

We have received the 'Almanac of the Diocese of Maitland' for the current year, and a very useful publication it is, great industry and care being employed in its compilation. It is now in its seventh year, each succeeding issue since the first showing noticeable improvement. It is as its sub-title indicates a family home annual, which should find a place on the bookshelves of every Catholic householder in the diocese. In addition to a comprehensive account of the various missions of the diocese are added a comparative table of progress, diocesan statistics, religious information for 1906, whilst in purely secular matters we have a list of the Federal Senate and House of Representatives, also of the Legislature of New South Wales, with useful notes on postal and telegraph rates, etc. The two contributed articles, especially that entitled, 'Our Relations with our Non-Catholic Brethren,' by the Right Rev. Mgr. Long, V.G., Bathurst, will be found worthy of perusal and earnest attention by many outside the diocese for which the Almanac is intended.

There are many cookery books on the market, but the majority of these are compiled for countries where the conditions of life are very different from those which obtain in the Australian colonies, and furthermore many of them are devoted to directions for the preparation of dinners, etc., which are altogether beyond the means and requirements of the bulk of the people of these colonies. Some time ago Messrs. Whitcombe and Tombs, Ltd., published the Kingswood Cookery Book, which was designed more for the everyday use of people enjoying moderate incomes than for the wealthy. This book is now in its sixth edition, completing the 29th thousand—a practical proof of its popularity. The volume is not a mere compilation of recipes, as the majority of them are original, many having been written expressly for pupils attending the author's cooking classes, and therefore have been practically tested before being recommended to the public. There are close on 1700 recipes in the book, which is obtainable in cloth at the very moderate price of 1s 6d.

THE PANAMA CANAL

THE DIFFICULTIES OF THE UNDERTAKING

In view of a statement made the other day that it would be necessary to employ Chinese labor for the construction of the Panama Canal, the following particulars regarding the chief engineer of the undertaking and the many difficulties to be overcome, will be of interest:—Some genius with a passion for statistics has declared that, at the present rate of progress, the Panama Canal will take 264 years to construct, while, on the other hand, the celebrated engineer, M. Bunau-Varilla, has in a written statement to President Roosevelt declared his ability to cut the passage in forty-eight months provided he is given a force of 25,000 men. The general belief in engineering circles is, however, that the canal will be completed and open for traffic in ten years from the day on which the real work begins. This belief is shared by Mr. John F. Wallace, who was appointed chief engineer of the canal by the United States President last spring.

In order to superintend this immense engineering feat Mr. Wallace goes into voluntary exile for a decade. And not only that, but he will give up a salary of £10,000 for one of £5000, and also run the risk of losing his life by taking up a permanent residence in a country which is looked upon as the most fatal fever-bed in the world. But 'Engineer Wallace,' as he is called, values his life little and money not at all in comparison with the honor of being chief of so great an undertaking, and even were he inclined to refuse the appointment his professional pride would prevent him. And yet, when the letter from the President appointing him to the work was placed in his hands and he had read it, he hesitated. In fact, for more than a day that letter was unanswered, for he would not reply until he had obtained the consent of another—his mother, an old lady between seventy and eighty, who was living in Wooster, Ohio.

Mr. Wallace is a bachelor, and so the ties of affection between him and his mother are, perhaps, doubly strong. However this may be, the engineer started there and then for Wooster (he was staying at Washington at the time), and when he arrived at the house he told his mother of the honor which had been conferred upon him, and they rejoiced together. Then he explained to her how it would necessitate

An Exile of Ten Years at Least, and how more than possible it was that if he went he should never see her again. But the old lady is. pos-

sessed of a faith which rises above mere earthly partings, and, kissing him affectionately, she told him it was his duty to go, and go he must. So that night a letter was dispatched to the President accepting the appointment, and a few months later the famous engineer started for Panama.

It is difficult for one who is not an engineer to realise the immensity of the problems which have to be overcome in the construction of a work like the Panama Canal. In July last Mr. Wallace arrived at Panama strong in the determination not to return until the canal was completed and in operation. Never before had a man faced so colossal a task, but that 'Engineer Wallace,' if his life is spared, will see the completion of this task no one who knows him doubts for a moment. Before his departure the engineer delivered an address giving some particulars of the difficulties which would have to be overcome, in the course of which he said:—

'The construction of the Panama Canal involves problems covering the entire field of civil engineering. There are two big harbours to construct at Colon and Panama. Extensive surveys are to be made to determine which of the five plans proposed is the most economical and the most advantageous commercially. To determine the cost of locks and dams it will be necessary to make extensive borings. Great works must be constructed with a view to controlling the Chagres River, which rises from 20ft. to 60ft. sometimes in the course of twenty-four hours. This river follows the route of the canal for a distance of twenty miles. Immense reservoirs will have to be built in the mountains to provide a water supply for the upper reaches of the canal, to furnish power for lighting the canal with electricity throughout its length, and to provide water for adjacent cities.'

Curiously enough, eight years ago Mr. Wallace visited Panama and the canal, and inspected the works then being carried on by the French company. That he should ever be put in charge of such an undertaking never, of course, at that time entered his head. But, being an engineer, he was vastly interested in the enterprise and spent a considerable time at Panama gathering facts which have since proved of immense service to him.

In his paper addressed to the Commission, Mr. Wallace places

The Problems

which he will have to overcome under five divisions:—

First: There is the great problem of sanitation. All efforts will be made to keep from adding to the graves on Monkey Hill, that pest-ridden spot in which the bones of so many Frenchmen now moulder. Not only at the ends of the canal, but along its entire route, most insanitary conditions prevail. Panama and Colon, first of all, must be made sanitary, and in doing that a pure and adequate supply of water must be provided.

Second: Wharves, docks, and harbour protection must be constructed at Colon, for vast quantities of materials must be unloaded there for the construction of the canal proper.

Third: A harbour must be constructed at Panama. The present harbour at that port is now an open shallow roadstead, and the canal must be extended by dredging or building quays out into the deeper water of Panama Bay.

Fourth: A way must be found for diversion and control of the waters of the Chagres River, which runs along the course of the canal for a number of miles, and which at certain seasons of the year is subject to sudden and great freshets.

Fifth: Reservoirs to provide water-power for developing electricity must be constructed. The canal must be lighted along its entire length, and in addition to electricity for that purpose electrical power will be needed in operating much of the machinery used in constructive work.

German newspapers refer to the new Premier as "Herr Lord Campbell von Bannerman," and state that the last name is undoubtedly German. In France he is called 'The Messrs. Campbell Bannerman who have formed a coalition.' A Belgian newspaper calls him 'Le Baron de Bannerman of Campbell, in Scotland.'

The publication of an advertisement in a Catholic paper shows that the advertiser not only desires the patronage of Catholics, but pays them the compliment of seeking it through the medium of their own religious journal.' So says an esteemed and wide-awake American contemporary. A word to the wise is sufficient.

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