

On both sides of the Andes the engineers have had to contend against great natural obstacles incidental to the ascent of the mountains. The grades of the railroad are necessarily very steep in this region, the rise for a considerable distance being more than 40 feet to the mile. Comparatively speaking, the work in Argentina has been much less difficult than in China, where the Andes present an almost precipitous front to the Pacific. Before crossing the mountains the railway in

the Cumbre pass at an elevation of 12,015 feet. The total length of the railway will be 871 miles, but it will be impossible to run through trains because of the gauging of the extremely ferent localities, descending from a maximum of 5 feet 6 inches to a minimum of 3 feet 4 inches. This will not impair its usefulness to any noticeable extent, however, although it will assuredly cause the passengers inconvenience.

Even in palace cars the trip across the Andes is certain to be full of interest. The nature of the route in the mountains the road will be constantly threatened with interruptions arising from floods, storms or mud runs, in which the debris of the rocky valley is washed by a flood over the tracks for several feet.

The officials in charge of the work, however, say that the greatest precautions will be taken to guard against accidents from any of these sources. A powerful system of track watchmen has been instituted, the duties of the watchmen being confined to watching over the track just before the passage of a train and seeing that everything along the line is shipshape. Many passengers, moreover, will undoubtedly be affected by the high altitude, but every means will be taken to prevent any great discomfort from this source.

The value of the Transandine road, nevertheless, can hardly be overestimated. It is said that the great highway from the west coast republics of South America to Europe. It will shorten the time between Australia and Europe six to ten days, and it is believed that so soon as the service has been properly organized the Transandine railway will be utilized for the transportation of freight and mails from Oceania to North America and Europe. The state has made that one of its most immediate aims to be the establishment of a fast steamer service between New York and Buenos Aires, in which event trade between the two great continents of the western hemisphere will be greatly accelerated.

Obviously, the importance of the standpoint, from a southern American angle, will lie in the opening up of the great River Plate valley, the productivity of which seems to be without limit. River Plate valley soil is in fact so rich that it is boasted in the Nile delta, of rich black loam hundreds of miles deep. Thousands of acres of twenty feet about Buenos Ayres and Montevideo have been constantly cultivated for two not in the lapse of years has crop producing, and the land's fertility will thus have a fine Argentine opportunity to become a formidable competitor in the markets of the old world, to say nothing of an opening in

also figure in the construction of the road, which, by the way, was first proposed by an American, Henry Meigs, who came to Argentina in 1854. While a railroad which should run from the coast to the Argentine boundary. Much to the surprise of those who declared that his scheme was visionary, Mr. Meigs succeeded in pushing the project all the way up the Andes, but the enterprise the railroad has survived at intervals, but with little success, until the Argentine Republic caught the spirit of the times, became progressive and announced its willingness to lend a helping hand.