

INTERESTING FROM COSTA RICA.

Our San Jose Correspondence.

SAN JOSE, Costa Rica, July 4, 1857.

Fourth of July Feas—The Transit Route—Arrival of Messrs. Webster and Harris—Interest of the Rival Commodore—Race for the Spoils—Vanderbilt Fur Ahead—Scenes at and around the Presidential Mansion—Politics and Peace—Industrial Progress—The City of San Jose: Its Buildings, Banks and Trade—Mr. Spencer Around—Feelings of the People towards him.

Circumstances having found me thus far from the city of my nativity and love on this gala day of Yankeeedom, I know not how better to employ my time, while the cannons are booming forth their thunder tones of praise and thanks to the Almighty Dispenser of Events for having marked the birthday of the greatest republic in the universe, than by joining quietly in the celebration, by narrating some little of what is passing in this out of the way place.

The steamer Panama arrived about a week since, bringing to our shores Messrs. Webster and Harris, from your city, seeking to secure from this government a grant of the right of way or transit across the isthmus of Nicaragua. The gentlemen made no delay in coming to this capital, and on their arrival here felicitated themselves with the idea that they would have a successful termination of their venture, having passed Mr. Vanderbilt's agent on the way, who, desiring to be first in the field, had taken passage in the United States sloop-of-war Decatur, from Panama, which vessel did not arrive until some three or four days after the Panama steamer, though she left about ten days before her.

They had miscalculated the wily old Commodore's foresight, and little dreamed that the same steamer which brought them to this country also bore duplicate propositions from Messrs. M. O. Roberts and Horace F. Clark (Vanderbilt's men, who had chestnuts for his advantage) which were in the President's hands some several hours before the arrival of Messrs. W. and H., who were somewhat lowered from their high horses when the paucity of their propositions was made apparent by contrast with the magnificent offers of Messrs. R. and C.

The crestfallen appearance which they presented after their interview with the President was so great that it was with difficulty they could be recognized as the same smirking gentlemen who an hour before were seen wending their way to the mansion of the head of this republic. I am inclined to think they will return to your city wiser, if not successful, men. Webster would probably have been more fortunate had he called himself with some home less talented with filibusterism than that of Charles Morgan & Sons, for I assure you that he was well thought of, and held in grateful esteem, by this people, for his successful coup de main, which enabled Costa Rica to seize the steamers on the river San Juan, and thus cut off Walker from the supplies of men and means which would have aided him to have held possession of Nicaragua to this day. But, grateful as they are, they cannot sanction the coalition with that house, which must ever be looked upon as the most persevering adherents to Walker's cause, and consequently the most energetic and dangerous of Costa Rica's enemies.

Though Anderson has not arrived, yet it is well understood that his suit will be successful, for he has written from the port that he bears other offers than those already forwarded, and this government wants money badly, to aid it in meeting the large expenses incident to the carrying on of its war with the filibusters.

Since the visit of Messrs. W. and H. to the President many articles have appeared in our papers, some denouncing Anderson as a traitor to his former employer (Webster), and others reflecting upon the house of C. M. & Sons for their complicity with Walker; the result of which will be that Roberts & Clark (i. e. Vanderbilt) will get the contract—for, in presence of the fact of the outraged sentiments of the people, it would not be politic in the President to grant the route to the other parties, even though they were willing to outbid their opponents, which I think they are not sufficiently authorized to do.

This country is now turning its attention to peaceful pursuits, and evidences are not wanting of an advance in the comforts of civilization, far outstripping anything to be found in any of the other Central American States. One can see that this is a people of industrious and progressive habits. San Jose is situated in the centre of the coffee growing estates of Costa Rica, which estates produce largely of the finest coffee in the world, mostly sent to England, where it commands a very high price because of its peculiarly delicious flavor. There is in this city a mint which coins most of the money used in this and the State of Nicaragua.

There are several fine buildings in this place which would compare favorably with yours in the States, among which I would mention as particularly beautiful the National palace, where the government holds its sessions. The scenery about San Jose is beautiful, and in many respects resembles that to be found about Newburg and Fitchburg on our own glorious Hudson.

This country has suffered much in consequence of the want of money facilities, a few men having control of that important element, who loaned it out at the inconvenient rate of 2 per cent per month. This state of things I am happy to say will soon pass away, as a bank is about to be established with a million of capital, under some such regulations as govern the banks in your State.

I had almost forgotten to say that the "Commodore" had nearly upset his dish by sending Spencer here as his agent. This man having been attached to the expedition against the San Juan river, as pilot, presumed upon his position, it is said, and assumed control, abused the men and made himself generally obnoxious; added to which the people fear and hate him alike. It was, therefore, very impolitic in Vanderbilt to have sent such an emissary to blow for him. Fortunately the wants of the country do not give it so clear a choice as that it may be over nice with men who offer money, and so Vanderbilt succeeds, notwithstanding.

Our Punta Arenas Correspondence.

PUNTA ARENAS, Costa Rica, July 7, 1857.

Trip of the United States ship Decatur from Panama—The Coast Charts Inaccurate—Scenery by the Way—Gulf of Nicoya—Punta Arenas Port and People—The Oysters and Coffee of Costa Rica—Sugar and Indigo Crops—Steam Travel on the Coast—Walker's Filibusters and their Treatment—The Sickness, Ulcers and Nakedness—A Call for Aid—The Rival Transit Route Negotiators—Their Sparring and Diplomatic Fights—Fourth of July Celebration—Accident on Board a Chilean War Brig.

As stated in my last communication, the United States sloop-of-war Decatur sailed from Panama on the 8th of June, with orders to visit Punta Arenas, a port of Costa Rica, and thence proceed to San Juan del Sur, on the coast of Nicaragua. After a voyage of twenty days, we have arrived at Punta Arenas. The sailing distance from here to Panama is about six hundred miles, but in consequence of the tropical calms, with which vessels have to contend in these latitudes, we had an exceedingly long voyage.

During the voyage Lieut. E. C. Stockton, acting as master, determined the inaccuracy of the charts which are used as guides in sailing along this coast; since, on more than one occasion, the position of our vessel, when compared with them, was some distance inland. These charts were prepared from surveys made by Sir Edward Belcher, of the royal navy; they are besides defective in this particular, that the high points of land which abound along the coast, and which would seem as important landmarks of navigation, have not been indicated. From the importance which the ports of this coast are of late beginning to assume, it would be well for our government to take such steps as would furnish the navigator with more minute and reliable guides.

During the voyage we had frequent views of the majestic mountains which constitute the coast range, swelling into more magnificent attitudes as they recede from the shore, and whilst their slopes were clad with perennial verdure, their peaks were lost in the clouds.

The Gulf of Nicoya is a beautiful sheet of water, its clustered islets, mantled with luxuriant grounds of forests, gleaming like masses of emerald, the surrounding mountains casting their shadows upon it, its gorgeous sunset scenes, quite equaling those of the Mediterranean, command the highest admiration of the stranger.

Punta Arenas, or "Sandy Point," is a long, narrow tongue of land, situated between an estuary and the main waters of the gulf. This has been formed by the action of two tidal currents, which, on meeting, precipitate the alluvial sediment that they gathered from the neighboring shores. Punta Arenas is situated upon this point of land, and takes its name from it. The place contains probably three thousand inhabitants, many of whom bear evidence of a larger admixture of the Castilian element, in the dark hair, the striking eye, the fair complexion and slender form than their dusky neighbors of the Isthmus. The town has a lighthouse, a town clock, and what is yet a greater marvel, a railroad of some ten miles. This road is for the benefit of passengers and luggage to and from the town during the rainy season, at which time the roads upon the low land of the cape become almost impassable; but instead of the cars being propelled by steam, they are drawn by mules. By this appliance, safety is increased at a loss of velocity.

The Gulf abounds in oysters of large size, but which often prove deleterious to Northern stomachs, as more than one unguarded stranger can bear evidence to.

Costa Rica is noted for the fine coffee which the country produces, being quite equal in quality to that of any part of the world. The people also cultivate considerable quantities of sugar and indigo, and appear in their habits of thrift and industry much in advance of their Central American neighbors. The coffee, sugar, indigo, and other articles which are produced in the western part of the State, are brought to this port, carried in large two-wheeled carts towed by raw hides, and drawn by oxen. The excellence of the Central American coffee, and especially the Costa Rican, is beginning to attract attention, and will no doubt finally render it a desirable article of commerce.

The Pacific Steamship Company have a couple of steamers—the Panama and Columbus—which ply along this coast as far north as the Bay of Fonseca. The terminus on the Pacific side of the contemplated Honduras Inter-oceanic Railway. These steamers make monthly trips, collecting cargoes of coffee, sugar, indigo, hides, &c., and so far, the voyages have yielded a handsome profit. Should the governments of the Central American States assume a sufficient degree of permanency to permit the resources of these countries to develop themselves, the ports of Punta Arenas, San Juan del Sur, Realjo and La Union would soon become important commercial stations.

At this time the following vessels are at Punta Arenas: the United States ship Decatur, the Chilean man-of-war, Ancud, the French bark Genie, of Bordeaux—loading with hides and coffee; the steamer Panama, which has just arrived, on her way to Panama.

There are near sixty men at this place, who were sent

merly attached to the cause of General Walker, but who when the General's fate appeared inevitable, having assurances of protection from the Costa Ricans, as set forth in the proclamations of President Mora, passed over to the latter. They represent that they were kindly received by the Costa Ricans until the expulsion of Walker from the country, being well fed and required to do no duty—besides, at their first reception being given a dollar, with which to buy a treat. But since the defeat of Walker, the tide of affairs has assumed a different direction, and instead of a coffee plantation or a hacienda of cacao, which many of them expected to get, they are now pensioners upon an allowance of a rial a day, equal to 12½ cents, an amount barely sufficient to sustain life. It would scarcely be possible to conceive men in a more squalid, miserable and wretched condition than that presented by this company. From several months residence at the New York Emigrant Hospital, Ward's Island, I thought my eye was familiarized with every possible feature of human suffering, but the horrible, unsightly, gangrenous ulcers under which some of these men labor, far surpass in their aggravated character any examples of this disease as seen in the wards of our Northern hospitals. Being destitute of shoes, and marching over rocks and through thorns, the feet of many of them, all lacerated and poisoned, are in a most dreadful condition, compared with which the bastinado would be merciful. From insufficient clothing the skin in some appears to have suffered slight abrasions, which from accidental contact with noxious plants have developed themselves into formidable ulcers, which scarcely yield to the most careful medication. Almost every one of the company is laboring under ague and fever. A day or two ago one died of dysentery. The government has assigned them a building, which has been converted into a hospital, but which has none of the conveniences so requisite to the comfort of the sick. In this hospital the sick and the hazards appear to dispute possession, and as respects numbers the latter appear to have gained the ascendancy.

Who is there among the advocates of the late expeditions to Central America who will contribute a mite to the amelioration of these unfortunate wretches, who will receive it with none the less gratitude, though they are gullies of desertion? Many have shed blood in the cause, and say they would never have abandoned it had they have had anything better than dogs and mules to live upon.

Dr. Hine, lately appointed United States Consul to this port, never fails to extend every courtesy to the visitors, and will doubtless render perfect satisfaction to all in his official capacity. He has just moved his residence to San Jose, the capital of the State. A residence here of several years renders the Doctor well acquainted with everything connected with the State and its people.

W. Cary Jones, entrusted with a mission not yet made known to Central America, in behalf of the United States, came passenger by the Decatur. Mr. Jones came well equipped for travelling the mountainous routes of this country. Capt. Thatcher and Lieut. Scott, of the Decatur, accompanied by Mr. Jones, are at this time on a visit to San Jose. They went up on mules, and the arrival of such a cavalcade will doubtless set the little capital astir. Captain Thatcher goes for the purpose of making inquiries relative to a couple of Americans who were formerly employed as engineers upon the steamboats on Lake Nicaragua, and are said to have been captured and imprisoned by the Costa Ricans. As the steamer Panama sails from here to-morrow for Panama, I will be prevented from giving the result of the Captain's mission by this mail.

Mr. Young Anderson and W. R. C. Webster, who recently returned to Costa Rica from New York, are at swords points in reference to the contract lately entered into by the latter with the Costa Rican government for the right of navigating the San Juan river. Webster, the representative of Messrs. Morgan, Garrison and Company, denounces Mr. Anderson in no measured terms, in an article which recently appeared with the signatures of Webster, in the Weekly Album, a paper published in both English and Spanish at San Jose. The commentaries upon the conduct and character of Anderson, as based upon the representations of the aforesaid article, were much milder as given in the Spanish portion of the Album than those of the English editor. The offensive terms in which Mr. Anderson is stigmatized are, in the opinion of his friends here, quite unmerited, who believe that the long established reputation of Mr. Anderson for honesty and probity furnishes sufficient guarantees against receiving any hasty imputations against his integrity. And it is further believed that a full investigation of the matters at issue between these gentlemen would result in the eliciting of facts that would cast a different light upon the case.

The Chilean brig Ancud, which is lying here, is commanded by Capt. John Williams, of English descent, and has on board one hundred and thirty five persons, officers and crew all numbered. She leaves here in a few days for Realjo, and thence to Acapulco, the ultimate limit of her cruise. She carries fourteen guns.

The Fourth of July was celebrated in this far off corner of the world in proper style. Our little man-of-war arose that morning gay as a bride, dressed in a mantle composed of the colors of every civilized nation. At midday her artillery poured forth a volley, and twenty one guns opened their thunder as a national salute in honor of the birth of Young America, and ere the echoes had relapsed to silence around the sunny crags of the neighboring mountains, they were awakened again by a similar volley from the Ancud, our Chilean neighbor. From the accidental discharge of a gun whilst it was being loaded on board the Ancud, two men were seriously injured, each losing an arm, and one of them his eyesight. Lieut. Chiz, acting as chief officer in command during the absence of Captain Thatcher, sent on board the man-of-war to acknowledge the compliment shown our country, and, also to express our regret at the accident which had occurred.

The Decatur is expected to proceed in a few days to San Juan del Sur, which is 120 miles from this place.