

The Recent News from Nicaragua—Fact and Fiction.

NAPOLÉON, managing the subjugation of Spain through an imperial correspondence with his brother JOSEPH, the puppet of "that brief monarchy beyond the Appenines," instructs him in the use of the *lie* as a weapon not inferior to the sword, in the arsenal of conquest. He commands him to exaggerate, in bulletins, the number of his troops, the importance of his success, and the losses of his enemy. NAPOLÉON was not the first to discover, nor the last to use falsehood, as an offensive arm. Fraud and violence escort the genius of war on either hand. The heavy smoke of the cannonade is not denser than the cloud of deception that hangs over the movement of armies struggling desperately against powers that gradually absorb and destroy them.

The civil strife of Kansas, and the *fillibuster* war in Nicaragua, requiring on one or both sides the public opinion of the nation for their support, have been kept alive by the press. But from Nicaragua, more especially, where the channels of information are controlled by the power most deeply interested in the creation of a certain popular sentiment, misrepresentation has issued with a boldness and hardihood without a parallel. However weak in military knowledge, in the tactics of the field or of the garrison, the art to spare and economize the soldier, while using to the best advantage his force and courage, the managers of the *fillibuster* war, in due proportion to their declining strength, have employed most cunningly the skill of despair and the last refuge of weakness.

During the past five months, it has been impossible to arrive at certainties in regard to the number, condition, defeats, successes, or prospects, either of the *fillibusters* or their antagonists. This darkness and difficulty has defied the skill of the most enterprising press in the world,—that of New-York. Dozens of volunteer or special reporters have gone to the seat of war, but either themselves or their testimony have been suppressed or perverted. The groans and lamentations of the victims, heard remotely, are drowned by the noise of eloquence and victorious jubilation at home.

Looking long and attentively, we observe a slow and steady movement of the entire armed population of Central America flowing inward toward the focus of the war at Rivas. We see the waters of the lake made subservient to this movement, by large and fast sailing steamers. The frugal and industrious people of Costa Rica, volunteering in masses out of all proportion to the number of the population, allow the precious coffee crop, the wealth of their nation, to fall ungathered, while they labor to exterminate the common enemy. A people who are contending for their homes and patrimony—the laws, liberty and property bequeathed to them by their fathers—however dark in color, or low in the scale of civilization, command always the respect and pity of brave and honorable men.

The cause of *fillibusterism* is an unhappy one, both in its design and in its principles, and is thus far fruitless of good results; a waste of human prowess; pouring out in fields without honor, in contests that give no comfort in defeat or credit in victory, some of the best blood of the world. It makes heroism cheap and deprives courage of its reward. We may learn from it a lesson for the future, not to esteem the trade of a soldier as meritorious, except in a good service. Worst and basest of all, in itself considered, it requires patriotism and piety to confer upon it either dignity or merit.

Through all the latter stages of this remarkable contest, the want of principle has been naturally attended by want of talent. Not only the fatal climate of the Isthmus, but powers not less notorious and destructive, in the men themselves—cowardice, drunkenness, cruelty, and the lowest vices, have been the Allies of MORA and CANAS, in the defeat of WALKER. Col. TITUS, with 150 men, exercising a discretion which is the perpetual redemption of cowards, granted a truce of 24 hours to 25 of the enemy, until they "should obtain reinforcements!" The reinforcements arrived, and Col. TITUS retired, himself leading the retreat—so as to be always first in a good deed,—and not to give offence to that Providence which "favors the strongest battalion." Here was cowardice.

Cruelty is another shape of the protean Nemesis. On the 30th of January WALKER marched to San Juan del Sur with 200 rifles and rangers, twenty-two miles, to receive from California *forty-three* recruits. With this powerful addition to his force he goes back to Rivas, on the 3d of February, resolved to attack the fortifications of St. George. A march of twenty-two miles over a bush trail, in the Isthmus climate, requires that a day's rest should follow. HADRIAN, the emperor, had legs of brass, but his heart and brains were surely not of that metal. These weary men, two hundred in number, four days on short allowance, (why?) are taken up on the night of their arrival and dashed against the solid barriers of St. George. It was a third repetition of the old, foolish, fatal error, that whips on the soldier like a slave; the fault of a pedagogue, who scourges little boys over tasks from which insulted nature recoils. These tired wretches drag themselves two miles and a-half, to within rifle-shot of the western barrier. For once, the ever vigilant native sentinels are asleep. They are seven to one *fillibuster*, defended with high walls, and over confident. The fortune of war smiled in mockery, and again offers victory to this Tantalus who has betrayed the confidence of Heaven. Only fifteen of the two hundred will charge the barrier. With unparalleled foolishness they fire upon the masses of the sleeping garrison. They have neither bowie knives, pistols, nor bayonets. It is too dark to find an object. The garrison return a deadly fire. The *fillibusters* can only run to the loop holes and by chance shots kill a few. At this game, man for man, every feeble native is an equal, and they are seven times more numerous. Says an eye witness,—“The advantage of our men was always in the clear aim by daylight; or if at night, in close fight with knives and pistols; but we were deficient in small arms.” The Costa Ricans had nothing to fear; they knew that their antagonists were not able to dislodge them. With shameful retreat and heavy loss ended the night attack upon the well-fortified camp of St. George, two hundred famished riflemen in the dark against fifteen hundred bayonets and a solid wall ten feet high. Then followed, on the succeeding day, a silly cannonade, killing here and there a man at long

distances, and then a cessation and despair. Cruelty went first, guided by dense stupidity. Commanders who maintain an untenable fortress, when captured, are punished with death.

Observe the superior conduct of Captain FAYESSEUX on his vessel, as related by an eyewitness to the correspondent of the TIMES. “When you bring a force strong enough to compel me, *I will surrender*, not until then.” The answer is a key to the folly of the whole war. The force inadequate, the position (Nicaragua itself) untenable, WALKER holds out, a martyr to pride. This is no virtue, but a fault, and, when the results are considered, a crime.

The facts and predictions sent us by our correspondent from San José in Costa Rica—received two weeks since by the way of Havana—are confirmed and verified in a remarkable manner by the late arrivals, and the reports of persons who came by the *Tennessee* from the seat of war and its vicinity. The intolerable cruelties and butcheries practised upon deserters, who are shot down on the run, dragged into camp and finished by a brief and sullen order from the chief, are confirmed by universal report. By an examination of the reports of the Adjutant-General of the *fillibuster* army, we find recorded about three hundred desertions; to these it is necessary to add at least as many more not in the rank and file, who have escaped without passports. On the other hand, only 181 officers and men are “reported” killed in action. All deserters and runaways, when overtaken, are shot down, and if not killed on the spot, are brought in and put to death by a brief order,—no exceptions made or favor shown.

Wholesale butchery of one's own countrymen appears to us a crime above homicide or manslaughter. Not even the tyrant's plea of necessity will justify it, as its fruits are chiefly hatred and contempt. Sickly sentimentalists may admire the beauty of the flame that burns their houses; common sense abhors it. Then, however, there is not even the clear flame of victory, but only a smouldering, sickening smoke of error, falsehood and defeat. The boasted “fatality” of the Nicaraguan war is twin-sister to the gloomy fate of the Sonora expedition. Destiny, without strength or wisdom, is only doom.