

# HEALTH AT PANAMA.

## YELLOW FEVER AND MALARIA ON UNCLE SAM'S TEN-MILE STRIP.

(Special Correspondence of the Deseret News by Frank G. Carpenter.)

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**P**ANAMA, April 2.—I want to give you some idea of the health conditions of the Isthmus of Panama. Most people think there is only a sheet of brown paper between this place and hades, and that our life is made up of a continuous fight with the climate. The truth is Panama would be a Paradise if it were not for the fevers. The air here is as soft and sweet as that of Ohio in June. This Isthmus is only about 40 miles wide and the breezes from the Atlantic and the Pacific are always blowing this way and that. We go about in our summer clothes, but the average temperature is about 80, the nights are cool, and toward morning one needs an extra cover. At Colón and in the other mountains of Uncle Sam's zone, it is still colder, and the air is still fresher. These conditions prevail about all the year round. It is never as hot as our Central States in midsummer and there is seldom a night when one is not able to sleep.

### NOT A HEALTH RESORT.

And still the Isthmus of Panama is not and never has been a health resort. The lowlands are swampy and there has been much malarial fever. About half the American employes here at one time or another been on the sick list and about 3 per cent of the 4,000 men at work here are now in the hospitals. We have had between 30 and 40 cases of yellow fever during the past year, and about one-third of the yellow fever patients have died. This is, not a high yellow fever death rate in a population of 40,000 or 50,000, and altogether the conditions are not bad considering the fact that we have just begun to wipe out the mosquitoes and to improve the sanitation and water supply. The percentage in the hospitals at present is not as large as at most of our army posts, and the malarial fever here is not to be compared in its injurious effects to the grippe, typhoid or pneumonia, which they have at home.

### LOOKING FOR TROUBLE.

Indeed, the man who comes to Panama is liable to get the fever from fright. The moment he leaves New York the passengers condescend with him upon the awful conditions. They go over the yellow fever cases of the last year, and the men who have been on the Isthmus tell stories of the deaths of the past. They relate how when the Panama railroad was building the mortality was so great that a man died for each he in the track, and some, perhaps, say that the funeral trains still move in and out carrying the dead to Monkey Hill. The truth is, there have been no such trains for many years, and the tie story is of doubtful authenticity. The passenger, however, does not know this. He grows more and more alarmed as he lands at Colon and is handed a circular of health warning by the quarantine officers.

This circular is issued by the canal commission. In capital letters the word "Malaria" stands out in the first paragraph, and below it are directions how to escape it. The directions say that malaria comes from the bite of a female mosquito, and they urge every one to use mosquito nets and take three grains of quinine each day before going to bed. The circular is signed by Col. Gorgas, the chief sanitary officer.

I received such a circular on landing. I heard more fever stories when I went to the Washington House for my dinner, and as I crossed the Isthmus on the railroad a rhoubah friend pointed out Monkey Hill cemetery as my future resting place and remarked: "That little station further on is known as Matachin, a Spanish word meaning 'dead Chinaman,' because 2,000 Chinese died there."

My fears increased as I approached Panama City and were by no means

allayed by a conversation I had upon arriving at the American legation, which has formed my home for a part of my stay.

Our minister to Panama, John W. Barrett, while he apparently has no fear of the fever himself, going everywhere and almost daily visiting the yellow fever wards of the hospitals, believes in being careful and in trying to frighten every American with whom he comes in contact into doing likewise.

When I entered the legation I found him sitting in the traditional ovi and as serious as one looking on the dining table of his best friend for the last time. He took me into his office and sat me down between him and a pot of Persian insect powder, which burned away, filling the room with a not unpleasant but pungent smoke. I afterward learned that this was to stupefy the mosquitoes or kill them on the wing.

Before I could ask him to what job he was burning incense, he began about the fever, asking me if I were afraid of it. I replied that I was, but that he who was born to be hanged would never be drowned, and I doubted whether Yellow Jack was to be the cause of my taking off.

"I hope not," said the minister; "and indeed, I don't want to alarm you; but a woman had the yellow fever in that building to the right, a man has just been taken to the hospital from the building over there, and a third party is lying below where we are sitting."

As he said this I felt my face growing yellow. The minister continued: "Still, the danger is not very great. It will only occur to you if you are bitten by a female stegomyia that has already fed upon a yellow fever patient. If its bloody jaws get into you, you are gone."

"A stegomyia," said I, pondering, thinking of the panthers, tigers, painted rabbits, iguanas and other dangerous beasts of the Isthmian jungles—"a stegomyia? What is a stegomyia? I never heard of it."

"The stegomyia is the yellow fever mosquito. It is about one-third the size of the Jersey mosquito. It is black and white with zebra stripes upon its body and legs. If a female of that breed bites a yellow fever patient its blood becomes inoculated with yellow fever bacteria, and in case she then bites you, you will have the fever sure."

my sleep, saying, "Go away, stegomyia! Go away!" I woke at 3 a. m. and took a lamp inside my mosquito netting to see that no stegomyias were lying in ambush. At the same time I called myself a fool for coming away from Washington, where there are no diseases more dangerous than grippe, typhoid fever, pneumonia and household's knee. Indeed, I longed for the thrill of again chasing myself from under the wheels of the senatorial automobiles and the Capital Traction cars, and had what is vulgarly known here as an attack of "cold feet." The feeling, however, left me as the day broke, and since then I have gone on like the fatalistic being, trampling on my three grains of quinine at bed time, and being careful of my eating and drinking. As a result, I have never been in better health, and I thoroughly enjoy life on the Isthmus. I am, however, under great obligations to Minister Barrett, whose emphatic lesson made me take care of myself. If others will adopt the same precautions they will reduce the percentage of disease here by several hundred per cent.

The chief diseases of Panama are, so the doctors say, all caused by mosquitoes. These diseases are yellow fever, malaria and elephantiasis. Each disease has its own peculiar kind of mosquito, and the female in every case does the work.

I had a talk with Col. W. C. Gorgas, the chief sanitary officer here, about mosquitoes. He is the man who cleared Havana of yellow fever and who has been brought here to do the same for the Isthmus. He tells me that there are about two hundred different kinds of mosquitoes in the world, each hav-

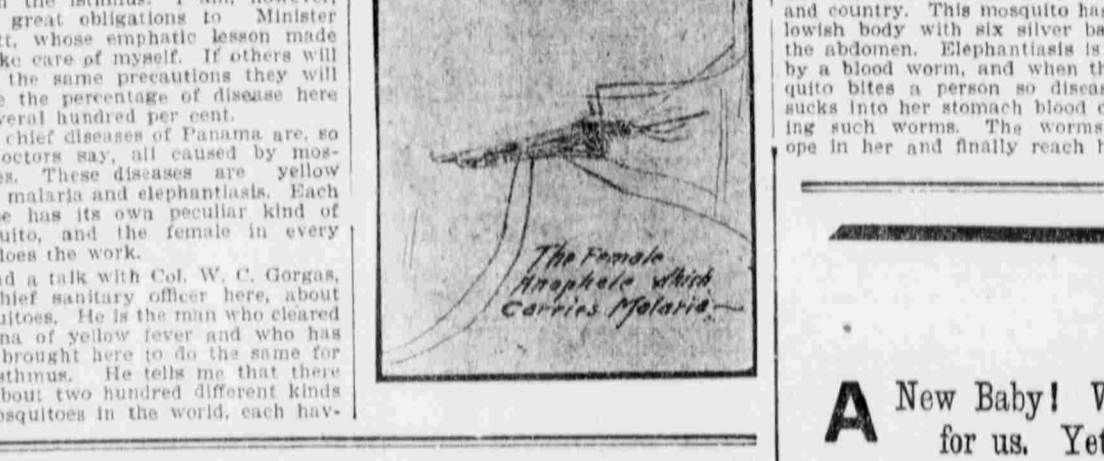
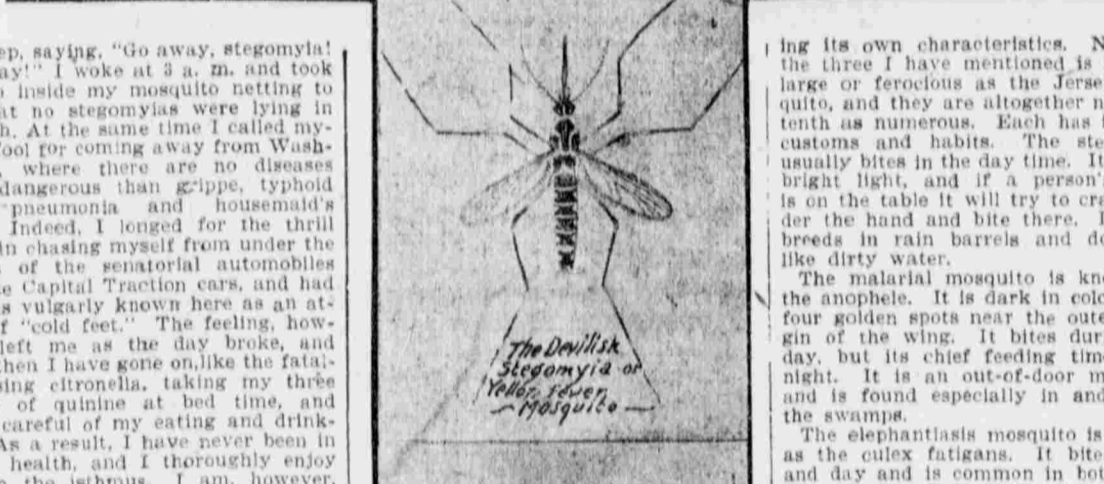
ing its own characteristics. None of the three I have mentioned is half as large or ferocious as the Jersey mosquito, and they are altogether not one-tenth as numerous. Each has its own customs and habits. The stegomyia usually bites in the day time. It avoids bright light, and if a person's hand is on the table it will try to crawl under the hand and bite there. It often breeds in rain barrels and does not like dirty water.

The malarial mosquito is known as the culex fatigans. It bites at night and is common in both town and country. This mosquito has a yellowish body with six silver bands on the abdomen. Elephantiasis is caused by a blood worm, and when the mosquito bites a person so diseased she sucks into her stomach blood containing such worms. The worms develop in her and finally reach her sal-

The Isthmus Not a Health Resort—The Terrible Mosquito and How He Works The Virtues of Citronella Oil and Quinine—How Uncle Sam Is Fighting Yellow Jack—Blood Tests From Schoolboys' Ears—Our Magnificent Hospitals—A Walk Through The Yellow Fever Ward.

GENERAL VIEW OF THE ANCON HOSPITALS.

(From a Photograph Taken for the Deseret News by Frank G. Carpenter.)



### RULE FOR JUDGING MEN.

The late William H. Baldwin, Jr., president of the Long Island railroad, was one of the most considerate and best liked of New York's large employers. Yet he had an inflexible rule in employing and discharging men. Speak once on that subject Mr. Baldwin said: "There is a rule that experience has taught me to be correct. It is a rule that I have used for years in my business, and that has not once led me astray. It is this—whenever I discover one of my men looking back with pride over his accomplishments, instead of keeping his eyes forward—well, that's quite enough for me. I don't wait for any positive offense. No matter how capable he may have been, I put a cross against his name, and he goes out at the first opportunity when a man gets to looking back on his record his usefulness is past."—The World's Work.

### BOBBY ON DOCTORS.

Doctors is the men that make it cost so much to be sick or to die, when you get sick then you are in bed and then your folks say well I guess we will have to send for the doctor, but none of them want the doctor to come until you have to have him or die and then you die sometimes anyhow.

there is a good many kinds of doctors, doctors that charge a good deal and also some that charge lots more, then there is horse doctors they don't charge so much, but they moast always have better luck with there pesents.

If a git to be a man I think I will be a doctor, then folks will call me Doc and hand me there munny & that will be better than being one of the folks and giving some other doctor my munny.

there is also I other kind of doctor that is a man that pulls teeth they call him a doctor too, but he hasn't got no snap bekaus he has to pull wimmens' and girls' teeth and thay yell jest like babies. When I got my teeth pulled I didn't yell and the doctor said you are a brave boy, and I guess he is rite.—Milwaukee Sentinel.

Saltair—Dancing tonight, 8 o'clock.

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John B. McDonald, the contractor who built the present subway in New York, has come forward with a proposal to build three immense subways in the city at a cost of \$165,000,000 and have them all ready at the same time—five years from the start.

ivary glands, so that when she bites another person she worms into circulation and he has elephantiasis. The doctors know all about the habits of such of these mosquitoes and they are doing everything to destroy them and their breeding places. For this reason they are draining the towns, cutting down the vegetation along the lines of the railroad and the canal, covering up the water barrels and cutting oil on ponds. The swamps are being drained and every bit of stagnant water in and about the cities is taken away.

### PRECAUTIONS AGAINST YELLOW FEVER.

The greatest precautions are taken to keep the employes from being bitten by mosquitoes of any kind. Every man is furnished with a mosquito net, and every American is supposed to sleep under a mosquito net at night. The yellow fever patients in the hospitals are kept inside wire cages in rooms with windows and doors of which are covered with wire netting, and every house which has the yellow fever is disinfected. Indeed, the whole city of Panama is being gradually thus treated. I daily pass through street after street, the houses of which show the marks of disinfection by the torn paper which has been tacked upon their doors and window cracks before fumigating. The other day a yellow fever case developed in the Grand Central hotel at Panama. This is the biggest hotel on the Isthmus. Every room of that hotel had to be fumigated in consequence. This disgusted many of the lady guests, as it necessitated their moving out for the day and endangered the beauty of their clothes.

### THE BEAUTIES OF ANCON.

Indeed, I don't doubt whether there is a more beautiful spot in the world than Panama. This is the place of which the lines almost straight on from the sea to the edge of the mountains, and the Culebra mountains, is a wide view of the mountains and the water. It is lower than the garden. Beautiful daisies shade their way from level to level, and these are surrounded by grass lawns and old cottages which make up the hospital. The houses are all of one story, with red roofs and many windows. They are surrounded by verandas and are so situated that the winds from the ocean and mountains blow through them day and night year in and year out. The air is never hot, and the windows and doors are so covered with netting that they can be always left open.

### MALARIA IS COMMON.

There is this difference between malaria and yellow fever. The man who has yellow fever and gets well need not fear having it in the future. The malarial patient may be attacked again and again, but the disease is seldom fatal. Malaria succumbs quickly to quinine, and it will be greatly reduced by wiping out the mosquitoes.

The doctors tell me that there are malarial germs in the blood of 70 per cent of the Panama people. One of our doctors on the canal zone has a passion for investigating such matters. He grabs every man he meets, American or native, and takes a drop of blood out of his ear. He analyzes the blood, and in seven cases out of every ten he finds malarial bacteria. In some of the natives the blood is so infected that they are just able to crawl about. A good course of quinine, however, usually cleans up their systems and makes them well again. Another doctor examined 44 children of a school at Bohio and found 29 to have malaria organisms in their blood. He gave each of these children six grains of quinine at night and morning for ten days, and then tapped their ears for a second examination. At this time only five were found to have malaria. In other words, by that course of quinine he cured 24 out of 29 cases of malaria in ten days. This work of the doctors is going on among all the employes of the canal

and other natives of the zone. The health organization is excellent, and the doctors are more liberal in their application of the wiping out of the yellow fever disease will be even more rapid than it is.

At Ancon there are already 50 beds and the arrangements are such that it will be possible to increase these to a hundred on short notice. An iron and cold storage room was set up here last year, a central steam kitchen which will feed the hospital patients.

The beauty of the Independent is never mind someone else talking on the line. Sounds incredible, doesn't it? The reason is plain. All individual lines Saltair—Dancing tonight, 8 o'clock.

It's like this—all the operators on the Independent are schooled in politeness. That makes it pleasant.

## A New Baby.

**A New Baby!** What magic, what mystery, what charm these words have for us. Yet, how infinitely more they mean to the mother. A new life; short, to be sure, but full of possibilities. Some one must be patient, hopeful, watchful, proud and never discouraged. That "some one" is the mother. She has heard her baby's first cry, and whether it be her first or tenth, the feeling is the same. Her feeble arms are out-stretched; those arms that will never desert it as long as the mother shall live. And that hand which supports the head of the new-born babe, the mother's hand, supports the civilization of the world. Is it any wonder, we ask you, mothers, that with all these responsibilities resting upon your all too weak shoulders, we urge upon you the necessity of selecting the babe's medicine with utmost care; the necessity of protecting your babe from worthless, unknown and narcotic drugs as you would protect it from the fire?

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