

VENEZUELAN PROGRESS.

GENERAL RAFAEL QUESADA UPON THE PROSPERITY OF THE SOUTH AMERICAN REPUBLIC—THE PEOPLE ANXIOUS FOR AMERICAN INFLUENCES AND HELP.

Among the passengers by the steamer Caracas on her last trip from Venezuela to this city was General Rafael Quesada, who returns to the United States after a protracted visit to South America, where for the past seven months he has been engaged in a careful survey of Venezuela and a study of her resources. General Quesada is a Cuban by birth. He served with valor and distinction in the war of Mexico against the invading forces under Maximilian, and shortly after the end of that conflict he heard of the breaking out of war on his native isle and at once hurried away to lend his services to his struggling compatriots. He rendered very important aid, and with his brother, General Manuel Quesada, he was conspicuously energetic in fitting out expeditions from this country to Cuba. Speaking yesterday to a *HERALD* reporter of his observations in Venezuela he said:—"The country is prospering rapidly and every effort is being made to bring out the great natural riches with which it is blessed. There is plenty of push and energy in the people, and with the comprehension which they now have of the value and importance of modern improvements of every sort there is little doubt that within a few years these improvements will have a marked effect in pushing Venezuelan products in foreign markets."

"What are these improvements?"

"Well, there is now a force of 1,500 men at work upon the new railroad, which is to run from the capital, Caracas, to Lagunayra, on the coast. The men are natives of Venezuela, and are under the control and direction of English engineers. There is another railroad going forward which, when finished, will connect that part of the country in which the rich mineral deposits are located. The capital of Venezuela, and Bogota, the capital city of the United States of Columbia, have now direct telegraphic communication with each other. The road from Lagunayra to the mining district through Lagunayana will be 140 miles in length."

"How are the mines producing?"

"They are very rich. For instance, the mines of Callao produce 17,000 ounces of silver per month. Many of the mines are paying very handsomely, and this, too, with processes which are not up to the best modern standard. Besides the railroads I have spoken of is one which General Pulgar, who is a very able man, is constructing, and when they are all in working order we may expect to see something of the prosperity in Venezuela which has been noted in Mexico. A company of American engineers is surveying for a line to run from Valencia, in the interior, to Puerto Cabello. In the city of Caracas tracks are down for a street railroad. This is to be carried on by native capital and has been built by native engineers."

Speaking of the steamship lines, General Quesada said the vessels were iron steamships of American build and the run between the two ports was made in about seven days. It had been found, he said, that passengers wishing to go to Europe from Venezuela saved about four days by coming first to New York and here resuming their journey by one of the transatlantic lines. The European steamers take twenty days for a passage, while in that time one can make the round trip from Venezuela to New York and have a few moments left for a run on shore here.

FRIENDLY TOWARD AMERICA.

"What is the feeling toward America?"

"One of the greatest cordiality. The people wish to emulate the United States and are very anxious for the establishment of close commercial, social and industrial relations. President Guzman Blanco is a close student of your affairs. He reads your papers and keeps himself posted on what is going on here which may be in any way productive of good for his own country. There is no subsidy paid to steamship lines by the Venezuelan government, but there is always a quantity of freight waiting shipment at good paying rates, so that there is no trouble about a losing business on the part of the steamship people. There is a disposition on the part of the people to favor American goods. They prefer them because they come from America, and there are many Americans now in the country, but we want many more."

With regard to the political condition of Venezuela the General spoke most glowingly, giving many instances of the prosperity of the country in every department of the service, and stating that President Blanco had projected a scheme for the unification of the entire foreign and domestic debt at four per cent interest. He added:—"For many years there was a dispute between Venezuela and the United States of Colombia touching the boundary line between the two republics, but recently there was a very amicable arrangement reached by which the questions in dispute are to be left for the settlement of arbitration by the King of Spain. The war between Peru and Chile did not affect us in any way." In conclusion, General Quesada said they were getting large numbers, generally via the Canary Islands, from Europe; that the taxes were low and that Caracas was being made one of the most beautiful cities in South America.