

The Dalles Daily Chronicle.

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THURSDAY - NOVEMBER 17, 1898

THE KEY TO THE PACIFIC.

An eminent English engineer, Archibald R. Colquhoun, made a thorough examination a few years ago of the Nicaragua canal route. He published an extended report of his investigations under the significant head of "The Key to the Pacific." In it he maintained that such a canal would render "greater service to the new world than the Suez canal does to the old," adding: "It will bring Japan, Northern China, Australasia, and part of Malaysia nearer to the Atlantic cities of the United States than they are now to England."

The Forum of November contains a paper on the Nicaragua canal, written by ex Senator Warner Miller, in which some new facts are given, besides a restatement of many facts made fairly familiar to the public by current discussion of the general subject. "One-half of the money wasted at Panama," he asserts, "would have built the Nicaragua canal."

Even if the \$100,000,000 in question should cause an increase of the national debt to the full amount, it would be a good investment. As General Tracy said in one of his reports as secretary of the navy, "the canal must be built or two independent navies maintained, one in the Atlantic and one in the Pacific, and the increased cost of building the navy and maintaining it would be very much greater than the cost of building the canal."

Mr. Miller gives some interesting figures in reply to the practical questions which the subject suggests. He takes Shanghai, the dividing point of the trade spheres of the Suez and Nicaragua canals, as the base of a highly interesting calculation. At the present time our commerce labors under the net disadvantage of 2,030 miles in voyages to Shanghai, as compared with that of Liverpool. This is about three-fourths the distance across the Atlantic. But by the Nicaragua route this disadvantage would be wholly overcome, with a small margin in our favor. With Yokohama as the base of calculation,

much the same results are reached, only our advantage would be still greater. An advantage of between 2,500 and 3,000 miles would accrue to our trade with all South American and Mexican points on the Pacific, and it is to be remembered that the Pacific commerce of the southern half of the new world is far larger than its Atlantic commerce.

The truth is that ever since the opening of the Suez canal, in 1870, European commerce has had a great advantage over the commerce of the United States. In this respect Europe's advantage has been a serious handicap to the commercial development of this country.

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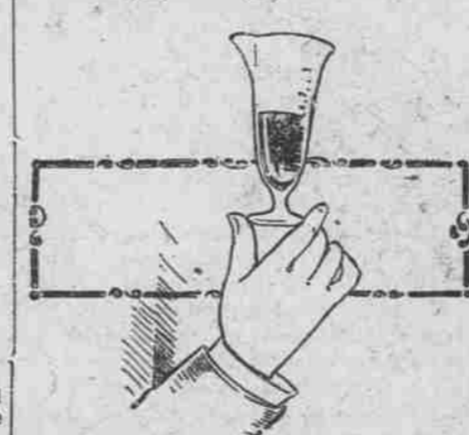
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