

TARRYING IN NICARAGUA.

PLEASURES AND PERILS OF THE CALIFORNIA TRIP IN 1849.



IN the last days of 1848 a number of young Yale graduates, bound together by almost brotherly friendship and the intimate association of long years of school and college life, were suddenly seized with a longing to join the throng that from all parts of our country was working its way by every known and unknown route to the newly discovered gold-fields of California.

They did not go primarily to dig for gold. With some of them that was but a remote contingency. But their professional studies were completed, their old companionship was broken up, and they were feeling the sense of isolation and discouragement inevitable to the early months of professional life, when all business worth having seems already captured by the older and more experienced. In this transition state, and with warnings for some that eyes or health were giving way, they were prepared, like tinder for the steel, to take fire at the enticing stories, then filling our papers and flying from mouth to mouth, of this new region of fabulous wealth, with its fruitful ranches and wonderful scenery, its free, adventurous life, its genial climate, and its golden opportunities for each in his own line, and to respond to its call to come in and possess the land, and to help in the founding of a great State.

There is no corner of the earth that seems now so remote as California then seemed. To go by the Howland and Aspinwall steamers, then sailing with tolerable regularity to Chagres once a month, would involve long delay, for they found that every passenger-ticket had been sold for many months ahead. Moreover, there was often great detention in crossing the Isthmus, and always fever there. But there were plenty of other ways to choose from. The daily papers were crowded with advertisements of new and much-lauded routes, for which enterprising men were getting up companies to be put through safely "in sixty days," the "rapid transit" of the time. Brigs and schooners from the smallest to the largest were withdrawn from other work and hastily cleaned and fitted up for "a limited number of passengers" to go round the Horn, or to some one of the many ports on the Atlantic from which a quick cut

across to the Pacific, and to whatever vessel chance might there bring them, was feasible.

At length the interesting character of the region to be crossed, together with the pleasing address and beguiling promises of the projector of the enterprise, led the Yale men to decide on Gordon's Passenger Line via Nicaragua and Realejo.

The story of this trip is given in extracts from letters written home at the time chiefly by one who went to California only to find an early grave. We give below a copy of the receipt given him with a statement of Gordon's plan.

State Room Passage.

GORDON'S PASSENGER LINE

TO

SAN FRANCISCO, via LAKE NICARAGUA AND REALEJO.

Received of ROGER S. BALDWIN, JR., the sum of one hundred and thirty dollars being in part for his passage to SAN FRANCISCO, in the above line.

On payment of Balance, One Hundred and Thirty Dollars, this Receipt secures to him passage in the *Mary*, Captain Hayes, from New York to San Juan De Nicaragua, from thence per Steam Boat *Plutus* to GRANADA, on Lake Nicaragua; or, navigation permitting, to Managua, Matiares or Nagarote on Lake Leon, as may be most convenient for landing; and a passage from Realejo, on the Pacific, to San Francisco, with Hammock, Bed, and Bedding for the voyage, and Camp accommodations during detention on land, *en route*.

The following provisions will be provided, viz:

FOR BREAKFAST.—*Coffee and White Sugar—Ham, Fish, Sausages—White Biscuit—half a pound Preserved Fruit to each ten persons.*

FOR DINNER.—*One third of a quart of Soup made from Kensett & Co.'s preserved Soups—Salt Beef or Pork—Potatoes, Hominy, Peas, or Rice—Rice or Flour Puddings.*

FOR SUPPER.—*Tea and White Sugar—Ham, Fish, or Sausage—White Biscuit—half a pound of Fruit Marmalade to each ten persons.*

The above is to be served up during the voyages, and on the Lake and Land transit, circumstances permitting.

Saloon Passengers will be expected to form into Messes, and the Gentlemen in rotation to receive and serve up their own meals from the Cooks (in the manner pursued in the U. S. Service). Passengers who take State Rooms will have a Steward provided who will expect a fee of \$5 from each passenger. The provisions are alike in both cases.

One Hundred Pounds of personal Baggage will be carried free if packed in round covered Valises or Bags weighing not more than 125 lb. each package; freight above that weight taken at \$6 per 100 lb. Passengers

are expected to assist in packing, stowing and unloading Baggage and provisions if necessary.

Any extra charges for passports, or transit Duties to be borne by each passenger. The general Customs Business will be transacted by an agent of the Line at San Juan or San Carlos without charge.

Gentlemen Passengers, if required, will have to walk from Granada or Lake Léon to Realejo (1½ or 3 days' march).

The Line provides an agent to charter vessels at Panama, Acapulco, and other Pacific Ports, so as to avoid detention at Realejo.

In the *unexpected* event of Vessels not being procured, \$75 of the passage money and 60 days' provisions will be refunded to each passenger at Realejo, which will procure passage in the Mail Steamers which touch there.

On the arrival of the passengers at San Francisco each passenger will have handed to him

1 Barrel White Biscuit.

½ Barrel Flour.

1½ lb. of Tea, in ½ lb. leaden packages.

6 lb. of Ground Coffee, in 1 lb. leaden packages.

15 lb. White Sugar.

1 Cheese (boxed up) about twenty pounds.

Which will furnish one person with all necessary provisions, except meat, for three months.

Every Gentleman passenger is required to provide himself with a Rifle or Musket. All Powder must positively be placed in the hands of the Agent of the line.

GEO. GORDON.

They were to leave New York the first week in February, and before the second week of April to be in San Francisco, ready, among the earliest, to seize the opportunity and to take the tide of fortune at its flood. Day after day they met the brig at an appointed hour, but nearly three weeks dragged on before she sailed.

SAN JUAN DE NICARAGUA [GREYTOWN],
March 20, 1849.

DEAR M—:

We left New York the morning of the 20th of February in a fine little brig with one hundred and thirty-six passengers, bound to California by the untried route of Nicaragua, and under contract to be put through in sixty days. After pitching about in a gale which caught us off Bermuda, one fine morning we awoke and saw Hayti lying on our right, and all day were sailing under its bold, beautiful shores.

From that time we scarcely moved a sail, but came across the Caribbean Sea direct to San Juan, with a wind always just aft, clear skies by day, and bright moonlight nights. More delicious weather I never experienced. On the morning of March 12 we made the land of the Mosquito Coast, and, running down twenty or thirty miles, came to anchor in the afternoon in a snug little harbor at the mouth of the river San Juan. I never was more surprised than at my first view of this place. I had expected it would be like Chagres, a collection of huts on some low, marshy point, and utterly destitute of everything like beauty or

interest; but I found it one of the prettiest and most charming little places it was ever my happiness to fall into. As we came in it looked just like a picture. The little bay with its three or four islands, skirted by a fine beach, on the outside of which a heavy surf was rolling, while within all was calm and still; the steep, thatched-roofed cane houses clustered together at its head relieving the dense forest behind; and the dimly seen summits of the far-off mountains of Nicaragua, made to me one of the most beautiful landscapes that I ever beheld. My heart fairly bounded with delight, and in these forests I had many a fine ramble. How strange it seems to be walking under orange, and lemon, and tamarind, and palm trees; to be picking guavas and mangos; to be breakfasting on alligator steaks and dining on wild boar! You should have seen me this morning, sitting under a cocoanut tree, from which I had shot a nut of just the right size, cutting the end with my machete, and drinking the rich, pulpy milk, watching with one eye a couple of suspicious-looking lizards and with the other a troop of some fifty monkeys who were performing all kinds of antics for my sole amusement. I went some four or five miles into the forest, and everything about me was so strange, so different from our New England woodlands through which I have been accustomed to wander, that I felt really inclined to doubt my own identity. On one hand would be a great cactus with leaves fifteen or twenty feet long and full of bright crimson flowers, on the other long trailers hanging sixty feet from great tamarind and dye-wood trees. Palms were about me the buds of which were five or six feet long. In the little swamps some beautiful varieties of calla were in bloom, and in the branches of the trees were some of the most brilliant birds you would ever see — macaws and paroquets. Now and then I would start a wild turkey, and about noon had a double shot into an immense drove of wild hogs, but both unsuccessful. I take great delight in these rambles. Every day, while some of our party are reclining in their hammocks and complaining of the heat of the sun, I am tramping through the woods with my rifle or fowling-piece on my shoulder, or paddling about the bay with fishing-rod, or exploring among the islands or up the river, getting as much enjoyment as I can out of our detention here. We have hired a little piragua by the week, and a number of pleasant days I have spent in it on the water. All kinds of fish abound here, both in the river and in the beautiful lagoon back of the village, and if I tire of catching them I can have a hunt after guavas or a shot at a pelican, or into a flock of ducks by way of variety. I doubt if I ever was in better health in my life. The mercury rang-

GOING UP THE SAN JUAN IN A BUNGO.



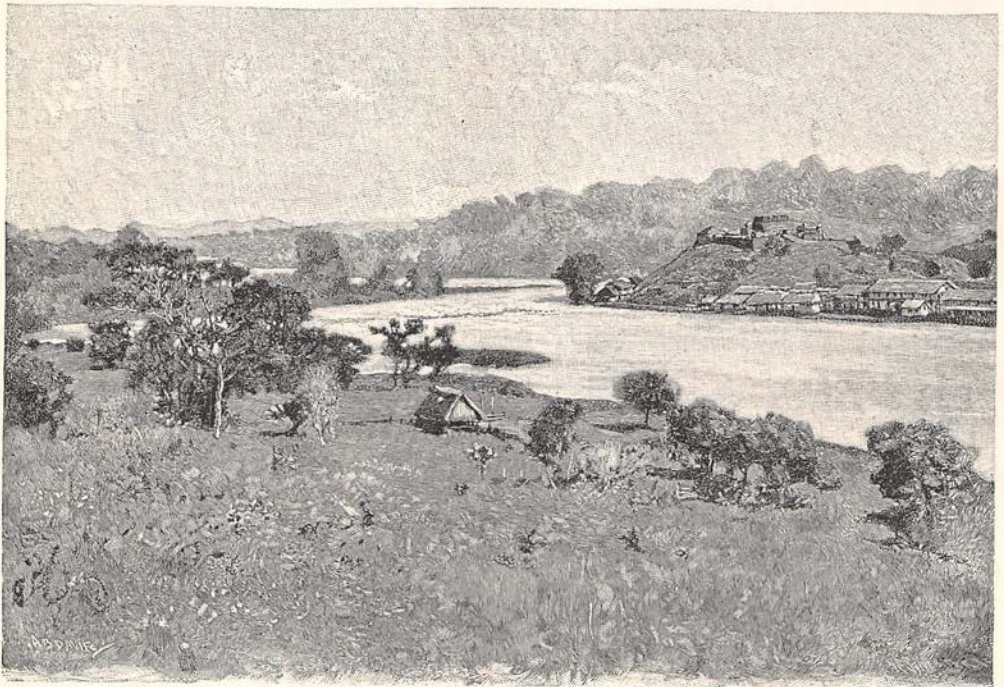


ing from seventy at night to eighty or eighty-five at noon, and the sea and land breezes blowing with refreshing regularity. Every morning we are down from our hammocks by sunrise and in for a bath, not regarding in the least the sharks and alligators, which may be floating within twenty feet of us.

CITY OF GRANADA, CENTRAL AMERICA,
May 24, 1849.

You will be surprised to receive this letter bearing this late date and written by me still

so far from the end of our journey. But it is too true that although "sixty days" and thirty more have elapsed, I am no further advanced than to this old city. After a detention of three weeks at San Juan, the boiler and machinery of the steamboat which was brought with us, and had been put together, were condemned as worthless, and the company left to proceed up the river, half in bungos and canoes, the other half on the remains of the steamboat. B—— and I had the sole occupancy of a bungo. Our captain, or padron, proved to be the kindest and best on the river, our boat's crew the most efficient, and we were considered the most fortunate of the company. What to many of our party was a voyage full of hardships and danger to us was the pleasantest part of our journey. The San Juan is a fine, noble river, abounding in fish, dotted with islands, and lined on each side for its whole extent with forests the exceeding beauty of which no pencil could paint or pen describe. The deep verdure of the foliage, the many brilliant flowers, the long waving palm leaves, the graceful festoons of the vines and mosses intertwining themselves in a



UPPER CASTILLO, LOOKING DOWN THE SAN JUAN RIVER, CASTILLO RAPIDS IN THE CENTER.
(FROM A PHOTOGRAPH BY O'NEIL.)

thousand different ways, we were never weary of admiring. At night our piragua would be drawn up by some sandy beach, and we would spend an hour hunting turtle or iguana eggs and catching fish, which with coffee made us excellent meals, and easily cooked. For two or three hours we would walk up and down in the moonlight; then rolling ourselves in our blankets and lying down among the boatmen, we would sleep as soundly amid the roaring of alligators and cougars, as ever I did in my bed at home. At dawn we would be wakened by the matin song of the boatmen, and during the day, when we were not gazing at and conversing about the strange sights and scenes through which we were passing, reading and study made the hours glide pleasantly away. So passed eight days, when we came to San Carlos, where the lake meets the river. Here we changed piraguas, and after two days' detention set sail for Granada. We were sorry enough to part from our captain, Mercedes, who had really quite endeared himself to us; and his crew were all a fine set of fellows. We soon found we had not bettered ourselves, for scarcely three hours out there had like to have been a pitched battle between the bungo men with their machetes and the passengers, now increased in number to eight, and all well armed. A few well-directed blows, however, settled the matter.

It was the 13th of April when we entered Granada—but I will give you an orderly, book-like description of the place where it has been my unexpected lot to tarry the last five or six weeks. The first object which indicates its vicinity to the traveler who may be navigating the clear waters of the lonely mountain-girt lake of Nicaragua is a high volcanic peak which rises five thousand or six thousand feet boldly from the shore, with, when we saw it, every rocky point sharply defined against the western sky, but which, at this season, night and morning veils its head in clouds. On a nearer approach he sees running northwardly from its base a long, wide beach of very fine sand with a ruined fortress standing midway upon it. This beach seems to him to be of a curiously variegated black and white color, and he gazes at it with wonder; but as he draws still nearer these appearances resolve themselves into piles of clothes and groups of tawny-skinned

women vigorously engaged in restoring the clothes to purity. Their process of doing this is somewhat peculiar. The women seat themselves in about knee-deep water, and, taking the clothes as they are passed to them by little



FORT SAN CARLOS AND LAKE NICARAGUA. (AFTER A PHOTOGRAPH BY O'NEIL.)

naked children, rub them over with a saponaceous herb, and then, after soaking, pound the clothes on flat stones with all their strength—and here they are by no means the weaker sex—until not only every vestige of impurity leaves them, but, if any fine or delicate fabric comes into their hands, until its substance often vanishes in passing through the ordeal. It needed only the loss of a few shirts and handkerchiefs to convince me of this. These washerwomen are the first sign of the city, for as yet no mark of habitation is visible. The piragua nears the shore, and an anchor is thrown out. A bold bungo man leaps into the water, the stranger places himself on his shoulders,



LANDING AT GRANADA.

and, if not a long-legged man, is borne dry-shod to the land. At this moment a dozen men on fine horses come rushing by at full speed in a torrent of dust and exclamations. The traveler is somewhat surprised, and, seeing at a distance twenty or thirty others likewise bearing down upon him, begins to grow uneasy;

but being told that they are passing only for amusement, his fears are quieted, and he admires the grace of the riders and the spirit of the steeds. Then, leaving the lake directly behind



WASHING ON THE SHORE OF THE LAKE.

him, he passes up some one of half a dozen roads leading to the city, bordered on each side by hedges of prickly cactus inclosing fields of plantains and pines, and he smiles to think how precious in our northern conservatories would be the very weeds he is treading under his feet. As he ascends the gentle rise he meets long files of women walking along with a firm, erect step, balancing on their heads large earthen jars of the capacity of from two to four

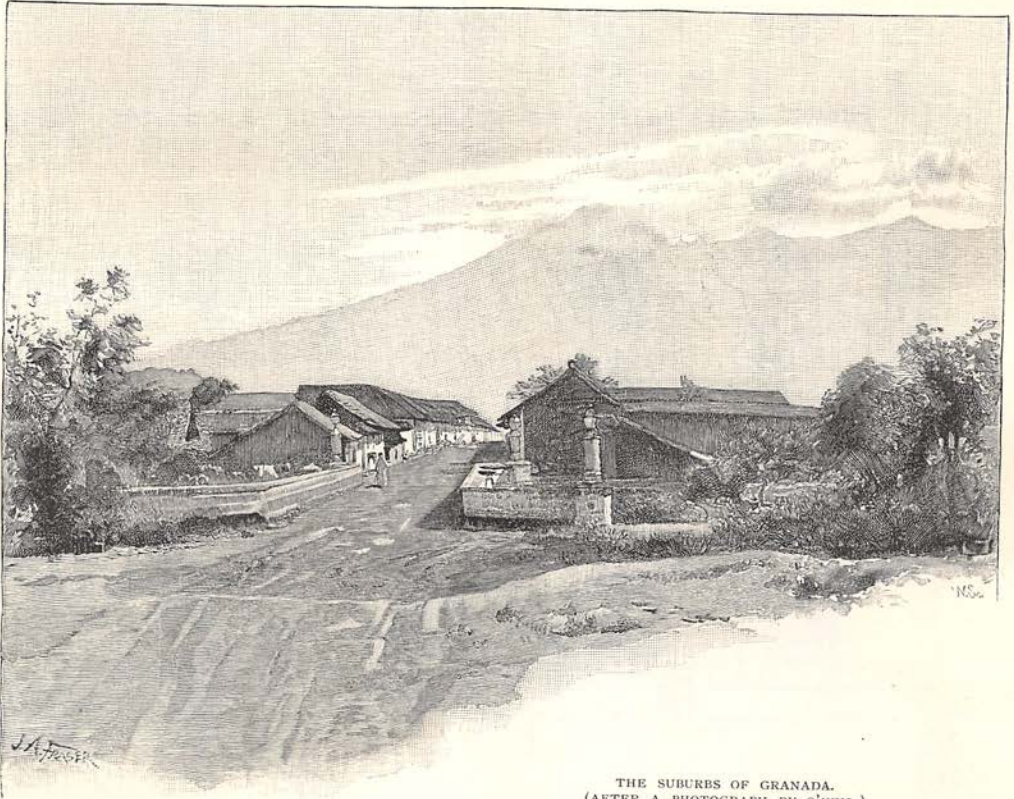
gallons, with which they wade into the lake, and, filling them, return to the city, oftentimes singing as they go, and forming in their singular costume a scene quite interesting. At the distance of half a mile from the lake the stranger enters the suburbs, and begins to see before him the broken towers of the old time-worn churches, from which, at any hour of the day, a dozen clear-toned bells are chiming. In the suburbs live the lower classes or laboring



A STREET IN GRANADA.

population, if they may be called so in a country where a man rarely works if he has a "pe-seta" in his pocket to buy him his dinner. The houses are mere huts of cane thatched with palm leaves, many of which a strong man might carry away on his shoulders. All colors may be seen, but most are of the Indian shade, and of children and dogs there appears to be an infinity. Most of the young ones have their hair cropped to within a sixteenth of an inch of the skin, with the exception of a few locks in front, and it makes them look like little fighting cocks.

but the sidewalks are only about two feet wide, and are raised high up from the streets, which are inundated in the rainy season. Moreover, as the windows of all the houses project a foot or so from the side of the walk, an inexperienced passenger in the night is apt to return home with several depressions in his hat and corresponding elevations on his head. These houses, in consequence of their being built directly on the street, with walls three or four feet thick, large heavy gates, and iron-barred windows without blinds or glass, give the streets a somber and



THE SUBURBS OF GRANADA.
(AFTER A PHOTOGRAPH BY O'NEIL.)

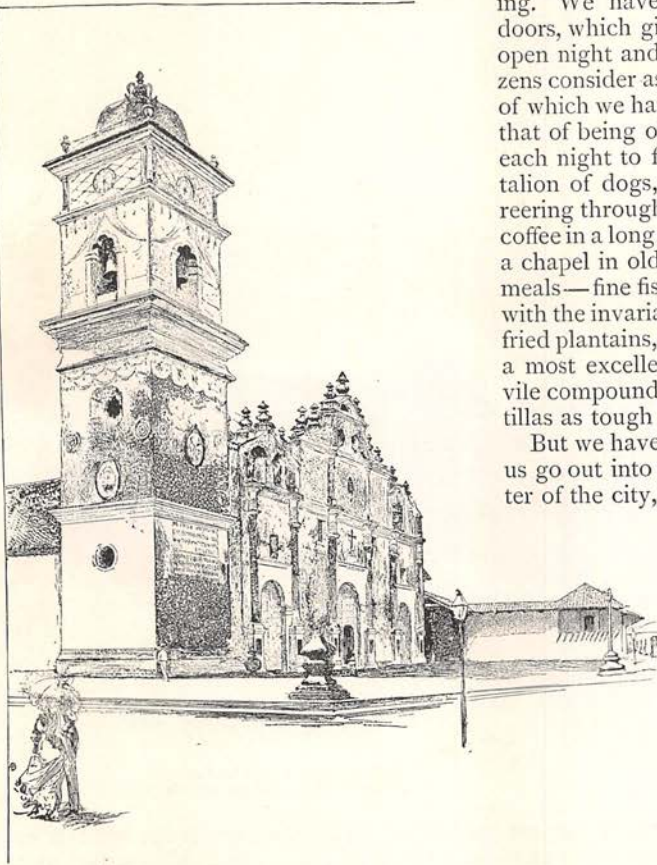
They roll about naked in the dust till they are eight or ten years of age, when their mother puts scanty garments upon them and sends them to school. Still farther on, adobe houses begin to be mixed with those of cane, but all are small and unconnected until the city proper is entered. Then the streets, which are regularly laid out at right angles, are entirely built up with blocks of heavy-looking one-story adobe and stone houses, all stuccoed and painted white, with tiled roofs projecting six or eight feet over the street, forming an agreeable shelter for the person who is obliged to walk out under the rays of an almost vertical sun. The streets are about as wide as Nassau street, New York, sufficiently so for carts easily to pass one another;

prisonlike appearance, which the white stucco with which all are covered vainly strives to relieve. But within they are more comfortable for this warm climate than I should have supposed. The dwelling-apartments, kitchens, and stables form a hollow square inclosing a court, generally well planted with flowering and fruit trees. All the interior roofs project ten or twelve feet, forming a shady corridor, where it is very cool and delightful to lie swinging in one's hammock. Very little furniture is used, a few chairs and tables, beds and hammocks sufficing. The city rejoices in two pianos, but, I believe, contains no carpet. The floors are generally of brick, kept clean and bright, and are much cooler than ours, and rarely wear out. I have

not seen a pane of glass in Central America, which is indeed almost useless, for, owing to the lowness of the long, projecting roofs, sun and rain can never enter, while the cool breeze is always invited. Our Venetian blinds, however, would be very agreeable. There are, only heavy-barred shutters, which in early evening, owing to the fear of revolutions, are shut and locked, and the whole city seems deserted. One of these houses, strongly built of stone and heavy wood, is at present our abiding place. It is a house larger than the ordi-

gether it is perhaps the best house for hotel purposes in the city, and we live in it with a good degree of comfort. It was here that we came when we first landed in the city, and it immediately went into operation with twenty boarders at a dollar a day each. We were satisfied with our fare, but, thinking it too high a price, they concluded after a few days to reduce it one-half, keeping us for three dollars and a half a week. So thus we live, sleeping in our hammocks or on hide beds, as the fancy takes us, in a large paved room, open to the roof, where at any time a dozen bats may be seen hanging. We have no windows, but have two doors, which give us a good draft, being kept open night and day, a measure which the citizens consider as the extreme of hardihood, but of which we have felt no inconvenience except that of being obliged to turn out once or twice each night to fire a volley of pistols at a battalion of dogs, who take great delight in carreering through. Twice a day we are called to coffee in a long room which may have served for a chapel in olden times, and twice more to our meals—fine fish from the lake, flesh, and fowl, with the invariable accompaniments of tortillas, fried plantains, and frijoles. The plantains were a most excellent dish, but the frijoles were a vile compound of beans and lard, and the tortillas as tough and hard as sole leather.

But we have stayed long enough inside; let us go out into the plaza. This is the main center of the city, a square about half the size of the New Haven Green, but without a tree or a blade of grass. Looking towards the east front, where our street enters, we have just before us the principal church, a fine-looking edifice which appears venerable more from decay than from years. On one side of it is a long, low town hall or court-house; on the left are dwelling-houses, and on the right the arsenal and quarters for the soldiery. The remaining side is mostly given



CHURCH AND CONVENT DE LAS MERCEDES.

nary size, on a corner two squares from the plaza, and was the old Convent de las Mercedes, from which the inmates were driven in a revolution some years ago. And now where formerly the nuns chanted, told their beads, and did penance, some fifteen or more "Norte-Americanos" eat, sleep, and make themselves as cool and comfortable as possible. A fine, wide corridor runs about the house, both inside and outside, where a regiment might sit at ease in the shade, and within is a large court planted with mango trees, for the rich fruit of which I have acquired a decided taste; alto-

gether it is perhaps the best house for hotel purposes in the city, and we live in it with a good degree of comfort. It was here that we came when we first landed in the city, and it immediately went into operation with twenty boarders at a dollar a day each. We were satisfied with our fare, but, thinking it too high a price, they concluded after a few days to reduce it one-half, keeping us for three dollars and a half a week. So thus we live, sleeping in our hammocks or on hide beds, as the fancy takes us, in a large paved room, open to the roof, where at any time a dozen bats may be seen hanging. We have no windows, but have two doors, which give us a good draft, being kept open night and day, a measure which the citizens consider as the extreme of hardihood, but of which we have felt no inconvenience except that of being obliged to turn out once or twice each night to fire a volley of pistols at a battalion of dogs, who take great delight in carreering through. Twice a day we are called to coffee in a long room which may have served for a chapel in olden times, and twice more to our meals—fine fish from the lake, flesh, and fowl, with the invariable accompaniments of tortillas, fried plantains, and frijoles. The plantains were a most excellent dish, but the frijoles were a vile compound of beans and lard, and the tortillas as tough and hard as sole leather.

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rows at the sides of the square, while others go about from one place to another with their wares, chattering and bargaining, and, as their costumes are often quite gay, it presents a very lively and animated scene. At noon not a soul is to be seen; everything is taking its "siesta." In the evening the scene is changed. A few market women who have their wares undisposed of still remain, and groups of men are at the corners talking over the news, but it by no means presents the animation of the morning. We cannot stay long, however, before from the belfries of the church chime out the bells, the doors open, and forth issues some baptismal or extreme unction procession, with music, torches, bells, and soldiers, the priest in a kind of sedan chair, borne by some half-dozen stout men, and followed by a train of women and children, gesticulating and singing at the top of their voices. At this, all in the plaza and up all the streets within sight go on their knees, "los Norte-Americanos" excepted, who take off their hats and moralize on the procession as it sweeps along.

But the place to go for amusement in the evening is the lake. There come down, when the day grows cool, the young men of the city, and dash about over the fine beach on their spirited horses, oftentimes having with them their young lady companions, seated before them on the saddle, while hundreds—and, if it be Sunday or a feast-day, often thousands—of others are bathing, walking about, or seated in groups under the trees, enjoying the breeze, which is always blowing over the lake with the most refreshing coolness. Many very delightful hours have I passed there, often alone, seated on the ruins of the old fortress, gazing out over this most lovely lake, with its clear waters, its islands, and high mountain shores, and admiring the wonderfully perfect and symmetrical outlines of lofty Ometepe and its sister volcano, which rise up out of its very bosom; sometimes with my Granadian friends promenading the beach on foot or on horseback, or seated under the trees eating watermelons, which the country bingos bring in great abundance, and chatting in broken Spanish, to their no small amusement. If a violin happens to be near, it is a very easy matter to get up a dance under the shade of some of the large, wide-spreading trees which border the shore, or if a guitar is present, the girls are always ready to sing. The Nicaraguan ladies—at least those of Granada—are very fine-looking, and they seem inclined to do all in their power to make our stay agreeable. We are indeed a great novelty to them, for this is a country through which foreigners very rarely pass, and almost every house is open to us and at our service. Granada used to be, they tell us, a very gay place, with

music and dancing every night in all the streets; but of late, owing to the dread which the numerous revolutions have inspired, the spirits of the place have departed, and after dark, when we first arrived, every house was closed and double-barred, and the whole city as silent as a church-yard. The presence of so large a number of Americans in the place seems to have given the inhabitants a greater sense of security. But we have decided to start to-morrow, and, as I have my farewell calls to make, for the present good-by.

LEÓN, June 1, 1849.

HERE we are now living as systematically as the oldest inhabitant, in León, the metropolis and now the capital of the sovereign state of Nicaragua, having reached the third station of our journey—*quién sabe* how many more there may be before we pass the golden gates of San Francisco Bay? Eight or ten of us are occupying a large and comfortable house two blocks from the plaza, and we live in peace and quietness, under the auspices of a fine old priest on one side, who sends us little gifts, and always makes it a point to be at his window to greet us with "gun morning," and of an equally fine old lady on the other, who gets up our meals in the approved style of the country at a real and medio (18¾ cents) a head. The main body of our company are in Chinandega, a large town twelve leagues nearer California; but they are in much discontent, and we prefer keeping quiet and cool by ourselves. We have a large court, with four rooms on one side of it, where from one wall to the other we sling our hammocks, which serve as seats, lounges, and beds. Here we receive with proper dignity our numerous visitors, and here, I think, we shall stay till a vessel can be chartered, or everything comes to a winding-up, which is equally probable. But I must tell you how we got here. Imagine me on a delightful morning, the 21st of May, bidding farewell to my kind friends in Granada, getting my pockets full of cigarritos and cakes for the journey made by their fair hands, and walking round to the hotel. Directly arrived our muleteer, with six animals in a row, each one with his head tied to the tail of the one before him. Then there was a rush for the choice. Destiny marked out as mine a little black mule, sleek, well-trained, and with quite an intelligent, animated countenance. On the Alvarado I placed my alforjas and hammock behind, my spyglass, haversack, and rifle before, my blanket over all, and lastly myself. It seemed load enough to crush the little fellow, but he bore up nobly. Imagine the others performing the same operations, and finally, all being equipped, amid the acclamations of a street full of spectators, filing up the Castle Real, and singing at the top of our voices



DANCING ON THE SAND AT GRANADA.

to the tune of "Oh! Susannah" a little song made on our departure —

Me voy á California
A tierra muy lejana, etc.

It would have been a queer procession to move down Broadway, some on horses and some on mules, each with his pistols and knife belted around him and his rifle or gun slung to his saddle-bow, and the animals themselves half buried under a weight of blankets, alforjas,

ponchos, water-calabashes, and the like. But we went on bravely for a league, when adventure the first greeted us. One of our party got off his horse to pick up his pouch, which had dropped, and, he being some time about it, the animal began to walk off; the walk was soon changed to a trot, and then to a gallop, and the horse disappeared in the bushes, having first relieved himself of the greater part of his cargo by a kick and a shake. Two of us, being behind and seeing the mishap, dashed into the woods in pursuit, but soon lost the track in a

maze of paths, and returned to the road to search out Andrés, our guide. We went on to join the rest of the party, who had dismounted, and were seated comfortably under the dense shade of a cotton tree, regaling themselves on wild plums. In half an hour Andrés came back, saying that the beast could not be found, and that he had probably gone back to Granada, whither he would go in pursuit. We then went up to a little hacienda near, and, ordering dinner, awaited his return, sending out also the men of the place under the inducement of a reward of three dollars for the gun and fishing-rod, which had been so securely fastened that they had not been thrown off. Meanwhile we lay under the shade, some sleeping, some chatting, and some eating different unknown fruits, which the little naked children delighted to bring us. In an hour our repast was brought to us on a large tray—six gourds containing a curious compound, mush, chopped onions, eggs, and a rather suspicious substance which from the spotted appearance of the skin we at first thought snake, but which the conformation of the bones proved to be lizard, and which was very sweet and delicate. We were all hungry, so the gourds soon went away empty. Late in the afternoon the guide returned without the horse, but with a note from a friend advising us to go back and take a fresh start in the morning. This, however, we were unwilling to do, not wishing to lose a day; and who likes to bid good-by twice? We therefore decided to take the guide's horse, while he, notwithstanding his earnest remonstrances, was to go afoot. But, fortunately, just as we were issuing into the road the hacienda man appeared with the runaway, though minus the gun. The change was made to the satisfaction of all, and onward was the word. Andrés, however, was in a very ill humor, and his temper was by no means improved by the threatening appearance of the clouds, which had begun to gather around the mountains of Granada in a very ominous manner. He obstinately refused to let his horse take a faster gait than a walk, and we, being inexperienced on the road, kept the same pace. In about two hours—long enough to have brought us to our first stopping-place, though we were not more than half way—on came the rain. It grew dark as suddenly as shutting your eyes, and amid the most vivid flashes of lightning and terrific crashes of thunder a deluge of water descended that seemed as though it would beat us off our saddles. By this time we had left the main road for a shorter mule-path, which led through a series of ravines in which our mules so pitched, slipped, and jumped about that it appeared certain that in some of them we must all roll over together to the bottom.

We kept close together, singing and whistling to indicate our whereabouts, for we could not see a foot before us except during the flashes of lightning. Once we had a regular stampede. One of the party attempting to open his umbrella, every animal started with a jump. Mine leaped on a high bank and plunged headlong into a jungle, where I really thought he had stuck fast. Altogether it was a hard ride, and as we were obliged to go slowly it was nine o'clock before we reached Masaya. For once I listened with satisfaction to the distant barking of the dogs, and soon we were riding through a long street of Indian huts. At one of these our guide stopped, and, after some conversation with its inmates, informed us there was no *posada* in the place, and that all the houses were shut up through fear of a revolution; nevertheless we were obliged to stop there. He himself was in mortal fear, and kept telling us to talk loudly in English, that we might not be mistaken for a party of revolutionists, and be shot in the dark. We held a consultation, and were more than half inclined to start again in search of some place which might promise better accommodations. But then we considered that we were wet and weary, in a strange place, and understanding little of the language, and any shelter seemed agreeable. A fresh shower coming down just then decided the question at once, and in a moment every one was off his saddle. A glance into the house showed us that little was to be hoped for there. It was only a little cane hut about twelve feet square, and already contained at least a dozen men, women, and children, with the usual complement of an ill-looking dog apiece. One look was sufficient, and we left for the kitchen. This was a similar structure, but smaller, and, finding it unoccupied, we took immediate possession. There was room, by close squeezing, for four of us to sling our hammocks from the poles of the roof; the other three made their couches on bundles of reeds. I must say, however, that the people of the house could not have treated us more kindly. They did everything in their power: took care of our beasts, and would freely have given up their own poor beds; but suspecting fleas, we thanked them, which is here equivalent to a polite refusal. They also got us a much better supper than we could have expected, charging us only the prices of the articles; and for half the night a crowd of naked boys and girls were at our door, waiting to attend to anything we might require. Imagine us, four in a row, suspended over the three others beneath, hanging in nets of grass, midway between the ground and the roof of the little hut, half afraid to move for fear of bringing the whole down on our heads, and with the smoke of the fire gracefully curling around

us, which, though it offended our eyes, answered the excellent purpose of keeping off the mosquitos. We slept well and soundly, and the next morning rose early, and saddled our animals, and set out for the plaza. Our guide suddenly changed to be one of the best-tempered men in the world, and for the rest of the journey he continued so. Nothing could put him out of temper, and there was nothing he thought would please us, or be of service to us, that he would not do. But we did not thank him much this morning when he led us to the door of a fine *posada* fronting the plaza where we might have stayed the night before. We ordered as good a breakfast as they could give us, and while it was being prepared went out for a little walk about the town. Masaya is a place of more inhabitants than Granada, but of a very different appearance. Granada is more compact than any city I have ever seen, while Masaya is scattered about, all the houses disconnected and standing among a profusion of palm, cocoa, and fruit trees. We had hardly gone four squares before we were obliged to return, being loaded down with presents of fruit. The plaza of Masaya is very large, and presented a very lively scene as we rode through it. The market was in full operation, and I should think at least a thousand men and women, in costumes gayer than any I have seen in any other place, were busily engaged in exchanging their wares. . . . Two miles [from Masaya] we came to a little village the remembrance of which is like that of a beautiful poem. Said B——, "I could live here forever," and we all felt saddened as a turn in the road cut off our parting glances.

A little farther on a magnificent scene awaited us. We came to where the road crossed a vast stream of black lava, which had rolled down from Masaya mountain overwhelming and destroying everything in its course, and had passed down as far as we could see towards Lake Nicaragua, which, with its sister lake of Managua and their connecting river, lay in the distance, the high range of mountains which separate them from the Atlantic bounding the view. About two leagues on we came to an open plain on which many cattle were feeding, and stopped for half an hour to let our mules and horses graze, while we ourselves dined on pines and oranges which we had brought with us.

From this point the road led through the forest four leagues to Managua, and here we were called upon to admire a new kind of beauty—large trees of the size of our elms, with not a leaf upon them, but covered in their place with flowers, some of a bright yellow and others clear red and white. When I say covered, I mean all covered, like the stem of a

hyacinth, a hundred on a twig. Where they overhung the road, our horses often would be fetlock deep in the blossoms which had dropped, and yet there was apparently no diminution on the branches above. They were not coarse and ugly, but delicate and fragrant, the kind which the ladies of this country most delight to entwine in their hair. One sight I saw which I could only stand and gaze upon with delight—one of the largest of these trees, and one of the richest in this new kind of foliage, with an immense vine covered with blue and purple flowers winding up to its topmost boughs, and hanging thence in long and rich festoons, forming a most complete bower. As if to make perfection more perfect, among the branches were perched two macaws, the most beautiful birds of the country, with the richest red and blue plumage, and drooping tails a yard long. About sundown we reached Managua, a large town and the true capital of the State. It is situated on Lake Managua, where we had a delightful bath, and then returned to the *posada*, the best in the State, and kept by a man who owns a plantation some leagues square on the Pacific, from the products of which he set us out a most excellent supper. We slept here between sheets, and on pretty fringed pillows, which were so soft we were loath to leave them in the morning. But in this country the time to travel is the early morning or the cool of the evening, the middle of the day being very hot. Our forenoon's ride was to Matiares, six leagues. The road crossed a mountain from which there was a superb view of Managua Lake with its numerous bays, promontories, and islands, with Momotombo and Momotombito rising in full view, the loftiest volcanoes in the country, visible fifty leagues away on the Pacific. Today we met numerous travelers and long trains of freight-mules. Troops of monkeys and apes and flocks of parrots enlivened the way, and now and then a deer would start up and bound away through the bushes. We took our siesta on the plaza of Matiares, the town itself, which has been pretty much destroyed in a late revolution, offering no accommodations for us. In the afternoon we went four leagues farther to Nagarote, a large place, where we passed a comfortable night in the house of the schoolmaster. Much of our way was along the borders of the lake, heavy traveling for our animals, but from the change of scenery pleasing to us. The next day twelve leagues brought us to León. You see I am running on, for if I should describe minutely all the incidents of the way, both you and I would be well tired. . . .

June 26. Twenty-five days later from Central America: as many more, and we may



MARKET AT MASAYA.

call ourselves old citizens, and, for aught I know, be entitled to vote at the next election. We are still living at León, nine of us, enough to keep one another in countenance in this strange city. A week since I rode over to Chinandega to look after our baggage, and spent a day there to see what was going on and to watch the course of things; and I returned very well satisfied to remain where I was. Though we have been detained in this country more than three and a half months,—it may be a month longer before a vessel will arrive at Realejo to take us up the Pacific,—still we

by priests and in fear of a vagabond soldiery. But here reside the British and the American consuls, the bishop, the general, the director, and all the dignitaries of state. Two gentlemen from New York are also here, engaged about the canal treaty. We are on somewhat intimate terms with a number of families residing here, going in and out when we please, as the custom of the country is. The posada has been a favorite place of resort for us. The landlord and the landlady are a perfect study for a seeker of "characters." But they are very kind to us, and are exceedingly anxious to have



A STREET IN LEÓN. (FROM A PHOTOGRAPH BY O'NEIL.)

have passed through a land full of interest, at least to a young traveler. The natural features of the country mingle beauty and sublimity to the highest degree, and the climate must be one of the most delightfully salubrious and healthful in the world. Much of my stay has been made exceedingly pleasant by the hospitality of the people, particularly in Granada, where I became really quite attached to many kind friends.

León is a city of much more pretension than Granada, but of not half the stamina and respectability. Granada is sound and whole; León is decayed, prostrate, its people overridden

their daughters learn English. One of their sons, a little fellow of fourteen, is an ensign in the army, and a daughter is married to General Muñoz; so they are all very patriotic, and heartily hate the "Colandrakes," as the opposition party are called. We have called once or twice on the General, and have been received very courteously. He is a gentlemanly man, and looks just like the lithographs of Santa Ana, La Vega, or any other of the Mexican chieftains, mustachios and all. But whatever may be his military qualifications, he must test them now, for he is required to go down with his army and to face Samosa, an assassin and leader of

the opposition, who has just taken and burned the city of Nicaragua, committing there the most terrible atrocities. We went up into the plaza this afternoon to see them off, and, notwithstanding the uniformless and ragged appearance of the troops, it was really a solemn spectacle when the bishop with his retinue of priests, after preaching them a sermon, gave them his blessing, and bade them go and fight for their country. Meanwhile Samosa was being excommunicated in the cathedral, the bells were clanging, cannon were firing, and all León was in commotion.

After they had filed up the street the General and his staff came out from his quarters in the posada, and there was another scene, his wife and sisters in tears, bidding him good-by, and lamenting that they should never see him again. Soon all galloped off, and we followed to the river, and in the distance it

sponse always is, "*Muy bien*," and we pass where we please.

About a week ago a messenger came up from the Sovereign Director of the State, asking us to change houses with him, as he wished to fortify ours. We answered, "With pleasure," and at evening a cart and an escort came for our baggage. We loaded it and, taking our guns and rifles, marched down with it to the plaza, singing as we went, for it is a custom with us when we find ourselves in queer situations, which is often the case, to sing certain songs at the top of our voices. As soon as we reached the plaza up came a file of soldiers and a full band of music with torches and lanterns, and escorted us down in the most triumphal way. At the door they gave us a serenade ending with the "American March," the little boys cheered, and we entered. The President set out a table for us, and we were waited on as quite a dis-



THE SEAPORT OF REALEJO.

was quite a striking sight to see the troops marching up the long, broken hill, the horsemen bringing up the rear with a blood-red pennon streaming from the point of each lance. Nothing will give you a better idea of the political condition of this country than to tell you that since we have been here there have begun and ended in the different parts of the country seven or eight revolutions. Each city has one on its own responsibility, and the authorities are in nightly fear that one will break out here. These revolutions have kept us in an interesting state of excitement. The city is under martial law, police orders are read daily at the different corners, sentries are doubled, and it is half what a native's life is worth to go wandering about after dark. But we Yankees are privileged. We have dropped the regular passwords, and answer to the challenges, "Americanos del Norte"; and the re-

tinguished party. What to make of it all we hardly knew, but the next day we were informed that we were considered as a guard of honor to defend the President's house in case of a rising. We laughed heartily, but congratulated ourselves on the exchange, as we had, rent free, a fine, spacious house on the best street in the city. Nine rooms, one for each of us, surround the principal court, and in the rear are two others, where are the stables and the kitchens, all well planted with lime, orange, mumbro, and fig trees, and the main one possessing a splendid jasmine bush, fully twelve feet in diameter, and geraniums and heliotropes all in full flower. We have each selected a room and hung our hammocks, and I feel quite as if I had a home.

July 13. Chinandega. There is really now some prospect of our getting off. Two vessels are lying in the harbor of Realejo, and when



A NICARAGUAN EXECUTION.

you receive this you may think of me as far up the Pacific, if not already within the promised land. We have spent more than four months in this strange country. So far as regards myself, I have enjoyed it highly; the constant novelty, the singularity of our position, our manner of life, and the continual succession of strange scenes through which we have passed, have prevented anything like stagnation. We are now in Chinandega — but I must tell you of a little trip we made before we came here. On the day after my last page was written letters came from our *chargé d'affaires*, Mr. Squier, who had arrived at Granada, informing us that, on account of the turbulent state of the country and the interruption of communication on the highways, fears had been entertained, if not of the personal safety of himself and suite, at least of a long detention, and requesting us to form a party and be in readiness to march peaceably down and escort him from Granada to León. Soon after came other letters to our consul giving him the information that Masaya was occupied by Samosa's troops. On this he thought that, although he had sent to Chinandega for others to come and join us, it would be best, on the whole, for us who were in León to go down at once. We therefore repacked our movables and went up to the consul's house, leaving the President's mansion with the fig trees and lime trees as a guard of honor.

The next day we spent in procuring horses. Four or five very fine ones were brought in from a hacienda a few leagues out, and the complement was made up from the *cuartel*, where we had the liberty of choosing from a hundred or more. Behold us then in the service of our own Government, and going down to the wars to escort our *chargé d'affaires*. The next morning we started, ten of us, all capably mounted, and in an extemporized though better uniform than had yet been seen in Nicaragua — red shirts and white trousers, with pistols and knives belted around us, and short carbines obtained from the President's private armory at the pomels of our saddles. As the government had been trying in every way to procure our services, it seemed the universal opinion, as we dashed through the streets, that we were the advance guard of a party going down to assist the General, and great was the sensation it excited. Our consul intended to be of the party, but the night before was taken down with fever. We crossed the river, and entered upon the Camino Real. This was a very different way from that in which we traversed the country before. Then we were going slowly from one town to another, loaded down with baggage and obliged to assume an easy traveling gait. Now we were free and unencumbered, our spirits high, and our horses fresh, and we could gallop and race along as we liked. In three hours we made Pue-

blo Nuevo, eight leagues away, but not without an accident on the way. One of our party had a sunstroke. At Pueblo we stopped two or three hours in the heat of the day to dine and give our horses "zacate." It was St. Peter's day, and all the young men of the place were on horses racing through the streets like madmen. Two days in the year they have this custom, which is amusing to see. We proceeded thence to Nagarote, where one of our party who was taken with the country fever on the road had to be left. We were detained till after dark, but decided on pushing on to Matiares that night. It was a lovely moonlight evening, and you may believe that our ride by the side of the lake shadowed by old Momotombo was enchanting enough. It was late when we reached Matiares, a miserably poor town, where the best house could show us no better accommodation than

for them all through Central America.) Evening brought us to Masaya, where, as we had made fourteen leagues, and it looked like rain, we concluded to stop for the night. We found here the General and his troops, but aside from them a more deserted-looking town I never beheld. It was in Masaya that this latest revolution was plotted, and the richer portion of the inhabitants had in alarm retired to their haciendas or had gone to Granada, the stronghold of the "Timbucos," who are the aristocracy, while, on the approach of Muñoz, the lower classes—the "Colandrakes"—had gone off to join Samosa, or had scattered themselves through the country. We had met numbers of them on the way. All the houses about the plaza were closed, the posada included. But on applying to the General, he quartered us without any ceremony in a house near the cuartel,



THE JOURNEY IN THE MARKET-CART.

one hammock, one table, a bench, and the floor. On the latter I laid myself, wrapped in my blanket, and, in spite of the opposition of a legion of fleas and biting ants, gained a few hours of good sound sleep after my ride of fifty-one miles. At sunrise our horses were saddled, and after a bowl of coffee we went on to Managua to breakfast. During the time we stopped here I went with a Granadian friend to visit some of his relatives, as beautiful girls as one would see in any country. (Managua is famous

and gave orders in another direction to have supper prepared for us. The next difficulty was the impossibility of buying fodder for our horses; but on further application a file of soldiers were sent who came with a supply, probably taken from the nearest cornfield. Riding through the plaza the next morning at sunrise, we saw the troops drawn up in long ranks, and a few people standing about in groups as if awaiting some event. Stopping our horses a few moments, there came out from the cuartel a mel-



A POOR SUBSTITUTE FOR BEEF. (SEE PAGE 931.)

ancholy procession headed by a man dressed in coarse white shirt and drawers, and with ropes around his ankles and wrists. He was carrying a large black crucifix, and was flanked by two priests reading aloud out of large books; behind came a file of soldiers with loaded muskets. Just then the bells began to chime a funeral dirge, and we knew that a military execution was about to take place. I will not describe it to you, for it was barbarously done; but the prisoner met his death like a brave man.

He was one of the plotters of the revolution, and a bad character generally. General Muñoz had caught him here, and gave him but a short time to prepare for his fate. . . .

It was very delightful to walk once more through the streets of the old city, for we all felt a kind of affection for Granada, the place where we had experienced so much kindness and hospitality. And it was very pleasant also to bathe once more in the bright waters of the lake. Cool and refreshed, we returned in time

to see the grand entrance of Muñoz into the city, which brought out all the people and set all the bells to ringing. He brought in five more prisoners, all of whom, I presume, have before this shared the fate of the poor man at Masaya.

The two days that we passed in Granada flew away very agreeably. In the early morning of our departure the General held a review of his troops, about a thousand in number, preparatory to marching down towards Managua, where we have since heard that he has beaten Samosa in one battle, and now has him penned up in a little town by the lakeside. About ten in the morning we collected at the house where Mr. Squier was stopping, and, our party being increased to over twenty in number by the addition of Mr. Squier and his suite, and some others, we rode into the plaza. There an officer met us and invited us to the residence of the General, who with his staff was anxious to escort us out of the city. Meanwhile merchants and other citizens were continually riding up, and soon we were more than fifty in number. We had a beautiful United States flag of silk, and with that streaming ahead we made a gallant show as we passed up the street leading to the highroad.

Night brought us to Managua, and we galloped through its principal streets, four abreast and flag waving, to the posada. We had scarcely disposed of our animals and seated ourselves to a quiet supper when we heard musket-shots and exploding rockets, and saw many people running by with arms in their hands. We hardly knew what to make of it, but soon a great company with soldiers and music came to our door, and then we learned that on our entrance, our numbers being magnified by the darkness, we had been mistaken for an army from Granada come to attack the place. The inhabitants had rushed together in alarm, but on finding out the true state of the case they had come to invite us to march about the town in procession. So out we went, unfurling our banner, and with that and the music in advance, Mr. Squier and his escort following, and with a train of three or four hundred Managuans behind, kept in good order by the soldiers, we passed through all the principal streets. We were greeted at every turn by loud cheers of "Vivan los Norte-Americanos!" "Vivan los Estados Unidos!" "Vivan el ministro de los Estados Unidos!" "Vivan las Banderas!" etc., to which we responded in our best Spanish, "Vivan the brave Managuans!" "Viva the fine ladies of Managua!" and fifty other vivas, always giving the real Yankee "hurrah," which greatly pleased them. Rockets were going up, guns were firing along the whole line, and all the señoritas of Managua seemed to be out in the moonlight. The crowd would

not release us till very late, and then not until we should give them "a patriotic song," with which they seemed perfectly delighted.

The next day was the glorious Fourth of July. We had intended to have some little celebration of it among ourselves, but, circumstances requiring the early presence of Mr. Squier in León, we passed the whole day upon the road. Often, however, a shout or a snatch of "Hail Columbia" attested that we were not unmindful of its presence. The night we spent in Pueblo Nuevo, where we found the friend we had left ill recovering, and so far upon his return route. At eight the next morning we continued, and in less than three hours were at the "Old Convent," a league from León, where a large escort was awaiting us — all the military and civil officers, the President and his cabinet, the bishop and his retinue of clergy, and a large number of the most respectable citizens, more than a hundred in all. Here we stopped a few moments, while Mr. Squier changed his traveling dress for his official uniform, and we washed and brushed ourselves a little; then our banner was unfurled, and the whole cavalcade started. We went on at full gallop across the plain of León, down the hill, across the little river, and up into the city. My little horse, notwithstanding the long journey, was fairly dancing with excitement. Entering the city we found the streets crowded with people, who all kneeled as the bishop passed, and then rose and shouted "Viva! Viva!" to the Minister. The bells of all the churches that we passed rang their gayest peals, cannon thundered in the plaza, and all the soldiers were drawn up to receive us with presented arms. And thus we concluded our second trip across the country.

We stopped for a day at our consul's, and then with two others I came on to Chinandega. For the sake of variety, and in order to be with our baggage, we made the journey in a market-cart, and it beat all kinds of traveling that I ever saw yet, bungos not excepted. I will not attempt to describe it, except to say that beside us three the cart contained two women, two babies, one man, and three boys; that we had one upset in a thunder-shower down a steep bank, and those who were not rolled out into the mud were nearly suffocated in the cart; and that we were all night on the road, during the whole of which the women amused themselves with singing the queerest, strangest songs that I ever yet listened to.

The English consul, who has always shown us great civility, offered to our immediate party the use of his house in Chinandega, altogether the finest in the place, and we have been here a week or two very comfortably situated. The consul's proper residence being at León, we

have the whole house, with two or three attendants to wait upon us.

SAN FRANCISCO, ALTA CALIFORNIA,
October 4, 1849.

THE main part of our company finally left Realejo in the brigantine *Laura Ann* on the 20th of July. At different times several small parties branched off from us, and more than once I was strongly urged to try my fortunes with them; but for reasons which satisfied me I steadily declined, notwithstanding one long and most vexatious and outrageous detention, and the result showed that I was right in my determination, as you shall shortly learn.

First, however, for our voyage. For the first month we met with the usual succession (in those seas) of calms and heavy squalls, for days together rocking in the long swell and not making a mile, the surface of the ocean without a ripple, and the sails flapping idly against the masts. Then suddenly in the night would come up a squall which would make the ocean seem a sea of fire and, perhaps with the loss of a sail, drive us many miles on our course, for all came from the eastward. All of that time I slept on deck, for you may believe that with 120 men on a vessel of only a little over 100 tons burden, the accommodations below were very limited.

We had not long left port before it was discovered that much of our water had leaked from the tank in which, in lieu of casks, it had been placed, and, in addition, that a large share of the provisions had actually spoiled, and the best were hardly eatable. Indeed, so long as the meat lasted, not a piece was put upon our table the smell of which would not have sickened any but a California immigrant. On this part of our voyage a strange sickness appeared among us, which in one night attacked nearly every person on board, and afterward not a person escaped. It was akin to the influenza, but with peculiar symptoms, and though, as it seemed, not dangerous, yet an exceedingly troublesome complaint. For some days not a sailor was fit for duty, and the passengers worked the ship. I had it somewhat severely, and for more than ten days. It was determined to put in at Mazatlan or San Blás for water, after we had been three weeks on an allowance, and had found that it would not be possible to make San Francisco with the stock that we had; but off Cape Corrientes a southeaster came up which bore us before it to Cape St. Lucas. . . . As day after day and week after week passed by, and we were making almost no progress against the constant northwester which blew down the coast, pint after pint was knocked off our allowance, and our provisions became exhausted, one kind after another, until finally they had

become reduced to bread, rice, and beans, with one quart of water a day for each man, for cooking as well as for drinking. The bread was full of worms and defiled with cockroaches; the rice was of a quality that would not bring one cent a pound in the States, half hulls, and with as many weevils as kernels; the beans were of a peculiar kind, and the more they were boiled the harder they became. There was no water to be wasted on them. So that my fare was half a pint of water's worth of boiled rice morning and evening. That left a pint for drinking during the twenty-four hours, and little enough we found it too. On this diet I lived for about two weeks, and like the prodigal son would have been thankful enough for the mush with which grandfather's hogs are fed, and many nights would have been glad to get my mouth into the dirtiest puddle that Chapel street ever saw. At length, finding it impossible to make San Diego, the port we were aiming at, we ran into shore at a venture one evening in September, and, coming on soundings in a thick fog, anchored, having then but eighty gallons on board. This time we were truly favored. The second boat sent on shore quickly returned, bringing the news that directly opposite was a basin of pure fresh water not ten steps from the beach, and that the surf was not so high but the casks could be floated off. What rejoicing there was! If it had been broad daylight, and if the captain had known of this water, he could not have placed the ship in a better situation than he did, running in to an unknown shore in the night, with imperfect charts and in a thick fog.

But now read the most remarkable thing! We had not lain thirty-six hours in this out-of-the-way spot when a vessel which was also out of water, passing by, saw us, stood in, and anchored alongside; and this vessel proved to be a Peruvian brig loaded with provisions for the California market, and with the owner of the cargo on board, who, having become dispirited by the length of his voyage, which had already exceeded four months, and having heard at the ports below that prices in California had gone down, was disposed to sell us all we wanted on very reasonable terms. So we bought of him flour, cheese, sugar, and lard of most excellent quality—a providential supply indeed, for, after getting our water, we should soon have been put to great straits for food, having in fact nothing eatable on board. The place where we were, a bight in Lower California, abounded also in fish, and several barrels of fine mackerel were caught and salted down, a fine bed of rock salt having been discovered on shore. Some cattle were driven down from a farm twenty or thirty miles back, three of which were bought and killed, so that from a state of absolute want

we suddenly found ourselves in the midst of plenty. . . .

At night we could camp on the shore, the wreck of a whaleboat which was found near supplying the wood for our fires. While here the supercargo, both mates, and all the sailors but two ran off and went up the country. The supercargo was a knave; he took with him all the charter money, and probably never intends to show his face in San Francisco. The first mate was a villain, had been a pirate, a wrecker, and a murderer, and had made any amount of trouble on board. We were glad to get rid of him. The others were good men, and were seduced by the mates and the supercargo. But the places of all were well supplied by members of our company who had been sailors before, and with a new crew we again set sail. Still the northwest winds continued, and it was not until more than three weeks, and when we were threatened with still another deficiency, that of fire-wood, that the hills which encompass the magnificent bay of San Francisco appeared in sight.

We thought all this bad enough, but what was it compared to what the parties who left us have undergone? The little sloop which I mentioned to you in a former letter as having left Realejo about the beginning of May, with nine of our company and some fifteen of the shipwrecked party, arrived here but the day before yesterday, having been 144 days on the route, 32 days becalmed in one spot under an almost vertical sun. They had only a pint of water apiece a day, much of the time almost perishing for want of food. Once they ran on the coast at a venture, as we did, but found no water. They dug for it, and searched the interior for thirty or forty miles, but in vain, and at length were obliged to put to sea with only a bottle of water apiece, their only chance being to fall in with a vessel, or to make some port within five days, at the end of which time they expected to perish. But the lucky thought of distilling entered their minds. A rude still was made out of a tin boiler and a gun-barrel, salt water was put in, and, to their great joy, it trickled down fresh. For twenty-two days they lived on what they could thus manufacture, averaging half a pint a day to each man, their only food three mussels a day. Some endeavored to walk up the coast, and found themselves in lonely deserts, obliged for days together to live on cactus, and were almost beside themselves for joy when they found a poor,

broken-down mule that had been left by the wayside. Others of our company joined a party which came up from Panama in an iron boat. For months they suffered everything. At length speaking a steamer, one leaped into the water, crying that he was perishing. A rope was thrown to him, and he was dragged on board the steamer; the others have never yet been heard from.

A bungo was also fitted out from Realejo many weeks before we left. The fate of that, too, is unknown, and probably none live to reveal it.

Here the most thrilling tales of sufferings hourly meet the ear. But, so far as we know with certainty, not a death nor even a dangerous attack of illness has occurred in all our company which left New York. Hardships, however, and peril and hunger and thirst, all have been common.

October 7. I will not attempt to convey to you any idea of this most indescribable place, nor to give you my impressions of it—I have not the time, being too busy in arranging and landing my baggage. You already know more of it than I myself do. Such another city never was and never will be. Sharpers, swindlers, speculators, gamblers, and rogues of every nation, clime, color, language, and costume under the sun are here gathered together, and no words can convey a true idea of the result. I do not meet many of my friends on shore; they are mostly in other parts of the country.

SACRAMENTO CITY, October 22, 1849.

I THANK you often from the depths of my soul for the many letters your kind hearts prompted you to write. They were better than all the gold of the mines. By and by I will do my part, but if you knew the whirl my brain has been in ever since I landed in this strange country you would excuse me now. I am like one who is looking on an ever-shifting panorama, and cannot find time to say even a word to the one who sits beside him. Never expect to see me come back rich. I shall not make much money here, except by a streak of good luck. I am here so late, and every avenue is now filled up; but I do hope to get together enough to carry me back richer in experience, to be with you all again. You can conceive nothing of this country. No account that you have ever read can give you half an idea. Double everything, and believe that then you know not the half.

Roger S. Baldwin, Jr.