

THE RECENT ENGAGEMENTS.

The W. I. Royal Mail steamer *Trent* arrived at Aspinwall, from San Juan del Norte, on the 21st ult.

Particulars of the recent engagements are given in the correspondence of the *Aspinwall Courier*, and the statement of the purser of the *Trent*:

CASTILLO, February 17.—Mr. Editor: On the 13th of this month, at 6 A. M., we opened the ball with the enemy in line style; three brass six pounders and 250 rifles, sending our friends in and about Serapiqui a pressing invitation to leave for home. In ten hours we threw 400 round shots among them, knocking the fort and houses to pieces, and making it too hot for Costa Rican courage to withstand. At dark they evacuated the fort, leaving 4 brass guns, 350 Minnie rifles, a large quantity of provisions and ammunition, and all their wounded. At day light on the 14th we took possession, and the same evening our little boat, (the *Rescue*), with 150 men, started for Castillo, arriving on the 15th. We cut off the greater part of the enemy from the fort, which is now so closely invested that there is no hope for them but surrender. On the 16th we cut from under their cannon the steamer *J. N. Scott*, the largest and finest boat on the river. Some of the prisoners tell us that the enemy have no provisions.

The poor prisoners are as grateful for a good meal of victuals as men can be; their wounded are receiving the same rations and treatment as our own men.

Our loss at Serapiqui was three killed and seven wounded—the enemy left seventy killed and forty wounded in the fort. The forces were nearly equal, our number having been 410, and that of the enemy 430, as we ascertained by their own muster rolls.

As soon as the prisoners are able, they will be furnished with canoes and allowed to go home, as the great part of them have been pressed into the army. To-morrow, February 18th our guns, (now 9 six pounders,) will open on the last hold Costa Rica has on the San Juan river, and fall it must.

In haste, yours, &c.,

DEL NORTE.

P. S.—I forgot to state our killed and wounded at Castillo were—killed, 1; wounded, 3.

SAN JUAN DEL NORTE, Feb. 18, 1857.

On the 13th two deserters from the Walker party arrived here, and on the following day three more; they reported the Costa Ricans at Serapiqui strongly fortified, and as having successfully resisted several attacks.

On Monday last the news reached here that Serapiqui was in possession of Colonel Lockridge, having been abandoned by the Costa Ricans on the Saturday morning previous, after a fierce cannonade from the Walker party on Friday, and that Colonel Lockridge had proceeded up the river to take the fort at Castillo Rapids.

Yesterday the *Rescue* arrived down here with Colonel Lockridge and several officers, but, as usual, very little information could be obtained from them; four men, taking advantage of circumstances, left the *Rescue* at Pontu Arenas, and are here now. They, with several others, leave here on the English steamer. The first rumor was, that Castillo and one or two steamers were taken, but from the last information the present state of things seems to be that the Costa Ricans have burnt all the houses at Castillo, and also the river steamers which were below the Rapids, and are in possession of the fort. The *Rescue*, after taking on board some provisions, &c., returned up the river again. Before leaving, Colonel Lockridge posted the following proclamation in various places in town:

NOTICE.—To the citizens of Nicaragua and all whom it may concern: Having succeeded in opening the San Juan river as far as Castillo Rapids, I now inform all those who wish to pass or trade on the river that I offer the fullest guaranty that they shall be protected in their rights, property and persons, on all occasions which I have promulgated as orders to all who are subject to my control to be strictly carried out.

I make the proclamation from the fact that evil-disposed persons and enemies of the Republic of Nicaragua have accused me of the most heinous crimes, all of which are false.

I come to restore tranquility and peace to Nicaragua, and not to molest peaceable and well-disposed persons of any nation, save those belonging to the Central American States, with which we are now at war.

S. A. LOCKRIDGE,

Emigration Agent for the Republic of Nicaragua. Done at Castillo Rapids, this 17th Feb., A. D. 1857.

The proceedings of Col. Titus and his men, after taking possession of Codj's Point, on the 7th ult., are thus detailed by Lieut. Col. E. H. McDonald:

The next morning, Com. DeBrissot and a volunteer called "Kentuck" went over in a canoe, pulled down the Costa Rica flag and hoisted the "Lone Star" of Nicaragua—all the enemy having abandoned the point in the night. Upwards of 400 stand of English Minnie muskets were left scattered on the ground. Col. Frank Anderson's command crossed in the steamer and took possession of the enemy's works, chattles, &c., finding thirteen dead bodies in the principal fort, probably all killed by the artillery of Gen. Wheat. Fifty men of this command were detached for burying the dead of the enemy, which amounted to thirty-three. Persons taken said they had been badly treated and worse fed, living on beans and plantains alone. Five pieces of artillery—four brass 6 pound pieces, and one iron 9 pound piece, with corresponding ammunition, were found; also fifty thousand rounds of Minnie rifle cartridges in good condition, and a large quantity of damaged ammunition, 250 pairs pantaloons, 40 bushels of beans and 6 barrels of salt, but enough kettles and pans for ten thousand men.

The same night the steamer *Rescue*, or *Filibuster*, as some of the boys call it, took up the forces of Col. Titus and one 4 pound gun to the Island of San Carlos, which was taken without any resistance; the boat returned to Serapiqui and took up all the stores needed at the above post, and then proceeded up the river in pursuit of the steamer *Charles Morgan*, which had gone on with the news of the Costa Ricans having left Serapiqui. The latter boat had four hours start, and the *Rescue* came in sight of her just as she went over Castillo Rapids. The Costa Ricans had tar and resin on the steamers *Scott* and *Cacahuca* and all the buildings of the town. At the moment they saw the *Rescue* they set fire to the boats and buildings, and at the same time they opened a heavy fire of round shot and grape from the fort on the hill. The lower fort on the river was taken by storm by Captain West's company, of Col. Titus' command. Four men jumped from the steamer, swam against a six-mile current, cut loose and saved the steamer *Scott*, although the machinery was very much injured. All the furniture and bedding of the National Hotel were saved. All other houses, with all their contents, were destroyed.

In taking the fort, the enemy lost forty-five, while we only lost one, killed.

The Costa Ricans are still fifty strong on the high fort of Castillo, cut off from water and provisions, and surrounded by our forces. On the 18th the fort was to have been taken by storm. By this time that is done, and communication has been established to Walker.

E. H. McDONALD,

Lieut. Col. 2d Rifles.

Mr. Jewry, the purser of the *Trent*, gives some important information. He says:

The Royal Mail steamship *Trent* arrived at Greytown on the 11th Feb., and found there the British men-of-war, the *Cossack*, *Tartar*, *Victor*, *Pioneer* and *Intrepid*. The *Orion* had gone to Pearl Bay in consequence of the unsafe anchorage outside, her draught of water being too great to permit her coming into the harbor; the crews are said to be all healthy.

After the capture of the river boats the other day, Mr. Scott the agent, with surprising speed and energy, prepared a boat (called the *Rescue*) and dispatched her up the river, but from her not having returned, reasonable fears were entertained of her having fallen into the hands of the Costa Ricans, but which were dispelled by her making her appearance.

On Sunday news reached Greytown that Walker had repossessed himself of Serapiqui; from the inquiries I have made of those there, it would appear that, on the 13th, Walker's party attacked that place about 5 A. M., with a force of 200 men and two nine-pounders, the Costa Ricans holding on till about the same time the following day, when they evacuated, and Walker's people took possession after sustaining a loss of two men killed and three wounded. From a statement of a prisoner in hospital, it appears the Costa Ricans had a loss of fourteen killed and about twenty wounded.

The *Rescue*, above referred to, confirmed the Serapiqui accounts, and brought further news of the fall of Castillo into the hands of Walker's people on Monday, with a loss of eight killed and twenty wounded; it is conjectured the Costa Ricans lost not fewer than thirty-two killed and sixty wounded; some of the accounts say many more. They also repossessed themselves of the steamer *J. N. Scott*, but her machinery had been so much injured that they were unable to bring her down till repairs are effected. The *Rescue* had on board Colonel Lockridge, who came down for provisions of which there are an abundance at present in Greytown. The British naval authorities here are preventing recruits from being forcibly compelled to join Walker, who claim

their protection. Some very disgraceful scenes are at times enacted on board those river boats. It was only the other day a man's cries of murder awakened the attention of the commander of the *Victor*, (moored over by Scott's factory) who discovered that he had been threatened with his life, and a pistol held at his head for protesting against going up to fight. Of course the interference had the effect of rescuing the man, and about fifteen others, who fell out of the ranks, upon their being mustered at the desire of the naval authorities. A report also was about that two Englishmen had been hanged on board the last river boat that went up, in consequence of which Captain Cockburn, of the *Cossack*, at present senior naval officer, detained Colonel Lockridge and the *Rescue*, on her arrival yesterday, until he fully investigated the case, and after rescuing three men claiming British protection, he allowed them to proceed, I suppose, being satisfied of the falsity of the report.

The *Aspinwall Courier* adds: We have also another statement in private letter, declaring Serapiqui, Castillo and San Carlos to have been taken by Walker's forces. This last account gives the number of killed and wounded as follows: 7 killed, 10 or 12 wounded, of the filibusters; 100 killed, 200 to 250 wounded, of the Costa Ricans.

We are informed that among the papers taken at the fort were dispatches signed by Gen. Mora, and addressed to President Mora, supplicating for reinforcements, and declaring it impossible for him to hold on much longer without them.

FROM THE SOUTH PACIFIC.—The Pacific Steam Navigation Company's steamer *New Granada* arrived at Panama, February 21st.

From Peru we learn that Castillo has taken Paiza and Pura. We are also informed that the mission of the Minister to Lima, from Costa Rica, who went to negotiate a loan has been unsuccessful, and considerable bad feeling has been engendered by the conduct of the Minister, and the treatment of him by the Peruvian Government.

We take the following from the *Valparaiso Mercury*, of the 31st of January: "Through the representations of a young gentleman, Mr. William Cox, Government has decreed the organization of a party to explore the river Rio Negro, in the South, by which, according to traditional rumors, a water communication may be found uniting the Atlantic and Pacific oceans. With this object an expense of \$3410 has been decreed; but that, convinced of its insufficiency for the object proposed, Government intends increasing the sum in order to insure the success of the expedition in all respects.

BOLIVIA.—Our last advices state that Republic to have remained in peace after the revolutionary attempt which was discovered and overcome in time.

BRAZIL.—The yellow fever was ravaging the country, and on this account the ships arriving thence at Montevideo and Buenos Ayers were subjected to quarantine.

FROM BOGOTA.—The *Aspinwall Courier* of the 27th ult., publishes the following:

On the 27th and 28th of January, Mr. Morse was presented to the Secretary of Foreign Affairs and the Acting President of this Republic, but no definite understanding had transpired from these interviews. Congress met on the first of February. The President's Message and the reports of the Secretaries had been received and published. The message takes the position heretofore assumed, respecting the 15th of April affair, by the Secretary of Foreign Affairs, though the tone of the message is moderate, and the Secretary is more violent, more prolix and more unconciliatory than ever. The opinion in Carthage and in some other parts of the interior, among the foreigners, seems to be that the mission of Mr. Morse will not have a peaceful result. We cannot see any cause for apprehension; Mr. Morse was well received, and the unfavorable messages to which we have referred, emanated from the outgoing Administration. The incoming one is now organized, and with it he has to negotiate.

THE DEED SCOTT CASE.

THE DECISION OF THE SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES.

Chief Justice Taney, in delivering the opinion of the Court, said that this case, after argument at the last term, was directed to be re-argued at the present term, owing to difference of opinion existing among members of the Court, and in order to give the case more mature deliberation.

There were two leading questions: first, had the Circuit Court of the United States for the district of Missouri jurisdiction in the case? and if it had jurisdiction, was its decision erroneous or not?

The defendant denied, by plea in abatement, the jurisdiction of the Circuit Court of the United States on the ground that the plaintiff "is a negro of African descent, his ancestor were of pure African blood, and were brought into this country and sold as slaves;" and there fore the plaintiff "is not a citizen of the State of Missouri." To this plea the plaintiff demurred, and the Court sustained the demurrer.

Thereupon the defendant pleaded over, and justified the trespass on the ground that the plaintiff and his family were his negro slaves; and a statement of facts, agreed to by both parties, was read in evidence.

The Chief Justice having stated the facts in the case, proceeded (in a tone of voice almost inaudible) to say, in substance, that the question first to be decided was, whether the plaintiff was entitled to sue in a Court of the United States. This was a peculiar question, and for the first time brought before the Court under such circumstances; but it had been brought here, and it was the duty of the Court to meet and to decide it. The question was simply this—can a negro, whose ancestors were imported and sold as slaves, become a member of the political community formed and brought into existence by the Constitution of the United States, and as such, become entitled to all the rights and immunities of a citizen, one of which rights is suing in the courts of the United States in cases therein specified? In discussing this question we must not confound the right of a citizen which a State may confer within its own limits, with the rights of a citizen within the United States. No one can be a citizen of the United States unless under the provisions of the Constitution; but it does not follow that a man, being a citizen of one State, must be recognized as such by every State in the Union. He may be a citizen in one State and not recognized as such in another. Previous to the adoption of the Constitution every State might confer the character of a citizen, and endow a man with all the rights pertaining to it. This was confined to the boundaries of a State, and gave him no rights beyond its limits. Nor have the several States surrendered this power by the adoption of the Constitution. Every State may confer the right upon an alien or upon any other class or descriptions of persons who would, to all intents and purposes, be a citizen of the State, but not a citizen in the sense used in the Constitution of the United States. He would not thereby become a citizen of the United States, and therefore could not sue in any court in the United States; nor could he enjoy its immunities of a citizen in the other States. His rights would be strictly confined to his own State. The Constitution gives Congress the power to establish "a uniform rule of naturalization;" consequently, no State, by naturalizing an alien, could confer upon him the rights and immunities of all the States under the general government. It is very clear, therefore, that no State can, by any act, introduce a new member into the political union created by the Constitution. The question then arises, whether the provisions of the Constitution of the United States in relation to personal rights, to which a citizen of a State is entitled, embraced negroes of the African race, at that time in the country, or afterwards imported, or made free from any State; and whether it is in the power of any State to make such a one a citizen of the State, and endow him with full citizenship in any other State without their consent? Does the Constitution of the United States act upon him, and clothe him with all the rights of a citizen? The Court think the affirmative cannot be maintained; and if not, the plaintiff could not be a citizen of Missouri within the meaning of the Constitution; nor a citizen of the United States, and, consequently, not entitled to sue in the Courts.

It is true that every person, and every class and description of persons, at the time of the adoption of the Constitution, regarded as citizens of the several States, became citizens of this new political body, and none other. It was formed for them and their posterity, and for nobody else; and all the rights and immunities were intended to embrace only those of State communities, or those who became members according to the principles on which the Constitution was adopted. It was a union of those who were members of the political communities, whose power, for certain specified purposes, extended over the whole territories of the United States, and gave each citizen rights outside his State which he did not before possess, and placed all rights of persons and property on an equality.

It becomes necessary, therefore, to determine who were citizens of the several States when the Constitution was adopted. In order to do this we must recur to the Colonies when they separated from Great Britain, formed new communities, and took their place among the family of nations. They who were recognized as citizens of the States declared their independence of Great Britain, and defended it by force of arms. Another class of persons, who had been imported as slaves, or their descendants, were not recognized, or intended to be included in that memorable instrument—the Declaration of Independence. It is difficult at this day to realize the state of public opinion re-