

PANAMA, June 3, 1857.

*Col. E. J. C. Kewen and the Picayune's Panama Correspondent.*

"The more recent apprehensions of the friends of Nicaragua have been awakened by the correspondence of the New Orleans Picayune, published in the journals of Memphis yesterday. That such a tissue of inconsistencies and absurdities should receive the credence of any reflecting person, is no more surprising than that a respectable newspaper, ostensibly friendly to the progress of Americanism in Nicaragua should so long retain a correspondent, who has undoubtedly and scrupulously absolved himself from any suspicion of ever having written a truth in relation to Walker or his army. The whole course of Francis W. Rice, the Panama correspondent of the Picayune, has been characterized by an unscrupulousness of exaggeration and a profligacy of misstatement that would do credit to the mendacious accomplishments of the basest employee of the Wall street capitalist."

[Kewen, in the N. O. Crescent and Memphis Eagle.

I have known E. J. C. Kewen for about eight years. His glib qualities have passed into a proverb on the Pacific coast, yet I am free to admit, that until he became Nicaraguan Emigration Agent, he would not make use of a fib when the truth would serve his purpose just as well. Since then, he seems to have entirely discarded the fair Goddess as an undesirable companion.

In the same missive that contains the foregoing attack upon me, E. J. C. K., who has not been in Rivas so lately by several months as your correspondent, makes the following assertions:

"Walker's position at Rivas is impregnable to the assault of the allies, however formidable their forces may be. The leagued States of Central America are incapable of concentrating an army within six months, which could give any serious annoyance to the present position of Gen. Walker."

The armies will be compelled for the most part to remain within their fortifications, and Walker is more amply provided for this necessity than the oft-defeated, discouraged and impoverished army. In the meantime, he can reach the American army by way of Panama and the Pacific."

After this, it would seem to be scarcely necessary I should make any defence against the elegant adjectives of the Nicaraguan emigration agent; but in justice to the Picayune, I cannot forbear to recount a few truths I have told and its readers.

Under date of San Juan del Sur, February 2, I wrote you that Castillo and San Carlos had been made too strong for a successful attack upon them by the river force. Lockridge's retreat proved this.

Same date: "Walker's whole force before the battle of St. George amounted to 800 fighting men." By this I meant all who were fit for marching. See Gen. Walker's letter to Randolph, dated March 22, to prove this. Kewen and his friends were constantly asserting that he had 1,300 fighting men at Rivas.

Same date: I put the sick and wounded in hospital at 150. See letter of Walker to Randolph in proof.

Same date, I said: "Cut off his supplies and men, he may last three months." He lasted two days less.

In a letter dated 3d March, I think, I said: "Walker's men are rapidly deserting him. Nineteen men left in a body from one company, and eleven from another." Gen. Walker says: "One whole company—Farrell's—went off in detachments. This company was made up of Stockton gamblers." Kewen and his friends said the stories about desertions were lies.

I said that Gen. Sanders was defeated at Jocote, March 4. This was denied. Gen. Henningsen says: "Sanders, with 125 men, gave way before 200 of the enemy. His loss in killed was thirty-seven men." The enemy lost two or three.

About April 3, I put down Walker's force as not exceeding 400 fighting men. March 21, Walker puts it at 332.

Two steamers since, I wrote you that Walker could hold out but a few days longer, and that his only chance of escape was by the St. Mary's. I would ask Col. E. J. C. Kewen why Walker left, if his position was impregnable, and if he escaped by the St. Mary's or not.

But it is useless to pin the gallant Colonel tight against the wall. It does not trouble me to be called an "employee" of Vanderbilt by Col. Kewen. That is an old dodge when a man gets in a tight place, and cannot dispute your facts.

In my correspondence with the Picayune, I believe I have never given any opinion as to the justice of Gen. Walker's cause, but have confined myself entirely to a statement of such facts as have come under my own observation, or which I have adopted from others after a careful investigation as to their correctness. And I challenge Col. E. J. C. Kewen, or any other man, to place his finger on a single statement I have ever made, which essentially varies from the truth, as tested as it always has been by subsequent information.

In regard to the Colonel's hint to the Picayune, that it ought to dismiss its Panama correspondent, I have but little to say. When I commenced my correspondence, I naturally supposed you wanted the truth, even if it were unpalatable to you or your readers. I did and do not think you wanted any thing else.

In conclusion, I would say that Col. Kewen's assertion, that my correspondence has awakened the apprehension of the friends of Nicaragua, is proof positive, in my mind, that they believed my statements rather than his.

F. W. R.