passed without especial discomfort. When winter sets in, which it does suddenly, and usually about the 1st of November, it continues steadily through about five months, when there is as sudden a break-up, ushering in permanently pleasant warm weather. By those who have the experience, I am informed that the winters are far more agreeable than in other countries, where the temperature is higher and more violent changes occur. The rainfall in summer is reasonable and abundant.

It is easy to see what a magical transformation must take place in this great region, even if slowly, under the influence of an extended railway system. It is all the more easily imagined by one who has already seen in his own country an object lesson of a similar character. I doubt if the Russians fully realize to what an extent their great enterprise is going to modify their economic, and, perhaps, social conditions.

If people didn't have hobbies the world would soon cease to revolve

### CONTEST OF CANALS

#### Result Means Much to the Panama Company.

#### A WATERWAY FIGHT.

#### May End in Loss of Many Millions to the Old Ship-Canal Concern.

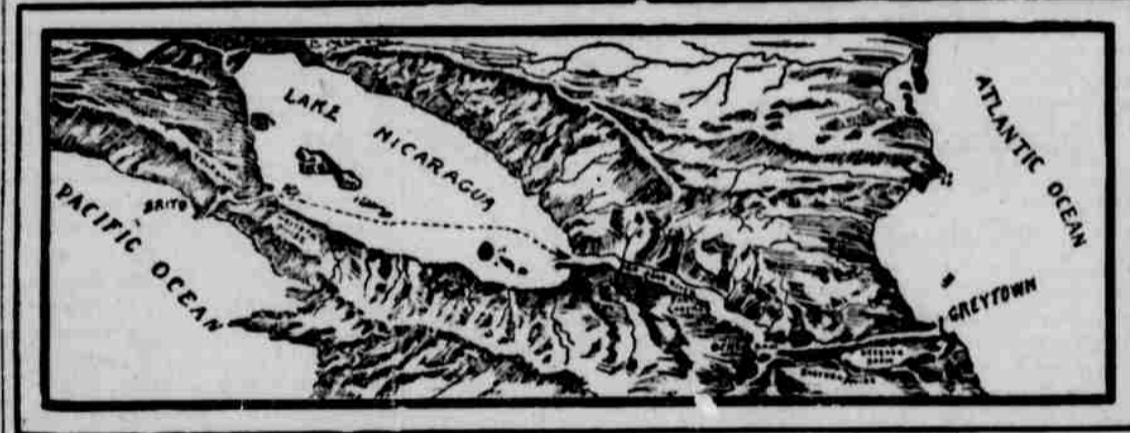
#### Nicaragua Project Most in Favor—There Is Not Much Difference in Cost and to the Ordinary Observer the Natural Advantages Seem to Be About Equal—Passage More Quickly Made by Panama Route—Great Inland Sea in Nicaragua.

The world is interested in a fight of canals, with the center of attention directed to Central America, that vast, narrow strip of land connecting the great American continent. For the first time in eleven years the Congress of the United States is arranging for the construction of the isthmian waterway passage, with forces ranged in two factions—one holding out for the completion of the Panama canal, begun so long ago by the Frenchman, DeLesseps, and the other advocating the construction of an entirely new passage through Nicaragua.

With the new Hay-Pauncefote treaty with England ratified, it will be necessary to consummate negotiations with the Central American States, through which, or along the border of which, the chosen route extends. It has been maintained that a strip of land ten miles in width along the canal should be bought, but the constitutions of the Central American States forbidding such sale, the only way remaining is to acquire nominal control of the land by treaty. We would then have the right to police the strip or do anything else we pleased with it. It is a fact that sovereignty of the strip is not necessary. Control is all that is necessary.

While the proposed canal is to be neutral, the United States will have the right to close it against an enemy in time of war, the fact that we guarantee neutrality not operating against the establishment of fortifications if we see fit. By a principle of international law, all treaties are abrogated with the country with which we are at war.

The new treaty which replaces the Clayton-Bulwer treaty with England provides that the United States shall do all the work of building the canal, assume the responsibility of safeguarding it, and regulate its use by all nations on terms of equality without the



PROPOSED NICARAGUA ROUTE OF THE CANAL.

guarantee of interference of any other country. It is this last clause which gives us the right to fortify the canal. Probably this will never be done, as the most effective way to control the canal in time of war is by means of the navy. It is held that if we control both approaches of the canal, as we shall do, it will be all we need.

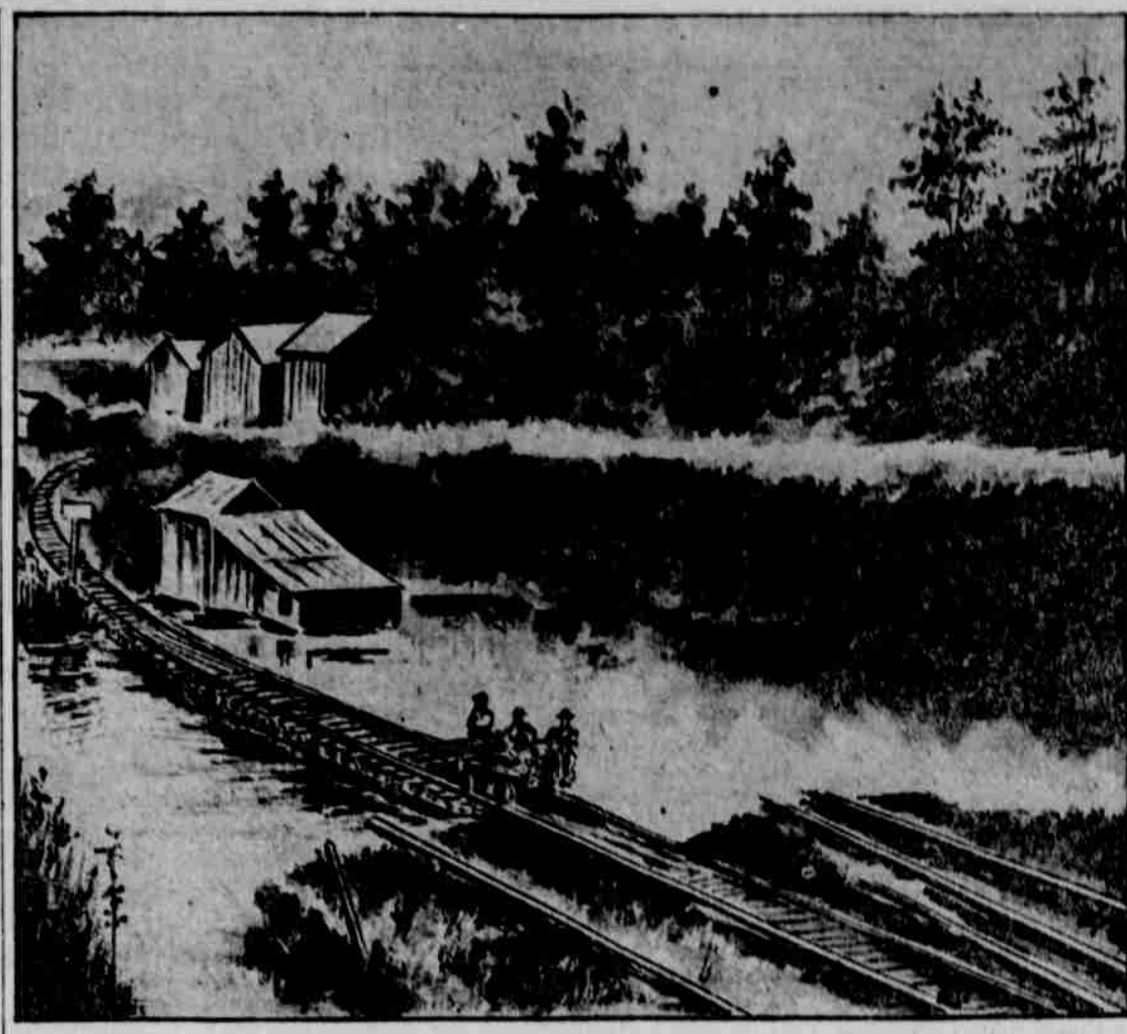
The first effect of the canal will be to shorten the time from New York to San Francisco from sixty to sixteen days, thus bringing about a great increase in water freight, with a propor-

tionate lessening of rates. Furthermore, it will bring the ocean shipping industry into close competition with the transcontinental railroads, thus reducing rates all around. Even now it is cheaper to ship perishable goods by water. Loads of freight daily come from New York from points west of the Alleghenies to go out in the coasting vessels around Cape Horn and up the other side to San Francisco.

Another result will be an increase in the volume of trade. There will be enough for both vessels and railroads. Still another and very important effect will be noted in the Central American States. The completion of the canal will draw American capital into these countries, which have hitherto been almost constantly at war among themselves. A demand for protection will be created and the official presence of the United States would act as a wholesome restraint on our hot-blooded southern neighbors. It is possible that the canal will in time bring about a commercial union of Central America, under a protectorate of the United States, a result which would be of the greatest benefit to the whole western hemisphere.

Don Luis Corea, Nicaraguan Minister to the United States.

Nicaraguan engineers finding river levels.



A SECTION OF THE PANAMA CANAL AS IT APPEARS TO-DAY.

Finally, the construction of the canal will give us an immense advantage in trade with South America. At present Germany and England each beats us in that direction. Altogether, it is believed that the isthmian canal will prove to be a greater stimulus to trade than any other one thing which could be accomplished, whether it be decided to finish the old Panama canal or establish an entirely new waterway by the Nicaragua route.

Fourteen Times Surveyed.

Since the conception of the project of a canal across the isthmus of Panama, no less than fourteen routes have been proposed and surveyed across the narrow neck of land connecting the American continents. Only two survive.

It was in 1843 that a survey was made of the Panama route for the first time. A French engineer undertook this work, but with no important immediate results. He was followed not many years afterward by George M. Totten, chief engineer of the Panama Railroad, who estimated the cost of the construction of the great waterway at \$75,000,000 to \$100,000,000. Subsequently the United States government also made a

Great Britain to bring in 4,000 negroes from Jamaica. This number has dwindled, through death, desertion and other causes, to about half the original number.

Nearly Half Completed.

According to the original designs and specifications, the Panama canal is now just 40 per cent completed. The Atlantic side is open to a distance of thirteen miles, the excavation varying in depth from 18 to 29½ feet. This has been filled in to a certain extent by silt deposits from the Chagres river, in the bed of which the canal partly lies. On the Pacific side a length of about three miles is cut to a depth of 6 to 20 feet. In Panama bay a channel has been dredged to deep water and a cut through the Cordilleras has been accomplished to a depth of 160 feet.

It was in 1850-1852 that the Wausitt company, which then controlled all transisthmian traffic, had the Nicaragua route surveyed and twenty years later a commission went over the line for the United States. When the Panama scandals began, Mr. A. G. Minto, who was a member of that commission, obtained a concession from Nicaragua and the Nicaragua Canal

Juan in its normal state has a flow of 20,000 cubic feet per second, but in the rainy season it sometimes mounts to 200,000. To hold back this flood with a dam 150 feet high, and thereby raise the waters of the San Juan to the level of the lake, is the project.

The line of the Nicaraguan canal begins at the Caribbean sea near Greytown. Taking a southeasterly direction, it passes to the north of a range of hills known as the Silleros and thence southerly to a point about a mile from the San Juan river. Following the river and at a safe distance from it, the course continues to the dam, where the canal enters the river and follows it into the lake. Crossing the lake in a northwesterly direction, the mouth of the Rio Las Lagas is entered. This stream is followed but a short distance when the canal crosses the continental divide into the valley of the Rio Grande and thence to Brito, the Pacific terminus.

The summit level—from the continental divide across the lake and along the San Juan to the great dam—will be nearly 150 miles long. Besides the purpose of a long stretch for speed, this extended level so high above the sea is to control the lake's level. It now fluctuates some thirteen feet. Under control it will not vary six.

It has been the general opinion that there is quite a difference between the mean levels of the two oceans. This idea is an erroneous one, for they are about the same. There is a difference in tidal ranges, however, the Pacific rising eight feet and the Atlantic but one foot. Five locks—one of 30½ feet and four of 18½ feet each, will be required to raise the vessels from the Caribbean to the level of the lake, while four of 28½ feet each will be necessary on the Pacific side.

Originally, the cost of the Nicaraguan canal was placed at \$50,000,000. The estimates have steadily risen until at present the figure is \$100,000,000. The first was for a 16-foot canal of narrow gauge, whereas the latest plans call for a cut 35 feet in depth and extending in places to a width of 150 feet. In curves a width of 180 feet is called for and in the harbor at either terminus a channel of 500 feet is projected.

Tea Drinking in Russia.

Enormous quantities of tea are consumed by the Russians, but they do not suffer from any effects owing to the way in which they connect the beverage. With them it is not a cup of tea, but a glass of tea. A sprinkling of leaf is put into the pot, boiling water is poured on, and allowed to stand more than thirty seconds. A small quantity of the brew—about two tablespoonfuls—is poured into a glass, which is then filled with boiling water, and here we have one of the most refreshing and palatable drinks imaginable. The color of the tea as drunk is a pale amber, and, of course, no milk is used.

New Cure for Consumptives.

A doctor has written to the London Times suggesting the running of motor cars at a speed fully up to the legal limit as a means of administering the open-air treatment to consumptives.

Tenants' Rights in Holland.

In Holland no landlord has the power of raising the rent or of evicting a tenant.



NICARAGUAN ENGINEERS FINDING RIVER LEVELS.