“RID NEW ORLEANS OF MOSQUITOES,”
SAYS WELLMAN, RETURNING FROM ISTMUS.

Dr. Croelington Wellman, director of the Tulane University School of Tropical Medicine, who, accompanied by Mrs. Wellman, made a visit to the Canal Zone, has returned to New Orleans very much impressed with the radical change in the character of the diseases prevalent on the Isthmus of Panama. Formerly the bulk of the cases were tropical affections, and now the large part is made up of ordinary diseases of the temperate climate. Yellow fever is now only of historical interest, having entirely disappeared from the isthmus.

Speaking yesterday relative to his trip, Dr. Wellman said:

“My visit to the Canal Zone was made in the interest of our School of Tropical Medicine, and through the courtesy of the United Fruit Company and of the canal officials, I had an unequalled opportunity of forming an opinion of the value of the work done. Colonel Gorgas, of the Canal Commission, and chief sanitary officer of the zone, placed all the resources of his department at my disposal, and I was thus enabled to secure an accurate impression of the splendid sanitary organization that has made the digging of the canal a possibility. C. H. Ellis, manager of the United Fruit Company, on hearing of my proposed visit, not only graciously granted complimentary transportation on the company’s steamers, but the various officials under him in Colon and Bocas del Toro were all most kind in affording every opportunity to inspect the medical and sanitary work.

“As a professional sanitarian, I am perhaps qualified to give an opinion on the splendid sanitary work at the Canal Zone, and I wish to say that it is above criticism. Only superlatives can express its value. One point which interested me is that the men doing the work do not believe that the health of New Orleans will be endangered by the opening of the canal. Strict quarantine regulations will sift out all the cases coming from the west coast of South America, and whose direct transit to our port would endanger the health of our citizens.

“Another striking thing is the radical change in the character of the diseases prevalent, comparing the old period and the present. Formerly the bulk of the cases were tropical affections; now the large part is made up of the ordinary diseases of temperate climates. Yellow fever, for instance, is now only of historical interest, having entirely disappeared from the isthmus.

“During the period of French operations the mortality reached as high as 60 per cent; now the zone is as healthy as New York. In Colon the green, slime-covered swamps then reached up to the railway station, and the mosquitoes were in clouds. Now the entire city is paved and drained, and a careful day’s search failed to find either a mosquito or a puddle, although it rained four times during the day.

“In Panama we did not even sleep under a mosquito bar, and the hotel was not screened, an insect single mosquito was in evidence.

“The measures which brought about this sanitary triumph are perfectly applicable to our own city, and with equal care and expenditure a like result could also be obtained here.”

Dr. Wellman considers the work at Panama the greatest object lesson to the world in all history, viewing it as a sample of what can be done in making the tropics habitable for the white race.

“I am glad to be known as an enthusiastic ‘booster’ for New Orleans, and in no way known to me can we do more to make New Orleans beautiful, attractive and desirable to the class of people we need than by copying the inspiring example set us by those in charge of the Canal Zone. We have here in New Orleans experts with the training and knowledge to direct such a forward step. What we need is an interested public, who will demand and be willing to support a movement that will place the Crescent City in the very vanguard of sanitary progress.

“Let us rid New Orleans of mosquitoes. This spells money, but it will be money well spent. We have the men to do the work. Our City Board of Health, the Federal public health officers among us and the Tulane Tropical Medicine School can each or all furnish the necessary expert advice and guidance, and would be overjoyed to do so. The question is: Do the business interests and the people of New Orleans want a cleaner, pleasanter, more attractive and more popular and charming city or not?”