CHAPTER III

THE RAW MATERIAL

The authorities would not employ cheap white labour from the States. They had an idea that the prestige of America would suffer if low-paid white citizens had to work alongside the mixed breeds on the Isthmus or amongst the blacks.

Nor did they ship any of the black population from the Southern States. Probably the owners of the cotton fields objected to the withdrawal of workers. What is more likely is that the coloured folk, full of suspicion about the unhealthiness of the climate, would only have been attracted by very high pay, with the consequence that when they were sent back from Panama to the States they would have been dissatisfied.

The Americans turned to the West Indies for the supply of unskilled labour. The healthiest of the islands is Barbados. It has a packed black population, stalwart and healthy, which finds difficulty in advancing much in prosperity above starvation point.

Here was an almost illimitable well, where wages

were lower than those paid in the cotton fields of the Southern States, and where plenty of workers could be obtained at a remuneration which would not satisfy the American nigger. When they were no longer wanted they could be shipped back to Barbados; if then there was dissatisfaction about the wages, that would not be the business of the American people.

The boat by which I journeyed to Colon put in at Barbados. We took on board several hundred labourers, their wives and their offspring. Agents had been busy putting forward the usual blandishments about the wealth that was to be obtained by working on the Canal.

The emigrants were picked fellows—big, muscular, and good-natured—and they made camp on the lower deck and alongside the middle deck. They and their families brought their worldly possessions with them—beds, cooking utensils, gaudy boxes—and they jammed every corner of those parts of the ship allotted to them. I never saw such a squeeze; but they were perfectly happy. Families squatted together, and the hatchways were crowded. There was no room to stretch themselves; they slept higgledy-piggledy in the most cramped of postures. The men were in their workaday clothes, picturesque but frequently ragged. Grinning faces showed beneath tattered straw hats. "Mamas,"

bulky, loose-fleshed women many of them, with features black as night, but with teeth so bright and regular that they would make many popular music-hall ladies jaundiced with envy, were in the gaudiest of print garments—yellows and reds and blues—and every one had her head swathed in a bright-coloured handkerchief. The piccaninnies, dark as ebony, toddled about as lacking in attire as when first they came into the world.

The shipowners did not provide plates or cups. These the dusky passengers had to bring along with them; mostly they were of tin. And it was an amusing sight when feeding time came along. The ship's servants brought up cauldrons of soup or tea. The passengers, presenting their meal tickets, had food poured into their pans and slabs of bread pushed into their fists, and then, sheering off, they huddled together and gulped the meal as though they were ravenous. There was plenty of chatter and laughter, and what the white folks would have considered the discomforts of travel they regarded as a joke.

Many of them brought musical instruments with them, chiefly banjos. Outside my cabin window were half a dozen men and women; they gossiped with shrill tongues, not only throughout the day, but throughout most of the night. Two of the men, armed with banjos, but by no means profi-

cient, twanged the same three chords by the hour. When I suggested they should go to sleep and let me have some sleep also, they replied, "All right, massa!" lay still for ten minutes, whispered for five minutes, gradually got back to their former key, and in half an hour were as noisy as ever.

In the evening, when we were steaming through the calm, quiet waters, and the air was balmy, and the only light was that of the moon, some coloured man or woman would start humming a hymn of the Moody and Sankey type. It would be taken up by neighbours, and before long a hundred voices were singing, in the quaint accents of the islands, "Hold the fort, for I am coming!" Then suddenly from the recumbent throng would spring up a fervid Christian, who considered the moment opportune to dwell upon the wickednesses of life, and to point out that unless his hearers turned from sin the punishment awaiting them would be terrible. The black people lay about, whilst he told of the golden crowns which they would wear if they went to Heaven, and the fiery torments which would be their lot if they went to Hell. He would start praying in a passionate, almost shrieking voice. I confess that I could not restrain a smile, remembering we were in warm tropical waters, when he beseeched the Almighty

BUILDING THE BREAKWATER TO PROTECT THE ATLANTIC ENTRANCE TO THE CANAL, JULY 21, 1911.

not to let the ship run into an iceberg as did the *Titanic!*

The morning we reached Colon, with the low-lying, swampy land on the horizon, there was a transformation. All the old patched garments, which had been good enough for the voyage, disappeared. The crowd were arrayed in the most gorgeous of attire. As there was no privacy, how the coloured ladies and gentlemen managed to deck themselves in their finery will be an abiding mystery to me. Anyway, they were tricked out in the most gorgeous of their feathers. No half-tones for them. Flaming reds, blues, greens and yellows were what the ladies liked. There was a made-at-home look about their clothes, though the amateur dressmakers had probably coloured prints as a guide. There was an easiness of fit which would probably have caused tears to trail down the cheeks of fashionable costumiers. The hats were enormous, and decorated with birds of a kind and plumage which must have been conceived in the absinthe-loaded brain of a mad artist. The dusky features and the gleaming teeth were partially curtained with the most voluminous and decorated veils. None of your dainty little hands were to be seen amongst these passengers, but big, broad, useful fists; and they were all pressed into white cotton gloves, and in some cases even white kid.

As for the men, constantly grinning, they had cut-away coats, grey trousers—all of them rather too long—socks as bright as their shirts, and patent leather shoes. Where these people got the money to make themselves so glorious and so happy I did not venture to inquire; but there never was a jollier crowd in the world.

Away to our left was the streak of coast line. As we ploughed through the burnished copper sea we could discern a few palm trees showing above the quivering haze. Colon, our landing-place, revealed itself like a stack of white houses apparently resting on the water. Away to the right was a long streak, as though an inky pen had been drawn across part of the sea. This was the breakwater which the Americans have constructed to provide shelter when the furious "Northers"—and they can be furious indeed—blow this way.

We slowed to a crawl. The heat was terrific. The atmosphere was humid. Even when sitting still in the shade one perspired. The more one absorbed iced drinks, which the Jamaica boy supplied, the more did one's thirst grow.

There was a dot on the water, travelling quickly towards us; really an electric launch. We knew that the doctor, appointed by the Americans to see that no one likely to bring sickness into the Isthmus, was coming. When the launch drew nearer

we could see the Stars and Stripes at the prow. With a dash and a swing the launch was alongside, and up the ladder came the doctor, black-bearded, and his two assistants, clean-shaven, the three of them sun-baked, khaki-clad, pith-helmeted. Those of us who were saloon passengers were first chivvied together in the dining-room and slowly paraded past the doctor, who asked questions. Folk like myself who were on a visit had no trouble. Panamanians, including about a dozen schoolgirls returning from being educated in Europe, had to stand on one side. They had to bare their arms. With a little grimace, and sometimes a little squeal, they were pricked and inoculated against small-pox.

Every one of the coloured passengers had to be inoculated. They were driven to the rear of the ship. Then, one by one, they came up the companion way. The doctor's assistants put out their hands and dexterously jerked up the eyelids, on the look-out for ophthalmia. Having passed this stage, each person had to bare an arm. In the twinkling of an eye the little instrument made the injection, and the coloured folk, pulling down their sleeves, passed on with a grin. It was with true American alacrity that the inoculation proceeded. I think the crowd must have been dealt with at the rate of about twenty a minute.

Meanwhile we had crawled toward the piers and

wooden sheds in the harbour of Colon. Panamanians, of weak coffee-coloured complexions, were there to meet friends. Wharf labourers were in throngs to assist in the berthing of the ship. There was no breeze. The heat was like the breath of an oven. I personally felt as though I was dribbling away.

But we had reached a port which, though little known to the outer world, is going to play a great rôle in the history of the future.

CHAPTER IV

THE GATUN DAM

The construction of the Canal is costing the United States £80,000,000, which is just the sum it cost Russia to build her trans-Siberian railway.

Some miles of the Canal track are navigable, and the great Gatun Lake, with an area of 164 miles, has come into existence. Lock building is proceeding apace. By September of this year (1913) Colonel Goethals hopes to take a boat through from the Atlantic to the Pacific.

That does not mean the Canal will be finished before the appointed time. Much remains to be done, including dredging to a considerable extent, before the world's commerce will be invited to pay its money and take the short cut. It will not be till January 1st, 1915, that the American eagle will have its great scream and the President of the United States will be expected to deliver a noble oration. You will scarcely be able to see the Canal for star-spangled banners. A procession of warships will steam from Colon to Balboa, and everybody who has had a two years' hand in the slicing of

the American continent will be entitled to receive a medal.

People, comfortably seated in deck chairs on fine ships, sailing over the smooth waters of the lakes and between the rock-breasted cuts, and being lifted by three locks to a stretch of over thirty miles, and lowered again through three locks, will be legitimately enthusiastic.

But most of the hard work, the result of twentieth century engineering, the triumph of puny man over Nature—and many a time Nature has deliberately resented this carving through the spine of the hills, and has smashed the work of months—will be hidden beneath placid water.

One difference of this Canal from other canals of less importance, or rivers where the drop is all in one direction, is that the vessels will be lifted into a hilly country, where there are no navigable streams, and then lowered on the other side of the range. This will be, and is being accomplished by impounding the waters of the Chagres River and its tributaries. The Chagres is a turbulent river, born in the unexplored region of south-east Panama, and drains an area of some thirteen hundred square miles.

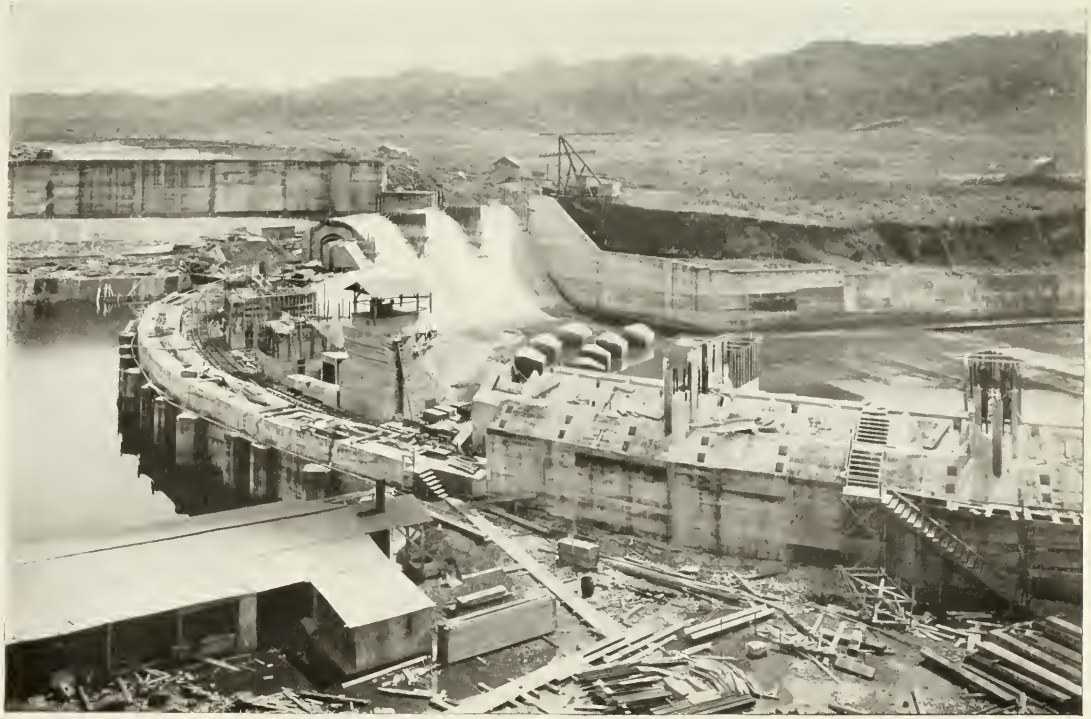
In the dry season hitherto the Chagres has run more or less smoothly through the hills across the Gatun valley, and escaped into the Atlantic. In the

THE GATUN DAM, WITH THE WATER OF THE LAKE BEGINNING TO RISE, JUNE 7, 1912.

away from the lake, is so gradual. Rock, sand, and clay, steam-shovelled from excavations and dredged from pits, form the bank. I was informed that the entire dam contains 21,000,000 cubic yards of material, which sounds a good deal.

This dam has completely changed the topography of a wide stretch of country. The valley has gone. The old village of Gatun is buried beneath the waters of the lake. It was a quaint native village on a loop of the Chagres. Long ago the bongo-boats of men going to California seeking gold would stop at Gatun, where one traveller records "eggs were sold four for a dollar, and the rent for a hammock was two dollars a night." The French, when they were excavating their canal, had big works here, and quarters for five hundred men. Up to five years ago it was one of the centres of the river banana trade. Stores, houses, church, however, have all disappeared. The natives have been quietly, but effectively, chivvied out of Gatun and the whole valley. The new Gatun is built up the hillside. The old railroad track between Colon and Panama is submerged. The new track keeps to the east of the lakes.

All the country is matted, tangled, impenetrable jungle. As the water creeps into the dips and climbs the hills all vegetation seems to give up the struggle. It just rots and dies. The thick-leaved



GATUN SPILLWAY: GENERAL VIEW LOOKING WEST AUGUST 4, 1912.

trees go bare; they stand grim in the water like skeletons of themselves. The trees about the edge of the lake are as sad and forlorn as the trees often are in an Australian landscape. The bed of the Chagres is hidden for near twenty-four miles. So is a diversion of the river which is blocked by the dam. So is a section of the old French canal.

The "Spillway" is, of course, a weir, so that the lake does not rise to a height that would flood the locks. It is a curve of concrete construction 1,200 feet long, and the water will spill over a slope 300 feet wide, to a channel 10 feet above sea level, which will take it to the Chagres bed about a mile away. Thus it will run to the sea. As the land between the Chagres and the sea level section of the Canal is low, the bank on one side has been reinforced to prevent overflow into the Canal.

By the side of the "Spillway" a culvert is being built. Down on the level ground at the back of the dam a huge electrical power-house will be erected. Water power will be used in generating electricity which will work the "Spillway" gates, supply the power for operating the lock gates, and hauling the ships through the locks, lighting Gatun, and providing illumination for the lighthouses which will mark the channel through the lake—and very odd some of these lighthouses look to-day, standing amid jungle which has not yet been reached by the water.

Now, to arrive at Gatun Lake from the Atlantic, or to descend from it to the Atlantic, there are three flights of double locks, each 1,000 feet long, so that vessels can be lowered whilst others are being raised ; indeed, to economise water, a full lock can transfer much of its supply into the basin of its neighbour. The width of each lock is 110 feet. Beyond the gates of the lower lock and the upper lock are long walls to which ships can moor whilst waiting their turn to pass through the locks.

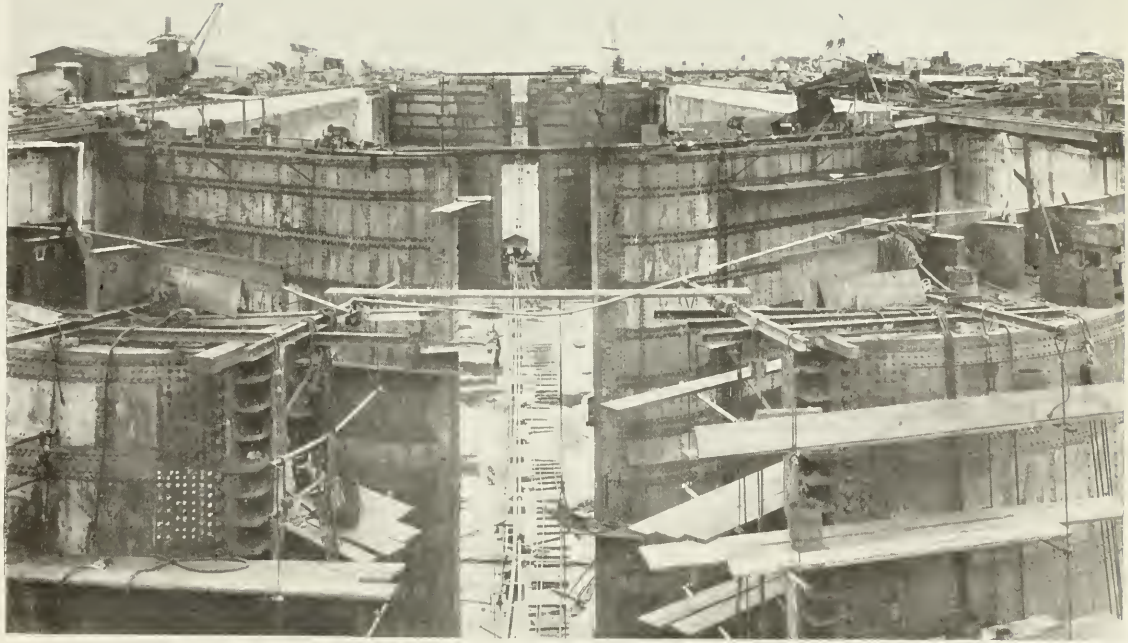
All the locks, which are in the wall of the dam, are of concrete, and all the manufacture has been carried on in one of the basins of the locks. A tremendous excavation had to be made to reach a foundation of rock. Each lock will, at the lowest point, have a draught of 40 feet sea water. The steel gates are colossal : you could drive a motor-car on the top. They are 7 feet thick, 65 feet long, and from 47 to 82 feet high. In weight they vary from 300 to 600 tons. The ninety-two leaves needed for the entire Canal will weigh 57,000 tons. At the upper end of each lock the gates are double, as a guard against accident. They are built of girders, stoutly framed and sheathed in steel plates. The lower half of each gate is composed of airtight compartments, so that in swinging it will partly float and relieve some of the pressure on the machinery working it. In the middle of each lock are supple-

THE SPILLWAY AT GATUN, SHOWING THE RISING SURFACE OF GATUN LAKE IN THE DISTANCE, SEPTEMBER 7, 1912.

mentary lock gates. Generally it will be vessels of 600 feet or less which will pass through, and it would be waste to fill a thousand feet length of lock. Water will be admitted or extracted by means of culverts 18 feet in diameter in the side and middle walls, and also by means of pipes in the bottom, and thus there will be secured an even rush of water. The side walls are 50 feet through at the base, rise perpendicular on the water face, and are 8 feet wide at the top.

Once a vessel approaches a lock it will cease to use its own steam. It will be towed through by electric locomotives running on cog rails at the top of the lock walls. Four engines will take charge of each ship. It is reckoned it will take about fifteen minutes to fill a lock and about three hours will be occupied to pass through the six locks—the three at Gatun I am describing and the three locks on the Pacific side. To go from ocean to ocean will probably take from ten to twelve hours.

I have mentioned the double gates at the top and lower end of each flight of locks as a protection should a ship prove obstreperous and ram, which, in the case of a single gate, would be disastrous. Not only is there this protection, but before the vessel can charge the first gate it will be checked by a chain with links of steel 3 inches in diameter. The chain will be attached to hydraulic cylinders



GATUN UPPER LOCK, SHOWING GUARD GATES, OPERATING GATES, INTERMEDIATE GATES, AND SAFETY GATES IN PROCESS OF CONSTRUCTION, JUNE, 1912.

been broken, this caisson can be swung across the canal, exactly the width of the canal, and in front of the emergency dam each end presses against a sill. The caisson will be filled with water. It will sink and provide an effective barrier against the torrent. The lock at the back will then be empty, and steps can be taken to repair the smashed gates. This emergency dam is one of the most ingenious inventions in modern engineering.

In my ears still sounds the roar of the work. As for the spectacle, it is not a dainty sight. The country has been ripped to pieces, and there is no tidying up yet. Engines are barking over the torn, dishevelled earth, and cars are disgorging "dirt" to strengthen embankments. Dredgers are hoarsely clawing their way along the lower channel of the Canal. There is the snort and the thud of pile-driving. Dozens of swing cranes are carrying material. An engine on the lock side is grunting whilst heaving a piece of machinery. Down in the hollow of the lock walls men are busy fixing the electrical appliances. The grey plates of the lock gates, daubed red, are being lifted into position, and there is the rattle of the electric hammers.

I crawl over the debris and dodge a running crane and clamber on the top of a gate. Away below, in the pit of the lock, engines are scurrying over temporary tracks. The workmen are like flies.

The dust of the concrete gets into one's throat this steamy tropical September day.

White men, brown men, black men, thousands of them, are toiling in an apparent welter of confusion. Then my eye travels south. There is peace, the calm leaden waters of Gatun Lake are rising slowly, steadily, the first proof that all this striving counts for victory.

CHAPTER V

THE CULEBRA CUT

THE popular, spectacular thing is the Culebra Cut.

From the engineering point of view more worthy achievements are being won in the making of "the great ditch."

The Culebra Cut, however, is within the range of the comprehension of the ordinary person. To delve through hills for nine miles; cut a channel with an average depth of 120 feet, with a minimum width of 300 feet; to slice through the continental divide, Gold Hill and Contractors' Hill separating the watersheds toward the Pacific and the Atlantic; remove a clear depth of 375 feet of hill; haul away about 100 million cubic yards of rock and earth—nearly half the total excavations in the Canal construction—have the work constantly checked by thousands of tons of the hill-sides sliding into the Canal, bringing into the Cut streams which had been diverted, and threatening to flood the workers out: there is something dramatic, majestic, and occasionally terrible in it all.

This channel—not straight, but gently serpentin-

ing through the valley of the Rio Obispo to the "divide," and beyond this point through the valley of the Rio Grande to Pedro Miguel, where the first lock descending to the Pacific is placed—will be at the same elevation as Gatun Lake, 85 feet above sea level. It will get water from the same source, mainly the Chagres River. At the north end of the Cut is a temporary dam to keep the accumulating water on the other side from entering.

Water does get into the Cut; rivulets occasionally break into it from the hills, and there are the frequent torrential rains in the fall of the year. A big drain has had to be made along the bottom way, and a pumping engine is constantly belching this drainage over the dam.

I stood on the lip of Contractors' Hill and looked down and along the great black trough. A dull roar constantly sounded. To-day there are seventy-five miles of shaky railway track in the Cut, with engines screeching impatiently—their long "dirt" wagons trailing—waiting to be loaded with debris and to climb with their loads up the slanting terraced ways and carry the stuff long distances and dump it where banks are being made, or down to the swampy shores near Balboa. There, one of these days, will be wharves and piers and sheds to hold merchandise; also a great railway yard.

The monster locomotives look like toys from the

above sea level.

elevation. On the Cut sides are clusters of men, busy like ants, white men and coloured men, working in separate gangs. There is the constant screech of the drills. There are the thunderous blasting explosions, reverberating like cannon. Behind brown clouds, billowing half across the Cut, hundreds of tons are dislodged. The steam shovels jerk forward and start loading adjoining cars. To keep pace with the excavations, and alongside them, a mile of track has to be shifted each day.

Every facility was given me to inspect the work. Either in an open coach attached to the front of an engine, or in one of the automobiles, adapted to the rails, which the officials use in hurrying from point to point, I made half a dozen excursions up and down the bed of the Canal, along the shelves where excavating is still in progress, and along the upper edges.

To be down in the Canal, with raw-sided Gold Hill towering above one, to be amid the fury of the ugly, serviceable engines and the deafening clatter of the drills and the multi-thousand toilers, sweating and grimy and mud-smeared and shouting, but all strenuous, provided sensations which it was worth travelling far to experience.

If the Cut had been of solid rock the engineers would not have had to combat with such troubles as "slides." Then they would have drilled and

blasted their way through, and once the passage was cut it would have stood firm. But this region is all volcanic, a confusion of earths and rocks, and rock which is hard when first cut but disintegrated after a short exposure to the atmosphere. It is not only that the sides tumble in, but that the lower stratum often is unable to bear the weight of the ground above and behind; it begins to bulge toward the bottom whilst the bank gradually sinks.

It is not to be forgotten that a considerable section of the Culebra Cut was cleared away by the French during their attempts to make a canal, and that the troubles they had then are still existent. The Americans, however, are optimistic, and talk about the "slides" having exhausted themselves—until another "slide" comes along. They have hopes that once water fills the Cut it will be a kind of buttress, and hinder any more slipping.

Over twenty "slides" have interfered with the work. The Culebra Cut would have been finished by now if it had not been for these disasters. The largest "slide" is the Cucaracha, which began in French times, covers 47 acres, and has broken back nearly 2,000 feet from the Cut. At other places fissures appear in the upper earth; they spread and join until there is one great "slide" threatening to pile into the Cut. The town of Culebra, perched high above the Canal, is in danger.

THE NOTORIOUS CUCARACHA "SLIDE," OCTOBER 23, 1911.

Already houses on breaking ground have had to be abandoned.

Nearly 17,000,000 cubic yards of extra material have had to be removed from the Cut because of "slides." It is recognised that between 3,000,000 and 4,000,000 cubic yards of "slides" are still in motion, and will have to be dealt with besides the ordinary excavation. Only in August, 1912, there was a tremendous break near Empire, and it stretched half across the Cut, burying an enormous quantity of machinery and, what was worse, causing consternation to the engineers by allowing the diverted River Obispo to rush into the Cut and flood part of it. It was a mighty labour getting the river again diverted, and the water pumped out of the Cut, before a start could be made to remove this unwelcome incursion of the canal bank.

These "slides" are enough to break the hearts of men. But the dogged determination of Colonel Goethals and his fellows, sick to silence when they have to face another break, is one of the finest episodes in the whole business.

For two years steam shovels have been working on the top of banks which were likely to "slide"; this with the object of decreasing the pressure. In some places there is a tier of nine terraces—by no means wholly successful in checking the moving of the banks and the upheavals at the bottom of the

Cut; still the engineers are sternly persevering. I have met men who shake their heads over the fate of the Culebra Cut. But the engineers absolutely shut out from thought that there will be any danger after the ground now sliding has been dealt with and the Canal is open to traffic.

Spend a morning in the Cut, in the hot, humid, sickening air of the rainy season in the tropics. Downpours drench you; but that is preferable to the thick, steamy, enervating atmosphere when the sun blazes.

Here is a gang of men, clambered upon rubble of a broken bank, with their drills working into the rock like giant needles on a sewing machine. The drills are all operated by compressed air, of which a long main pipe runs the length of the Cut. The drills drive 24 feet into the rock. With jaunty strides coloured men come along, balancing boxes on their heads—dynamite. A small charge of dynamite is pushed to the bottom of the drill-hole and fired by a magneto battery to make the hole larger. Then from 75 lb. to 200 lb. weight of dynamite is plugged into the hole, and the explosion is brought about by ordinary electric light current. It is like a thunderclap. A torrent of rock and earth is flung forth. Every month, in the Cut alone, 500,000 lb. of dynamite are used.

The steam shovels, cumbrous, ugly, but grim

HAND DRILL GANG BORING HOLES FOR DYNAMITE TO BLAST MOVING FACE OF A "SLIDE" IN THE CULEBRA CUT, FEBRUARY, 1912.

with strength, fascinate one. There are dozens of them at work in the Cut. By lever the huge scuttle is pressed amongst the blasted debris, lifts it, and throws the stuff on a "dirt" train. The monster appears to quiver with restrained energy.

Some of these shovels can lift 5 cubic yards, and that means over eight tons of rock or over six tons of earth. A seventy-ton shovel has shifted 4,823 cubic yards in a day. The shifting in a full working hour is 289 cubic yards. Much more could be shifted; the difficulty is getting the stuff away. Even the thousands of dump cars and the seventy-five miles of railway track are hedged by limitations. As it is, 175 trains haul out of the Cut every day, or a train every two and a half minutes.

Statistics like these indicate the ferociousness with which the excavating goes on. In the veins of the workers is a throbbing joy over big results. Go day by day, and you see little change. Let a month elapse, and then you mark the difference. And there is the Cut—a long black passage through the hills which tells of work done. Why, the record clearance in one day is 127,742 tons, removed on 333 trains.

At the southern end of the Cut you come to the massive Pedro Miguel lock—locally known as the "Peter Magill." All the hot scurrying and clanging and convulsive movements of big machinery, which

distinguished the Gatun locks, are repeated. This is the lock by which vessels moving Pacificwards will be lowered 30⅓ feet to the Miraflores Lake, artificial, a mile and a half long, partly created by water allowed through from the Cut and partly by the capture of small rivers. Then two locks, which will lower the vessel to sea level, and the ocean is met eight miles off at Balboa. As on the Atlantic side, here are tremendous breakwaters. Several little islands are being joined so that the entrance to the Canal is practically a land-locked harbour. The Americans are building fortifications.

From sea to sea small gangs and great gangs of workers are encountered. At the locks there are fifty gangs doing fifty different jobs. Each gang is doing its bit independently of anybody else. Behind the apparent confusion you know there must be a system, and that every piece of work has to be fitted into its place.

Somewhere are brains directing the complicated scheme. You will find them in the chief engineer's office at Culebra. Every night there come in detailed reports of what has been done. Every morning Colonel Goethals and his staff review and arrange as though a siege were in progress. Every detail is attended to. There is a "field hospital"; special trains carry all that is necessary to do repairs on the spot. Every night, under the flame of electric lights,

CULEBRA CUT, LOOKING NORTH FROM CONTRACTORS' HILL AND SHOWING TERRACES LEFT AFTER REMOVING SUPERIMPOSED WEIGHT TO AVOID "SLIDES."

The highest shovel on left is 280 feet above sea level, and that on the right is 65 feet.

gangs of repairers are out attending to machines reported to be defective. At Gorgona is a repair shop where 1,200 men are employed.

In and out, dodging about, you often see automobiles hastening over the jolting railway tracks. The workers call these " brain cars." For by them travel the men who think and decide. They are United States Army engineers. They are khaki-clad men, tall, lithe, bronzed, clear-eyed; but there is a lot of grey in their hair. They nervously eat the ends of cigars, and chat with you gaily as though cutting a continent in two was not a matter of much moment.

They know, right enough, they are doing a great work, and therefore can afford to be modest. Modesty is not counted an American characteristic. These American Army officers, however, who are supplying the brains, are quiet and dignified, competent and confident.