

Further Particulars of the Detention of the Northern Light—Letter of James L. White—Meeting Scene—Treatment of the District Attorney—Pursuit and Return of the Steamer.

We published on Tuesday, an account of the discovery of an expedition formed in New York, for Nicaragua, to sail on that day in the steamer Northern Light; the action of the United States authorities in the premises, the attempt of the steamer to leave port in defiance of legal notice to remain, and the fact of her being subsequently overhauled by a United States revenue cutter, and brought back. Accompanying these various statements was a letter from the Hon. John McKeon, United States District Attorney for New York, to Joseph L. White, Esq., the counsel of the Transit Steamship Company, setting forth all the facts of the case, and cautioning the company as to the consequences. In this letter Mr. McKeon stated that Mr. White had admitted to him that Parker H. French, the new minister to the United States from Nicaragua, had applied to him (Mr. White) to grant about 500 men to Nicaragua, under an alleged decree granting to colonists a bounty in land. That as common carriers he would carry all who intended to expatriate themselves, and to do all themselves of the so-called decrees, but that he declined to carry armed men, or an organized company, or persons who had enlisted, or intended to enlist on reaching Nicaragua.

Mr. White, before seeing the letter of Mr. McKeon, wrote to him disavowing any intention to convey or dispose of persons to Nicaragua or persons designed for military purposes after arriving out, and giving assurance that the object of Mr. French, as well as the steamship company, was to take out colonists, without arms, and even without a view to enlistment in Nicaragua. Mr. White further goes on to say:

It is proper, however, to say to you, that if the Government of Nicaragua wish to send "munitions of war" by any one of our ships, for the use of the State, we shall always take such "munitions" on payment of the freight therefor, no matter what party or parties, or what person or persons may for the time being administer the Government of the State. The Transit Company is a corporate body, created by the law of Nicaragua, and ever must and will recognize the Government which may be established there by the popular will, and in this respect the conduct and course of the Company will never, in any degree, be controlled or influenced by the course or conduct of the Government of the United States.

Should this Government find it convenient, from any motive of public or private policy, to refuse a recognition of the present Government of Nicaragua, we shall not regard it as a precedent to be followed by us, nor shall we follow it. Our duty is a plain one. We owe allegiance to the Government of Nicaragua, and every obligation which such allegiance imposes we shall to the letter discharge.

In the view which you take of the "Clayton and Fowler treaty" I do not and never can concur. And when you state that "I am aware that by the terms of the convention between the United States and the government of Great Britain, the United States are bound to repress all attempts at colonization in the territory of Nicaragua," I am constrained to say that I am not, never was, and never shall be, aware of any such thing.

Nor let the United States or Great Britain designed by the convention to which you allude to "repress all attempts" or any attempt to colonize the territory of Nicaragua by individuals.

The first article of the treaty of the 16th of April, 1850, to which you allude, provides that "the governments of the United States and Great Britain will, neither the one or the other, occupy or fortify, or colonize, or assume or exercise any dominion over Nicaragua." &c.

In a careful perusal of the treaty you will discover, that the prohibition to "colonize" applies only to the two governments in their corporate character. An attempt by the Hon. Parker H. French, in obedience to the government of Nicaragua, whose representative he is, to send colonists to Nicaragua, to become citizens of Nicaragua, can hardly, according to my judgment, be considered into a "colonization" by either Great Britain or the United States.

The treaty in question does not assume to go the ridiculous length of prescribing to Nicaragua whether she may colonize her territory, or if she may so colonize, by whom, or from whence the colonists may come. These are questions to be decided only by the sovereign will of Nicaragua, the exercise of which she has not delegated to either the United States or Great Britain.

You object to the authority of Col. French on the further ground that "the source from which the encouragement of colonization in Nicaragua is said to proceed, is not recognized by this government as the government of Nicaragua."

So far as the validity of the present government in Nicaragua is concerned, it is perhaps fortunate that it does not at all depend on the recognition of it by the government at Washington. The people of Nicaragua have both the authority and the power to establish a government for themselves and they have established one. It will be new to them, as it is to me, that the United States hold any supervisory or other control over their political action.

Whenever a government may be established in Nicaragua, and of whatsoever kind, and however the same may be changed or modified, are questions which affect only that State, and which are to be decided by them alone.

There is but one government there now, and it exists by the will of the people. Is there to be no law in Nicaragua?—no civil tribunals—and is the State to be blotted from the map of the world because the United States refuses to recognize a government which it has no power to establish, and no authority to dissolve?

This government the "Transit Company" did not establish—but, being established, and then being no other in the State, and no prospect of another, we owe it obedience, and to it we must look for the protection pledged in our charter for the enjoyment of our privileges. Otherwise, we are a corporate body in a State without a government, and under laws, with no officials to administer them.

After stating that he has no knowledge of any one carried out by the transit company ever attempting a breach of our neutrality, Mr. White adds—

"When the President was making every commendable effort to prevent the departure of Henry L. Hunney on his marauding expedition against Nicaragua, the company, as you well know, seconded these efforts by refusing to convey a man to Nicaragua, although hundreds of applications for passages were made to them. And in more than one instance passengers who had paid their fare in California, and desired to stop at San Juan del Norte, were compelled by our captain and agents under instructions from the company, either to proceed or return to New York."

Mr. W. has the following postscript to his letter;—
P. S.—Since writing the above I have seen your letter published in the Herald, and also a conversation said to have taken place between the Hon. Parker H. French and yourself, in which you threaten to break up our line. Had I been aware of this impudent boast, my reply would have been of a different character. The sooner you begin such a manumission's undertaking, the sooner you will learn that grandiloquent boasting has no terrors for us. So long as we obey the laws of this country as we ever have done and will continue to do, we have nothing to apprehend from their justice, or the vindictiveness of Government officers."

The New York Sun of Tuesday thus describes the scene at the wharf on Monday, when the Northern Light attempted to sail with some 350 young men whose ages ranged from 17 to 25 years, and many of whom were tagged and intoxicated:

As the hour of departure drew nigh, the crowd upon the wharf and steamer momentarily received large accessions, and the anxiety in reference to whether she would be allowed to sail without let or hindrance, more intense. About half past two o'clock, officer Hyer, of the United States Court, with three or four assistants, arrived on the ground and ascended on board. Not finding the captain, they found the chief engineer that the vessel was belled and must not be started. In a short time the captain arrived with the custom house clearance, when the marshal served upon him the process, and ordered him not to leave the wharf.— He declared that he knew nothing of the matter, and Joseph L. White, Esq., agent of the Transit Company, said that the vessel could not legally be detained by such a warrant, and should sail promptly at the hour appointed. On being informed, however, that the warrant authorized the marshal to seize and detain certain articles on board, he stated that under these circumstances the steamer should not sail. Mr. White then left the steamer with the intention, as he stated, of visiting the District Attorney's office.

About one o'clock U. S. District Attorney McKeon arrived on the ground, whose advent was met with a storm of hisses, groans and execrations by the crowd on shore and on the steamer. Perceiving that the gang plank was about being removed, he took his station upon the end of the gang plank leading to the wharf, and shouted to those endeavoring to draw it ashore, "Do not touch this gang plank, this vessel cannot go!" Then turning to the parties on board the steamer he said, "boys! you must come ashore—the steamer can't go!" At this time a most horrible and infernal din was created, yells, groans, oaths, and infernal din were heard. "Smash his mug," &c., filled the air, till it was utterly impossible, at the distance of a few feet, to hear what the District Attorney was saying. A clerk from Mr. McKeon's office at this moment handed him a telegraphic despatch. He then turned to the party on board the steamer and shouted, "I have just received this despatch from the President, authorizing Capt. Bigelow to detain the vessel. I will read it."

DESPATCH.

ATTORNEY GENERAL'S OFFICE, }
Washington, Dec. 24, 1855. }

John McKeon, U. S. Attorney, N. Y.:—President has ordered Capt. Bigelow to arrest and detain the vessel on your advice, and desires you to act accordingly. CUSHING.

The scene at this time was for confusion and disturbance, and creditable. The rage of the parties

on board the steamer and their friends on shore, seemed to know no bounds, and several symptoms of an intention to attack the District Attorney were manifested. One gentleman got up on the plank by his side, and in a very enthusiastic manner shouted, "I will stand by you, for you are standing by the law." Mr. Horton, an officer of the U. S. Court, also took his place beside him, when Mr. McKeon enquired of him, where were the marshals who have charge of the libel against the vessel, to which he answered that there were four on board at that time. A second attempt being made to remove the plank, Mr. McKeon, who, by this time, what with personal danger, abuse, and the circumstances in which he was placed, was necessarily much excited, told them in emphatic language, "You must not pull it in; I will hold you each responsible for a violation of the laws of the United States;" and turning now to the perfectly frantic passengers, he shook his fists at them and shouted, "Will Americans not obey their own laws? If not, you must be forced to."

Finding that his presence there was useless, and deeming that it was predetermined that the steamer should sail, even if in defiance of the law, the District Attorney left the wharf and proceeded to the office of the Transit Company, where he was met by Joseph L. White, who immediately on perceiving him inquired what he wanted. In reply Mr. McKeon read the President's dispatch, and ordered him to detain the vessel. Mr. White's reply was unique and very much to the point: "I don't care a d—d— for the orders of the President, you or anybody else;" and he expressed a very ardent desire to give Mr. McKeon a "licking," and took the trouble to follow him a few steps and invite him to return, that he might have that pleasure. This abuse the District Attorney, considering his temperament, took very quietly, and immediately proceeded to the barge office, where he met one of the custom-house officers, Mr. Van Buskirk. He stated to him that he wanted the United States cutter, and read to him the dispatch. Mr. Van Buskirk said that the cutter was at his service, and would be got ready in a few minutes; but as the utmost expedition was necessary a steam tug which was laying off in the stream was engaged, and directed by the District Attorney to take the cutter in tow, and proceed up the North River, opposite to where the Northern Light lay, and if she attempted to leave her wharf to fire into her.

In the meantime, the crowd on the wharf were growing impatient to see the steamer off. The generally received opinion on all hands seemed to be, that the vessel would not be allowed to depart, and on the part of not a few it was expressed with execrations and curses upon the government, and its officials who were concerned in the detention. About half past three o'clock, however, Mr. White again made his appearance, and, it is stated, gave orders for the steamer to start. At all events, the planks were drawn ashore, the lines cast off, and amid loud cheers, the waving of hats and what once were handkerchiefs, and a parting swig at their bottles, on the part of the crowd on board, who joyously drank the health of and good bye to their friends in sight, the vessel slowly steamed out into the river and down the bay.

A large portion of the wharf party now rushed to the Battery to get a view of the steamer as she went down the harbor, and by the time she had reached Ellis Island, the Revenue Cutter, towed by the steam tug, was observed steering a course from Buttermill Channel which would enable her to intercept the steamer before she could reach the Narrows. Great anxiety and interest in the development was now manifest in the party on the Battery. Their doubts, if any they had, in reference to the designs of the cutter, were soon dispelled. The smoke of a gun shot forth from the bows of the cutter, soon followed by a second, and the Northern Light was observed to stop her engines and lower her flag. The cutter then changed her course and steered directly for the steamer, and concluding they had at length seen enough, the crowd slowly, and many of them dejectedly, left the Battery.

It seems that the first gun fired by the cutter was with a blank charge, which was entirely disregarded by the officers of the steamer, but served to awaken the fears and check the hilarity of the passengers, at their supposed escape from Uncle Sam's jurisdiction. The second was more effectual, being round shot, and fired over the steamer, taking effect in the rigging. The engines were stopped, and the vessel lay to, until boarded by the Captain of the cutter, when a second cutter by this time having arrived, the steamer's head was turned, and she steamed up the bay opposite to Jersey City, where she cast anchor in company with her two unwelcome escorts.

The Express states that each member of the expedition was supplied, on Friday night last, with a common black button, on presenting which on board he was supplied with a free ticket.

The Herald of yesterday says:

The Northern Light is still anchored off the Battery, and near by lay the steamer Vixen and the revenue cutter Washington, with their guns bearing upon her. The "fillibusters," or those who had got on board without tickets, were put on shore at two o'clock on Tuesday morning, in a towboat. They numbered about two hundred. By order of the District Attorney, an examination was made for tickets among those on board, and those who were without tickets were placed under arrest. About twenty were arrested and put in the keeping of Capt. Faunce, of the revenue cutter Washington, who has the Northern Light in his charge. The District Attorney received letters yesterday from the Attorney General, in regard to the course the government intended to pursue towards the parties suspected in the expedition. The cargo of the Northern Light will be examined to-day.

Captain Tinklepaugh, of the steamer, and G. Fowler, the engineer, charged with resisting the U. S. officers, in taking the vessel to sea, have been held in \$20,000 bail to answer. George B. Hall, a passenger, charged with violating the neutrality laws, has also been held to bail. Among others arrested were Mr. Male, editor of the Nicaraguan, Dr. Gisner, Captain Lyster, George B. Hall, (colonel of the regiment,) A. Farnsworth, (the captain of the regiment,) and Jos. N. Scott, agent of the Transit Company. The Tribune says:

The United States authorities have been furnished with affidavits and documents—which they deem irrefutable—showing that a wide-spread movement has been commenced all along the Atlantic seaboard of the United States to send men and arms to Nicaragua, for the purpose of organizing an army in that State, to descend upon Cuba and San Domingo, and wrest them from their present possessors. After the consummation of this design, the parties interested in the movement propose to unite into one confederacy the State of Nicaragua and such other portions of Central America as may be acquired by conquest or otherwise, Cuba and San Domingo, and either to set up a separate republic, or to apply for admission into the American Union as slave States. It is alleged that thousands of the most reckless adventurers in the Atlantic cities have already been enlisted in this movement, and that the ranks of the would-be invaders are daily augmented by extensive accessions from the interior.