Adventures and Narrow Escapes

IN

NICARAGUA

BY

JOSEPH WORTH,

In 1866 and 1867.

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SPAULDING & BARTO, BOOK AND JOB PRINTERS,

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ADVENTURES

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CHAPTER I.

In presenting to the public this sketch of Nicaragua, it is not the intention to weary the reader with dry historic facts, and repetition of familiar descriptions, but rather to present the incidents and occurrences of a continued visit in Central America, in 1866, and 1867.

There has been little change in Nicaragua since the publication of the last edition of E. G. Squier's works, giving a full and complete description of the country; therefore, the author of these sketches will confine them principally to incidental occurrences, with only a brief outline of the country and people, for the benefit of those who have not acquainted themselves with the condition of Nicaragua, since the first edition of Squier's work, published in 1852.

The beautiful but hapless Republic of Nicaragua, has been the theatre of a series of startling events, which have concentrated upon it, not only the attention of the American public, but of all civilized nations. It has been the arena of aimless, and not always reputable and diplomatic contests, and of an obstinate and bloody struggle between a handful of Northern adventurers and an effete and decadent race. Unless the future shall strangely betray the indications of the present, it is destined to pass through a succession of still severer trials, in its advance to that political *status* and commercial importance, inseparable from its geographical position and natural resources; for in Nicaragua, and there alone, has Nature combined those requisites for a water communication between the seas, which has so long been the dream of commercial enthusiasts, and which is a desideratum of this age, as it will be a necessity of the next. There, too, has she lavished with a bountiful hand rich tropical treasures; and the genial earth waits only for the touch of industry to reward the husbandman a hundredfold with those products, which, while they contribute to his wealth, add to the comfort and give employment to the laborer of distant and less favored lands.

Public interest, and especially American interest in Nicaragua must therefore increase. The desire to know the characteristics of the country, its scenery and products, the habits and customs of its people, can never diminish. In all essential respects,

Nicaragua is little changed since 1854—at that period, E. G. Squier made another visit. It is true Grenada has been added to its list of ruined cities, and Revas and Managua bear the scars of battles on their walls. The people have perhaps a more thoughtful look, as becomes men realizing that the fullness of time has finally brought them within the circle of the world's movements, and that they assume to discharge the responsibilities of their new position, or give place to those who are equal to the requirements of this age, and prompt to recognize their duties to their fellow-men. In all other respects the country is unchanged.

Its high and regular volcanic cones, its vast plains, broad lakes, bright rivers, and emerald verdure, are still the same; the *agua-dora* still steps along firmly under her heavy water jar, or climbs panting up the cliffs that surround the lake of Managua. The naked children, in average color, possibly a shade lighter than before, still bestride the hips of nurse or mother. Small and pensive mules still trudge to market, ears and feet alone visible beneath their green loads of *sacate*. The Moso and his machete, the red-belted cavalier on scarlet pillions, urging his restles horse through the street; the languid Senora puffing the smoke of her cigarette in lazy jets through her nostrils; the sober-faced priest, with gallo under his arm hurrying to the nearest cock-pit; the shrill *qui vive* of the barefooted sentinel; the rat-tat-too of the after-

noon drum, the eternal "saints" days, and banging bomas—all remain the same as they were in the days of generations before them. The people are not seeking new inventions, as are the North American people, who sometimes seek in vain, and are never contented with the best. The Central American natives lack the ingenuity of the Yankee—in fact they seem to require less talent of this kind, for the country is well calculated to sustain a population without a strike of the hands. Laziness is really an acceptable element to this class of inhabitants, who regard economical measures and saving propensities, or the accumulation of property, as needless labor and useless effort.

Returning to the incidents of this sketch, we trace them from the time of leaving San Francisco until the return of the Colonization Society, which, during our absence, had broken up. The object of this society was the establishment of an American town in the rich domains of Nicaragua, where a trade should be established among ourselves that should be prolific of good to the country and profit to the colony. We sailed from San Francisco in the barque "Domingo." Incidental to the trip, are notes of ten days in a calm, scarcity of water, heavy storm and rain, canvas stretched and plenty of water secured. Forty days at sea, arrived at Realejo, anchored and signaled for pilot. Detained through a misunderstanding, as the inhabitants squared their guns for fight, understand-

ing our signal a sign for battle; becoming convinced of their error they came to our rescue. We were soon surrounded by natives in small boats, with various kinds of fruits for sale. Owing to the great quantity grown there, and the limited market, we obtained all, and more than we desired, at wonderfully low prices. At this place we secured flat boats to transport us up the river. Our colony consisted of a large majority of Germans, who preferred to leave the party and embarked accordingly for the town of Chinandega, while the Americans started for Leon, the capital of the State. The German wing took route *via* one river, the American the other. At 2 o'clock the following morning, we took our departure. A trifling incident occurred here. As the paddles of our boat commenced their motion, the natives who were rowing us along commenced their songs, which is customary with them starting on a voyage, when suddenly a shrill shout pierced the air, crying out to us, halt! Through the dim light of the approaching dawn, we saw a small boat rowing rapidly in our wake. It proved to be one of the sailors leaving the ship to follow us to Nicaragua. He came on board leaving the Captain's boat (he had made his escape in it,) to drift where it would. He was only sixteen years of age. The last heard from him he was mate of one of the San Juan river boats. His Captain recovered his boat, but never found his boy. At daylight we had arrived at a point up the river as far as navigable for our boat, and discharged our

cargo, at a place called Barceto. We remained at this point until next day, and then secured carts to carry us to the city. These vehicles we call carts were two wheeled conveyences, which were drawn by two yoke of cattle, with two natives for drivers. As the wheels began to creak with a horrible noise, the drivers attempted to remedy it by the application or the use of a kind of bark having the condiment principle of axle grease in it. We made very good progress with these clumsy carts, and night found us in the city of Leon; making our way to an English Hotel, where we found excellent accomodations, we remained three or four days, and four of us rented a house on the copartnership principle, which we called "head-quarters." As head-quarters it served us very well, for our principal object was to canvass the country, and settle upon some definite plan of active business, buying and selling land being the chief hobby, or ambition of our party.

The native citizens of the city of Leon welcomed us with demonstrations of joy and friendship. As we passed along the streets they lifted hats crying out "adios Americanos," and many other words of friendly welcome. We were the recipient of many and frequent invitations to the plaza, to listen to the music of the brass band, which discoursed its music every evening. They seemed anxious to talk to us, and entertain us—particularly were they anxious to learn the English, quite as much so as we were to speak Spanish.

After a sojourn of five or six days in the city, we obtained lease of a farm about six miles from Leon, near the town of Kisiluaka, with the intention of raising our eatables for the following year; this scheme we found to be money out of pocket, as we could purchase corn of the natives much cheaper than we could raise it; one of our company was a merchant, one a doctor, one a saddler, and another a sailor, each commencing in earnest the life of a farmer—the author of this sketch undertook the position as cook, but was the first to abandon the business; the saddler soon retired and took up his trade in the city; the remainder of the colonists planted about twelve acres of corn; the merchant sold out his interest for the sum of ten dollars, and started for San Francisco. The sailor also retired, and the doctor now became sole proprietor of the crop—out of money and help—and was in a deplorable condition for carrying on the farm in a strange country, and among a strange people. But this compelled him to go to the field himself, although he would as soon die as to do it. He was at this time boarding with the man of whom he rented the farm, an American, who had been practising medicine a little among the natives, who advised the doctor to relinquish the agricultural scheme, and go to practicing his profession; so with a degree of liberality, seldom known in barbarous countries, he made him a present of a horse and a stock of medicines, and started him in a good practice in Leon. In less

than a year the doctor was worth a thousand dollars clear of all expenses. He fell back upon his dignity with a native servant, and interpreter, but his corn rotted in the field, except that portion stolen by the natives.

After the disbanding of our party I started an enterprise of my own. I purchased a small place in the town of Kisiluaka, with the intention of raising garden vegetables, and a fine variety of fruit trees. I was quite alone among the natives, but I was very proud of my new prospects, and felt independent at last. I was making a bold adventure, but was determined no slight cause should discourage me, although I found it a lonely, weary life. The first night of my sojourn on my farm, I experienced a very heavy earthquake, that sent my bed and body flying across my room in a hurry. In settling upon this farm and engaging in agriculture in Nicaragua, I had nursed the idea that it would soon be settled by Americans. It possessed attractions sufficient to induce an enterprising imigration, and there was every reason to believe that American enterprise would develop the rich rescources of Central America. It is to be regretted that so fine a country should be left to nature's waste and idle natives, who lay in their hammocks smoking their cigarettes, with neither ambition nor wish for their country's welfare and development.

It would be a satisfaction to ascertain the real cause that has prevented American people from

settling and developing Central America. Young men that have no homes would find an opening in Nicaragua for wealth and position. There is land of the richest and most productive quality, to be had at reasonable prices. Americans as a general thing never have land enough; it makes but little difference how much land an American owns, he invariably wants more. However people seem to be afraid to go to Central America, even to ascertain its capabilites and rescources. Bugbear stories of the poisonous lowlands, infectious localities, and ravenous beasts, have been circulated and exaggerated by newspaper men, writers of romance and silly sensation, until there seems to be an accumulated mass of false representation, that no doubt retards the better class of emigration, interests and projects in this section of our Continent. The bugbear stories of the country being overrun with alligators is all nonsense, as well as the reports of its being infested with poisonous reptiles and insects. It is true that alligators and animals, snakes and insects, are found found in Nicaragua, the same as in other countries. The scorpion is more numerous, but not so much so that it is a grievance. The bite of the scorpion is a serious thing. If a person bitten can obtain native rum and drink a great quantity of it, the effect is an immediate cure. An insect known as the jigger is also common there, as well as in some portions of California. Stories are told of the jigger poison producing instant death; also of the

poisonous little fellows imbedding themselves under the skin of the feet, and depositing their eggs. The report is correct, but the exaggerated reports of the terrible results are seldom within the scope of truth.

THE BITE OF A JIGGER.

The egg of the jigger is deposited under the skin, and leaves a small black dot, not as large as the head of a pin, just in the center of a yellow spot about as large as half a pea. When they are extracted the jigger and the eggs come out together in a round bag, about half as large as a common pea; when this bag is not broken by taking it out, it is not poisonous, but when it breaks it poisons the blood and inflames the flesh at once. I have had them in my feet over six hours at a time, and have taken them out with the sharp point of a penknife, and the trouble was all over at once. A person of impure blood is liable to be affected by the jigger more acutely and severely than one of temperate habits and pure blood. If there are people who will stay away from a good country, because they are afraid of the jiggers, they had better stay at home wherever it may be, and live on the fruits of poverty and prejudice the balance of their lives. Such persons would be of little use in developing a new country or any of its rescources—no matter how simple they may be. A country possessing so much material wealth, and

so many attractions for the enterprise of a good citizenship, needs the energy and backbone of a self-reliant and self-sustaining population, who have a pride in the institutions of the country, its future and its several interests, as well as in their own personal interests.

CHAPTER II.

TRIP TO THE MINES OF MATAGALPA.

The prospect for making money began to look dubious; the Americans were leaving instead of arriving, and to think of making money out of the natives was an absurdity—one might as well attempt to extract blood from a turnip. I considered myself fortunate in preventing them from stealing the little I possessed; still I could not think of returning to San Francisco. I therefore determined to travel over the country and ascertain its possibilities, and acquaint myself thoroughly with its capabilities and resources. The principal object of interest at the time was the mining industry. The mines of Matagalga were occupying much of public attention, and in company with an American who owned an interest in them, and who was going over to take a sum of money to defray the expenses thereof, I availed myself of the opportunity to visit that section. Several of our party who had not left Nicaragua, but had returned from a prospecting expedition among the mines of Xicoro, had returned very favorable reports; but as their mules were poor and tired out, they could not be induced to return at the time, but would remain until my return from Matagalpa, and consider whether we would embark together in mining in-

terests. Mr. Greer kindly furnished me with a mule and necessary equipments, and after looking to our arms and ammunition, we were soon on the way to the noted mines. We traveled about thirty miles and stopped at an Indian hut for the night. It being my first ride for some time, I was quite tired, and accosted the man of the house with a familar "how-do-you-do," while Mr. Greer, who was somewhat acquainted with him, left his money in his charge for the night. The night was one of those cool, genial nights, where the soft semi-tropic breezes, laden with the odors of fragrant verdure, seem to have a somniferous effect upon the senses, and a time when sleep is doubly refreshing. The next morning we were on our way early, and had traveled quite a distance before we found that we had taken the wrong road, which terminated abruptly and left us in a thick forest without a road or a sign of one. The vines and brush were so densely grown that it was almost impassable. The monkeys were scampering about with great glee, but looking as if they were very much surprised to see us. Mr. Greer began to get a little out of humor. As he was the guide and leader, his task was more difficult than mine—I being "only a passenger." On this occasion a frequent resort to the bottle seemed to be his consolation in the dilemma. After having consulted the whisky several times he passed it to me, with the ludicrous question, "*how are we to get out of this?*" After creeping through the brush we

we managed to find an Indian hut, where we obtained an Indian breakfast, at the hour of 12 M. We obtained a good rest, and engaged an Indian to take us to our road, which we found in about two hours. Night found us in another Indian village, called *Jicaral*, where we took up our abode for the night.

The morning dawned beautifully, and we set out at an early hour. It was a general rule that travelers should journey only in the cool hours of the morning, until about nine o'clock, and before breakfasting. We were now on the right course, but the road being rough and mountainous, our mules traveled very slow, and required a great amount of persuasion to urge them along, and the persuaders, as we called them, comprised of very heavy Spanish spurs, seemed to have lost their persuasive powers, and the mules seemed to stand the strokes stoically and complacently. We traveled along until eight o'clock, and halted at an old Indian hut for the night. The next morning we started before daylight, in order to reach our destination before the night; being very dark it was difficult to find our way, which was a narrow path through a hilly country, overgrown with dense underbrush.

It was my turn to carry the money, this morning, on my mule. It weighed about thirty pounds, and a very inconvenient pack it made, tied to the back of my saddle. Being unable to see my way, except occasionally as I caught sight of Mr. Greer's

figure in the advance, I allowed the mule to find its own way to the best of its instinct and ability. While endeavoring to ascend a very steep bank, the poor animal made a mistep, gave a lunge, and slipped through the girth, leaving myself, pack and saddle in the rear. Fortunately I clung to the halter, and soon, with great difficulty, saddled again, and presently overtook Mr. Greer.

About noon we found ourselves in the town of Matagalpa, where we refreshed ourselves with a hearty lunch, and were soon on our way to the mines, nine miles beyond. We arrived between four and five o'clock. This mine was in charge of an American employed by Mr. Greer. It is a gold quartz mine, running in a regular ledge, and is worked by the old Spanish arastas, that only save about two-thirds of the gold.

The morning after our arrival they were ready to clean up, and calculated there was about ten tons of quartz crushed, of which the results were three pounds of gold, or, by close figures, 3 lbs. 8 oz., making $7,680; and there are plenty of good quartz mines in other localities fully as rich. The dense vegetation is a great obstable to discovering ledges. The Indians have frequently brought in specimens of gold quartz that are very rich.

I found the climate here cool and pleasant, the soil well adapted to the raising of grain—some wheat is already raised, but to no great extent. The hills are covered with an abundance of grass, the wild stock roll in fattening feed, and regale themselves on the purest of water.

The quartz mill was run by water. Mr. Greer has the benefit of three falls, sufficient in power and amount of water to run half a dozen mills.

We remained at this mine five days. During my stay, I availed myself of a bath in the river. My feet were very sore, as I supposed from the wearing of the heavy spurs, but on examination I found my spurs innocent of the charge, for, quite to the contrary, I found my heels filled with jiggers. Taking my penknife, I soon removed three large nests of these abominable little insects. Filling the places with tallow, I put on my boots, and was troubled no more with sore heels.

After we had spent five days, we started on our return to the city of Leon. As Mr. Greer had business in the town of Matagalpa, that would occupy one day, he left the mines a day in advance of me. On the following day I started, accompanied by one of his native employés, to overtake him at Matagalpa, and arrived in due time; but as Mr. Greer had not fully completed his business, I pushed on, leaving him to overtake me. As we had more load now we had an extra mule, and a native to lead him. As Mr. Greer was behind, I was traveling quite unarmed, and entirely alone, except the native spoken of; but having left the gold with Mr. Greer, I was not in as much danger of being molested, and the native knowing the money was left, would not be as apt to turn assassin, neither did he know that I was unarmed; they know the Americans always traveled armed.

However we traveled along the remainder of the day without the appearance of Mr. Greer, and 9 o'clock came before we found a house, or a place where we could obtain food or shelter for ourselves and tired animals.

Just before dusk I noticed there were four or five natives along with us. They had joined us with a small pack train and continued with us until we stopped for the night. It was an uncommon incident for them to travel so late, and I considered their company no compliment to our party, therefore kept an eye on them.

As I took the lead, and as the road was good and the moon shone very bright, I felt very little anxiety. Just before nine o'clock my native took a branch road, saying we will take this *canento* where we shall find a house and probably something to eat. As I rode up to the Indian hut and dismounted, I inquired for something to eat—the response came, "*no aqui muy tarde*"—not any too late. I then asked for some feed for our animals. The reply was the same. Looking around, I discovered another hut at a short distance, and sent the native who was helping me to make similar inquiries. Meantime I commenced taking off the saddle with the determination to stay, food or no food. I could hear the natives who had been traveling with us singing and whooping where they had camped in the road, close by. After I had removed the saddle, the native of the house concluded to give me some feed, and came

out with his knife and rope, to cut and carry it with. He asked how much I wanted, and after waiting about half an hour, he returned with as much as he could carry, and about an hour after my native came with some food. After feeding the animals, as we were enjoying a hearty supper, a Spaniard rode up and asked if we were not traveling with Mr. Greer, and informed us that he had just passed; we tried to hail him, but it was a useless attempt, and we rested easy until morning.

The next morning we were on our way very early, and at about nine o'clock caught up with Mr. Greer, and packing our mule with about three thousand dollars of gold, that he had buried, we proceeded on our way, and nothing else occurred worthy of record until we arrived at Leon—but we traveled day and night, carrying our food with us. Having no regular hour for eating, we replenished the inner man whenever we felt like it. Our food consisted of a kind of bread called "tortas," made of corn, boiled in strong lye of ashes. It is usually made in the evening, and allowed to cool over night. In the morning it is placed in a wooden tray, usually about 100 pounds at a time, and carried on the heads of the *maharos* sometimes a mile to the river, where a large hole is made in a rock, where the corn is deposited; a little fresh water is added; then the *maharos* get into it with both feet and keep up a constant pounding, which takes off the hulls. It is then washed with fresh water. After this process is completed, it is

ground between two rocks hewn and cut for the purpose. The flat rock is usually 12 by 18 inches square; flat on top, about three inches in thickness, with three legs under it—another rock is used to grind—water is used when it is ground; after this process it is in the shape of dough, and ready to bake. The baking apparatus is a kind of earthen pan or skillet, made out of clay, burnt very hard for the purpose. After this material is well baked it is called *torta*. How I used to hate the sound of the torta stones! It seems but yesterday, yet a year fraught with many changes has rolled away since I heard that grating, annoying sound of bread-making in Nicaragua.

There is much to be remembered in Central America of beauty and pleasure. The fair skies, the evergreen verdure, the creeping flowering vines, that wave among the branches of the tallest trees and shake their rich blossoms in the sunlight from January to January; the fine fruits, the tropic flowers, the fascinating climate—are all worthy of special mention. Nowhere in the world is to be found such exquisite breaths of purity and warmth, as in this charming atmosphere. Gaily plumaged birds,—rare specimens,—flit and chirp among more gorgeous blossoms, until the forests seem alive with bright bodies of orange, red, and purple. Much could be written of the birds of Central America, and the botanist would find it a choice field for collections and scientific research.

CHAPTER III.

A TRIP TO THE MINES OF XICORO, IN 1867.

The year 1866 has passed away, with its many wild and varied incidents, and 1867 still finds me exploring the country, and so far have accumulated nothing but information. Unlike many others, who have simply come and gone, I am determined to remain until I am well acquainted with the advantages, the rescources, and products of Nicaragua.

After spending Christmas in the city of Leon, and about the town of Kisiluaka, I began making preparations for the mines. I was obliged to buy a horse and saddle, to be ready to accompany our party, who were busy making their preparations. January 10th found us on our way en route for Xicoro. Our party consisted of five Americans, with a native to look after our stock. Being well armed and equipped for the occasion, we anticipated a jolly trip.

We left Leon at nine o'clock, and traveled along splendidly until we reached the *pozos*—the wells—twelve miles from the city and camped for the night. We arrived at this place at two o'clock. The natives charged us for water, having to draw it from a well. After we had fed and watered our stock, we began making preparations for supper.

Of course we did our own cooking, and everybody seemed to do his share of the eating. After supper, we enjoyed a smoke, with good cigars that only cost one cent. I seemed to be the "black sheep" of the party, or rather the unlucky one; having the chills and fever, I had to abandon smoking, which was quite a sacrifice—previously it was my greatest luxury. The fever and ague came upon me this evening, the first time for four or five days. With a journey of 225 miles before me, a raging fever and alternative chills was a poor prospect; but rather than go back to Leon, I would proceed if I suffered a thousand deaths.

The next morning we were on our way at eight o'clock, and traveled as far as the ranch of Dr. Gwzman, a distance of several miles—here we camped again. The next morning broke up camp at eight o'clock and crossed a river twice, and at five o'clock "struck tent" on the east bank. The next day we crossed the same river four times, and passed through an Indian town by the name of Jicaral, and pushed on rapidly two miles further to the mines of Fitzgerald, a German. He has a ten stamp mill erected that runs by steam, and the mines he rents. We camped for the night at an early hour. On the morning of the 14th, the saddler, Theo. Kelsey and myself, remained at the mill, while the rest of the party went on with the train. We remained until the next morning, in order to get a supply of quicksilver for our mines.

The 15th found us en route again, each carrying ten pounds of quicksilver. We passed through Santa Rosa, a small Indian village, and crossed a crooked twisting river four times during the day, and several small creeks; also crossed the summit of the first mountain, and as we turned our back we could see Lake Managua quite visible, but at a great distance. It looked bright and smooth as a mirror, and the day was one of the loveliest. The birds sent forth their clearest notes, and the whole scene was one of picturesque beauty. As we neared the summit, we halted under a pine tree, and on a splendid grass plat, threw off the saddles, gave the horses a good bait and ourselves a delightful rest. After a refreshing slumber, we proceeded on our way with refreshed horses, and traveled at a lively speed.

On the 16th and 17th, we passed several fine stock ranches, and saw some of the finest horses and cattle to be found anywhere. The grass was knee deep, and very nutritious. We passed a great many natives bound for a Fair, held in a town called Sauci, where they generally take their fat cattle and sell them at a very low price. At dark on the 17th, we came upon the camp of our party, near a small town called Canda.

On the following morning we broke camp, having lost one mule—the result was a late start. We made eighteen miles and camped in a small village called Pologuena.

On the 19th we crossed a spur of the mountains and descended into a dark glen, which terminated at last by opening out upon a valley, through which a clear stream was flowing. On the north side of this stream, lies the really pretty town (Indian town) of Telpaneca. While in camp here we had a call from a Padre, a very pleasant appearing Spaniard. This was of course an incident. We traveled along without interruption for two days; finding good feed for the stock, plenty of good water and excellent roads.

On the 21st we passed a large sugar house, or mill, owned by a native, which seemed to be in good order and prosperity. We arrived in Xicoro about half past two o'clock, and were glad to "pitch our tents."

We found the mines we desired to reach were about twenty-five miles from the town, so we replenished our stock of provisions. We were augmented in members at this place by a party of Germans, who overtook us, and like ourselves were prospecting the country.

On the 23d we made a fresh start with a large party, all in good spirits. We bade farewell to Xicoro about half-past nine in the morning. Xicoro is the center of a population made up of Indians, negroes, Spanish—and the king of darkness knows what else; but at all events the blood of the place is black, spotted, yellow and tan, with evidences and results of a variety from the

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mixture of all these elements. It was a horrible looking town!

On the evening of our first day's travel we camped on the banks of a small river where the busy hum of industry is heard; the spade and shovel had made havoc with nature's original features; a dam had just been erected on the river for mining purposes, and a quartz mill in process of building—several have been erected since—they are generally owned by the natives.

On the 24th we commenced the ascent of the hill, which was so steep that we could not ride up, and were obliged to leave a man with our cargo—we had about ten miles yet to make, and through a very rough and brushy country. We soon came to the mine on the hill called the Domingo Manta, in charge of Dr. C. Lockwood, an American. The Doctor invited us into his cabin, gave us a drink of his native rum, over which we toasted the old man well—he bidding us good speed. Leaving this place we left the last sign of civilization, and after traveling only about forty rods, we began to cut our way through a young forest of thick undergrowth. Three of us drove the train, while the balance cut the way. We traveled a mile in this way, and then camped in a gulch for the night.

OUR BILL OF FARE.

We did not serve our meals in fashionable style. Neither did we observe any hours for dining; whenever it was convenient we had dinner, and

took our supper usually at the same time. Each man cuts his own broiling stick and cooks to suit his taste. Coffee is always made—dried meat and bread made the bulk of our meal; dessert usually consisted of jokes and songs and a long smoke.

CUTTING OUR WAY THROUGH.

The next day the men set at work cutting a path through the brush again—being ill I was left as keeper of camp. The boys worked at the brush till night set in, and returned to camp. There were so many of us, our evenings were very pleasantly spent in speaking of our past experiences, past friends and future anticipations.

On the 25th we made our way through the undergrowth and arrived at our destination on the Rio Thomasa. It seemed queer to call it home. It was surrounded by a dense forest and was in the midst of an unexplored country, inhabited by nothing but wild beasts. The first night of our stay we were awakened by the roaring of the wild beast known as the *donta*, an animal belonging to the monkey species, but generally very black, making its home in the tallest trees and seldom seen; whenever they set up a howl they make the forest ring with a hideous noise, though one seldom hears but one at a time.

The following morning we set about devising and calculating where to locate our cabin, etc. However, we soon found a spot and set about

clearing a space to build on. A portion of the party went prospecting, while I went back for the balance of our cargo. I had missed my chills for three days, and commenced to recover my courage, and resume my former habits of smoking and enjoying myself with the balance.

I found our cargo all right and arrived in camp with it all safe and sound without an accident of any kind. We were obliged to build our cabins as rapidly as possible, for the rainy season was close at hand and it was necessary to protect ourselves from it at once. We turned out with all the force we could command, and the first day I disabled myself by cutting my foot; one of the boys was taken sick and had to be taken to Domingo. The Germans finished prospecting and started on their return to the city, having to take one of the boys to look after the sick man; this left us with only three, and in this condition the rain came, and poured down almost two weeks steadily. My chills came on and with a crippled foot I was indeed in a bad condition. My constitution must have been the very best, or I should never have lived through it. Not having a dry place to get into, another of our party fell sick with fever and ague, and at this time only one was left at each camp to care for the sick, except our hired native who took care of the horses; but before the last was taken down two had succeeded in getting the cabin partially up, and one side covered far enough to protect us from the rain. Sad and gloomy

nights followed, when nothing was heard but the growl of the tiger, or the bark of a wolf as they made their nightly approaches to the enclosure of the camp. We always kept our firearms close to us. We slept in hammocks attached to the joists of the cabin; here we laid and shook with the ague. Our shaking caused the leaves and dirt to fall through from the roof, and sometimes it seemed as if there must be an earthquake. Finally we began to gain in health, and began to think of putting the horses to pasture if we could find a trusty native to take charge of them, and take them out of the cañon before they should break their necks climbing over the rough sides of the mountains. My horse had pitched over one precipice, landing in a brush heap, and it took an hour to cut him out of it.

We were running short of provisions, and to kill two birds with one stone, we had the horses brought round, and one of the boys with our hired man took them to pasture, and at the same time went on to Xicoro with one mule to get provisions, for we were on short rations of beans and hominy, but we could say we had the best in camp to eat, and while we were at dinner some one would start up the impromtu song of—

"Hominy, hominy, beans and corn,"

Sung to the tune of—

"Rabbit foot, rabbit foot,
Nails and claws."

One would say, "oh dry up, it's ill manners to sing at the table." "Well, what's the difference

in a wild country like this? You never intend to be among civilized people again then, I suppose?"

"Of course I do, and then we can be more mannerly."

"Probably not; it's better to improve your manners, or at least preserve what you have, for you are becoming so ill mannered that when you return to civilization you will not know how to conduct yourself properly,"

"If we stay in this country, we'll be behind the fashions anyhow."

"I'd like to know what fashion has to do with manners, or with us here; just wait till we make a fortune, and we shall find use enough for our manners, and probably *fashion* also."

"How long shall we have to wait?"

"Time will tell; in about three months the story will be told."

"Yes, and probably a bad one; we shall doubtless be making tracks with our heels towards the camp."

After Mr. Tompkins arrived with one mule loaded with provisions, we commenced gaining in health and nearly ready to commence work again; but our continued bad luck seemed to have its way. Hardly a day passed but something happened of a disagreeable nature or formed into accidents to prevent our carrying into execution our plans and designs.

The native who went with Mr. Tompkins to take

the horses to pasture and get provisions, only succeeded in getting back as far as the pasture. Mr. Tompkins supposed he was merely idling along, but he was mistaken, he stole one of the best mules with a pack saddle and made his escape unmolested, and was never heard of again.

The man who was taken ill and carried to Domingo, required a man to go to his assistance, and this reduced our number to three, and a heavy task to commence; unable as we were it had to be done, for "at this stage of the game" there was no backing out.

We had to saw lumber by hand, a ditch to dig and a dam to build to turn the river; timber that was suitable for lumber was scarce and hard to obtain, being on a very steep hillside, and owing to the dense growth of light brush, we had double work to perform, for the underbrush had to be cleared before we could work at the heavy timber; a sawpit had to be constructed, and with skids and hand spikes roll the logs down the hill on to the sawpit; by this means we could use our saw. After cutting down one tree, we made one sawpit; but we had two sawpits to make, having one tree on each side of the river; while two of us were engaged sawing lumber, another was digging the ditch; but owing to our poor health the work proceded very slowly, still we made good use of our time, for it was a struggle akin to that of life and death.

In a month's time we had cut and sawed out

three hundred feet of lumber, enough to make our sluice-boxes, and one hundred yards of ditch dug. We were now ready to build the dam. The river was about ten feet wide, about one foot deep with a very swift current that required a substantial dam. Heavy timbers were needed, and we were obliged to cut them above the spot where we intended building it and roll them down by hand. Our provisions were getting low again, and we found we should be obliged to suspend work or replenish the "larder." By sending word to Domingo, we learned that our sick man was so far recovered as to be able to dispense with the man who attended him, at least long enough for him to take a load of provisions to our camp. We found one ready means of supply; if we could spare the time to take our guns and go into the forest, we could catch as many wild turkeys as we needed, occasionally we brought one down from the trees by firing from our cabin door. One evening we succeeded in catching game without going to the door even. Just after dark, after retiring to our "bunks," a word always used for bed, I believe, by miners, hunters, trappers, and travelers, I heard a scrambling noise that seemed to be in the joists in the front part of the room; after trying to discover what it was through the dim light of the fire, I finally discovered an animal setting there helping himself to our jerked beef, but no sooner had I spoken than one of the boys grasped a rifle and brought him to the floor; knowing it was a deadly

shot, we did not leave our bunks to investigate the matter until morning. On arising in the morning, we found a possum lying in one of the pains that borders on dissolution; the next movement on our part was to throw him over the hill—no meat made, but some saved.

After another arrival of provisions, we intended to give the river a test, before standing in need of another supply, if possible. Having a skiff all completed, and our dam nearly built, we knew it would not be many days before we could ascertain whether we had gold in the river bottom or not. As we came near the completion of this dam, we had reinforcements, which was not at all surprising, but during the hard work we had it all to ourselves; so at this time we were honored with lookers on, who were in our way, but not able to give us a lift. A foreigner who had just arrived from Leon, knowing something about carpenter work, was soon engaged making sluice-boxes. The two boys in the Domingo camp made their appearance about this time, making six in number, but the returned convalescents were hardly able to help us, and were little disposed to go into the hard work as we had been working for so many weeks. A few days would decide the matter, and settle the question as to whether our labor had been all in vain or not.

Now, after the dam was completed, a heavy shower of rain came, (and having the river turned into the channel) and causing the river to take a sud-

den rise, it broke over the side of the channel, causing the stream to flow back into the main river-bed again. After the flow had subsided, it required three days to repair it. We finally succeeded in draining the river, and set our sluice-boxes. Finding the bed of the river almost on the bed-rock, allowing us but little dirt or gravel to wash, it was not a very favorable prospect for gold; still we continued to sluice out the largest portion of the dirt and gravel that we could find, and after twice cleaning up we had obtained the *sum of five dollars and a few cents.* For three months of hard labor and long sacrifice, we had about one dollar apiece; we felt discouraged, and with good reason.

"Now, boys, what's to be done? A part of the crowd had better take the *five dollars*, and get out of the wilderness, and the balance of us had better stay until the provisions are used up." This was accepted as a good idea. The mule was brought up to camp, three saddles packed on his back, with two or three blankets, (having but few clothes left we could carry them on our backs). Three of us were now ready to travel, and three would remain. Theodore Kelsey, Charles Stevens and myself were ready to travel; Tompkins, Simons and Gaston to remain in camp. Stevens came to the camp on foot and was ready to leave by the same conveyance. Our idea of packing the mule with three saddles was only to the pasture where our horses were to be found, and the mule to be sent back to camp. We bade goodbye to our

friends and were en route for Leon. After we arrived at the pasture, we started in pursuit of my horse, accompanied by a native. Taking the load from the mule, I mounted and the native proceeded on foot. After we had traveled over a very high mountain and down into a deep gulch, we found a part of the horses, all except my own, but the native followed the gulch a little further, and soon came back driving the old fellow before him, but he was too poor to live. I hardly recognized the faithful animal. Was it possible I was left to foot it back? Not while another horse was to be found. My poor beast had carried me all the way from Leon to the mines when I was too ill to walk, having the chills and fever, and now he was reduced to a skeleton. I first thought of shooting him to relieve him of his misery, but I did not have the heart. I understood the reason now of the boys insisting on my coming to the pasture for the horses. They had surely inquired in regard to the welfare of the horses, unknown to me, and insisted on my coming for the purpose of seeing if I would be foolish enough to go back without one —if so, they were badly mistaken, for I was not long catching another, and when we returned to the balance of the little homeward party it was quite dark, but we tied our animals and rolled up in our blankets for the night.

We had no difficulty in making our way for some days, not until we arrived at a road turning off from our trail, leading through *pueblo nuevo*, and

thence to Sauci, being our nearest way to Leon. Leaving Santa Rosa and Jicarel to the left, we traveled over a rolling and most beautiful prairie. The scenery was the finest I had seen in the whole country. Fat cattle were grazing at their leisure. Our path, or road, seemed to run along on a divide or ridge, and we found a scarcity of water, but there seemed to be an abundance a little below on either side. We traveled along this ridge until we grew very thirsty, before we came to water near the road, and just before we reached this place we were met by a black, hairy-breasted Indian, that seemed to have some negro blood in his veins, and looked as though he had never worn a shirt in all his life. As he emerged from the brush at the roadside, he demanded a passport with his bayonet drawn, and if we had not been expecting guards on the way he would have had a few charges fired at him before he could have uttered the word, *pasa porte*. As he demanded the passport, pretending to be ignorant of the custom, we asked him why he *asked* for one? He took particular pains to inform us the various reasons, and as though he didn't wish any trouble. Judging well from his wild appearance that he would understand English, I spoke to the boys as follows:

"What shall we do, boys? Is it possible that we are caught and are compelled to go back, and have to probably suffer for water unless we can obtain it from the guard? Here is only one greaser, and there are three of us and two revolvers; we may rest assured

this is not the only guard, and look back there at the old wall that they have made a breast-work of in case of an emergency, and just before us is a steep precipice to ascend, it will be impossible to make our escape unless we should kill all of them, if there are any more. There they come now, about half a dozen of them, all armed with muskets; we had better be a little cautious how we talk." As they came rushing up, they seemed to be in quite an excited state, as though they thought we were endeavoring to pass without a passport. Our chance looked dismal. Of course we expected to be taken prisoners. "Oh, boys," said I, "I've got a passport in my valise, which I secured in San Francisco, allowing me the privilege of traveling through any part of the country; it is written in Spanish and I paid for it in gold coin."

"It's no use to get that out," said one, "it does not say anything concerning *cholera*."

"Never mind, let's try it anyhow." Dismounting, I spoke in Spanish, pretending that I had, until now, forgotten the passport that I had, or that I scarcely knew before what "*su pasa porte*" meant. It was nearly sundown and we had but little time to spare, but I was not long in securing the passport and handed it to the guards. One would read it, then another, and then they would look at the blank side of it as though they were examining the quality of paper; then they would look at the seal. While they were reading, we

were waiting patiently, and still with doubts as to its success, and most of all we feared they would see that it was only a pass for one man and that it would not be accepted for us all. Mr. Kelsey says that he has one likewise, so we thought that far, at least, we were all safe. The guard looked at us all as though he scarcely knew what to do, but he said he would keep the passport and we might pass on. We left the pass willingly and traveled along about fifty yards and began to ascend a very steep mountain, where we had to dismount and lead our horses, being impossible to ride, and night began to draw her crimson sunset curtains over the landscape, and we were soon enveloped in darkness; and such a clambering over the cliffs and pebble stones in the dark I never experienced before. After ascending the hill about a mile, we came to a flat and heavy forest, so dense that not a star could be seen through the canopy of leaf and branch. We mounted with one footman behind, giving the bridles to the horses to find the way by their better instinct. Sometimes we were obliged to strike a match when the horses would lose the trail. We soon came to a river, where we drank too much water for our own comfort. We tied our horses and rolled ourselves in our blankets for the remainder of the night, sleeping soundly until the morning light pierced the interlocking branches of the forest, giving us the first view of the morning in silver lines, creeping through the heavy thickness of interlacing leaves.

We resumed our journey after a hearty breakfast, and at 9 o'clock came to an Indian hut, where we again refreshed ourselves and proceeded on to Sauci, which is quite a magnificent looking place for an Indian town. We passed directly through, making no stop, as we desired to reach Kisiluaka as soon as possible, where we designed remaining until we could get particular news from Leon in regard to *cholera*, though we expected to meet our friend Covert there, and find protection for a time. However, being disappointed in finding him, his hired native prepared dinner for us, and as well as we could ascertain from the natives the cholera was not raging in Leon, but a few cases were known in the vicinity. Being old acquaintances with the natives, they insisted upon us taking dinner, and cut a chicken's head off before we could scarcely make a reply. After finishing dinner we ventured upon our journey and rode on to Leon, where we would be sure to find our friend, and one that we would not be mistaken in. He was an old filli-buster of the Walker fame, and a resident of Nicaragua about fifteen years, and one of the best American residents of the country. His friendship is not based upon the amount of money a man may have, for I had no money, and if he was not a friend of mine, the symptoms were very deceitful, that's all. On our first arrival in Nicaragua, he interested himself in our welfare, gave good advice and rendered prompt assistance. While we were at the mines he took out our mail matter, and paid

twenty-five cents per letter, and forwarded them to us, taking the chances of getting his money back; this man is J. Thomas, and a man who need not be ashamed of his name. "We shall not fail to visit him whether we have money or not," we said, and were soon before his door. He came out to us with a smile on his face, and with a look that seemed to say, "I expected to see you return in this condition." "Well my friends, "said he," are you willing to give up now? Get down and put your horses out, I will send a man to feed them, and if you will own up beat, I will take you in, and hope you will make this your home until you see your way further."

Being glad to accept the offer we did not hesitate long over the conditions, but came to terms at once. Our horses were well cared for, a good cigar apiece, and a seat in the pleasant shade fell to our lot, while to the amusement of Mr. Thomas we began to narrate our trip to the mines and incidents that occurred during our absence. It was the general impression that we made a desperate strike, had endured many hardships and obliged to succumb at last to failure and poverty. After enjoying a meal fit for a king, we set out for a walk around the city, and met a few of our friends who had not yet left the country in disgust. They were anxious to obtain information from and of the mines, and assailed us with inquiries, but our replies were not very encouraging. River and placer mining in Nicaragua has been in-

variably a failure; still people are not always satisfied until they make the experiment for themselves. We felt that we had made one for ourselves, and our number was growing less and less every day, and there would not be enough left to make another at the rate they were falling off. As to making a settlement, it was necessary to keep together, and the most productive and tillable lands lay in the interior. The country Americans ought to settle is some distance from the coast; high, cool, pleasant and healthy. Being situated far from market, a small colony cannot go to the expense of building a road, which is really the first thing to be done, and cannot be dispensed with. In the lowlands is good soil, but malaria of all kinds seems to infest the place, and Americans will not settle in these localities. If a society intend to populate the country they must all settle together, and depend upon one another for assistance.

The American minister had no foreman on his cotton plantation to take charge of about sixty natives, (there is a probability of final settlement of this country, but not while Americans have to seek work to save themselves from starving.) After remaining about a week with Mr. Thomas, I made a bargain with the American minister, A. B. Dickenson, to take charge of the plantation, though for very low wages, with a refusal of better eventually. I therefore saddled my gray and went to the plantation. Being at the suburbs of the city it was only

about half a mile from the minister's office. I was soon made known as the foreman of the ranch, and took the men and went out to the cotton field and set them at work, and made an excellent start. For the first three days the natives turned their work out well without any difficulty. The minister was in the habit of calling upon me every day, until business caused him to be absent several days, then the natives began to be reckless. Not being slaves, we could not compel them to work, but they hated to have their wages docked, so we made a general rule to weigh their cotton every evening, and if it was short what was considered a day's work, we would dock five or ten cents on the work. They then, between themselves, adopted a plan when they could get out of my sight of throwing dice for handsful of cotton. Of course some would be in arrears at night, and the winners would have an over amount of cotton to be credited to them.

On the second day of the minister's departure, the natives grew heedless and impertinent, and recognized me no longer as their foreman, but from appearances I saw they intended to appoint one of their own number—one who had held the position previous to my appointment. However, I endeavored to convince them to the contrary. I came in contact with the native foreman, and requested him to conduct his men better. I soon found I had hurt his feelings, and he was getting very angry, but exhibited no signs of rebellion. He

spoke in a very abrupt manner, saying "the minister had not hired him to work." I told him "he was hired to do as I bade him, if not to work to attend strictly to the men that were working." I was not in a condition for any contention, being quite unarmed, and the native, more for pretension than anything else, was always armed with a pistol and knife, and as I made the last remark, he said that if I "was the superior boss" he would leave the field and leave them in my charge alone. I told him I could do as well without him. He started off, saying nothing about his pay, but scarcely had I time to take a walk among the men, and set them to picking the cotton better, when he returned, going to a party of men and conversing with them; at the same time I was discharging a man for ill-conduct and bad work, paid him and bade him leave the field. On hearing this, they shouted they would all leave, taking up their cotton sacks at the same time, though rather hesitating to see if I would take the discharged man back, rather than have them all leave. To their astonishment, I started for the end of the cotton rows where my horse was tied, and told them to come on, that if they quit work they would not get their money until the minister's return, or until Saturday, the regular pay day. They gave a hideous scream, and came after me with a rush, gaining ground on me as I mounted. I waited to see the next move, and as they all came up, they drew their knives, demanding their pay, and threatening my life. I consid-

ered it about time to leave. I gave my horse the whip, and was at the house long in advance of them. I got my revolver and put it in my shirt bosom, waiting patiently for the scoundrels to make their arrival; but presently they came with a rush and a warwhoop, stamping their cotton down, at the same time waiving their knives at a desperate rate. I stood firm and unexcited, relying altogether on my revolver. If I had not had this good, reliable friend, I should have given up the field. After a desperate argument, and after the natives had cooled down again, and found that I was too stubborn and headstrong for them, the native "boss" came and asked me if I would allow them to go to work again. I gave them their choice, to quit or go to work. Taking work in preference to a discharge, they started for the field, though I called the "boss" back, and gave him orders to take charge of the men alone, until the minister returned, and I would only take charge of them about the house, and if the work was not done as it should be I would discharge them all at once. He made the agreement, and things went on smoothly until the minister returned, when I rendered my report. The natives trembled with fear when he gave the answer that if they wished to leave they were to be paid off the next day. As he spoke in English, I interpreted for him in Spanish. Pretending to be better friends than ever, they had no intention whatever of leaving, but quite willing to work under my orders.

I was tired and worn with my hardships in the mines. I found it a hard task to stand over them, and I believe the old man made it an invariable rule to visit the field in the heat of the day, at which time he usually found me in the shade of a tree, if there was one near. This would discourage the old man so that he wouldn't talk about better wages, and the low wages I was getting discouraged me too. My wages would not allow me a suit of clothes suitable for the business I was in; besides the natives respected the well dressed man, and were more obedient to one who looked better than they did. Still the minister was hard to please, and we could hardly see things alike, so I took my little dimes and left.

I saddled up the gray again, and was on my way once more, with no hope of making a fortune at present.

CHAPTER IV.

A TRIP TO VIRGIN BAY AND SAN JUAN DEL SUR.

Leaving the cotton plantation, I made a visit to Kisiluaka, and then set out for a trip to the transit, and by way of Lake Nicaragua. This trip was made in company with a German and a party of natives, of whom my friend hired a mule for the occasion. We left the city June the 8th, passed several ranches that seemed to be deserted or owned by natives, that were no doubt lurking somewhere on the lookout for travelers. We traveled about eight miles and stopped at Pueblo Nuevo for the night. The day had been very warm, and our horses were very tired, although the roads were excellent and well shaded. The next day we journeyed about five leagues before passing a habitation, until we arrived at Nagarote. The breeze and shade made it delightful traveling. About one league from Nagarote we crossed the Rio San Remon, and about a mile and a half further came to Lake Managua, and then traveled on the beach for a mile and stopped at the Pueblo Matèare four and a half leagues, and stopped at Nagarote. This place is a most filthy Indian town and overrun with bed-bugs. On the morning of the 10th, we traveled about six leagues to Masaya, where the natives left the pack train, one of them continuing the

journey with us to Granada. We passed Masaca two and a half leagues, and halted at an Indian hut for the night, among the banana orchards. Our chances for supper were rather slim. On the morning of the 11th, after a rain during the night, (it was still cloudy,) we took an early start and traveled past some heavy forests and some fine grazing land, and arrived at Granada, where we remained the following day. During this time I sold my horse, and on the 12th we were ready to take a flat-boat that was bound for the island of Ometeper. The boat was owned by natives, and the first night on the lake we were caught in a heavy rain, having no shelter for protection except our blankets. Occasionally while rowing among the islands, the natives would pull us under a wide spreading thickly-leaved tree, that afforded very good shelter during the heaviest showers. There were too many islands to attempt to run by sail, and the Indian was the poorest excuse of a row-man I ever met. After rowing awhile and resting awhile, we finally rowed to shore, and remained over night. The next morning we were gladdened by the sight of the warm sunlight and anticipated an early and pleasant start; but when we saw our natives making for the woods in search of meat, we were greatly vexed. After an absence of about two hours they came back with a large iguana, an animal apparently belonging to the alligator family, averaging about four feet in length. They generally live in the trees near the

water edge, and when disturbed they plunge into the water and dive like a fish. The Indians generally go in companies of three or four, with long knives, and while one climbs a tree the balance wait below, having waded out into the water, with knives ready to strike when the animal leaps in; frequently they catch them in their arms.

After the iguana was dressed he was cut in pieces with a knife, tail and all put into a kettle and well boiled; green plantains were also roasted. After the iguana was boiled the skin was taken off, and the meat appeared as white as a chicken. It was a great rarity, and with our bread and cheese we had a splendid meal, and were soon floating down the lake again at a slow speed, and passed through a very deep and quiet part of the lake. The water was without a ripple. We soon came to another place where the water was green with plants, causing us to imagine we were in very shallow water, until to our great astonishment we found they grew on the surface of the water. To satisfy our curiosity, as the boat passed we lifted them by the top and dropped them again into the same place; the roots fell below, acting as a kind of balance to the plants setting so gracefully on the surface. The Americans call it the sea-cabbage; it looks like a bunch of lettuce.

After we had gained some distance from shore, we were favored with a good breeze, and hoisting our sails were soon landed on the island of Amotapa, where we remained for one day, awaiting an

opportunity to obtain a boat for Virgin Bay. During our stay we took a stroll through some fine coffee and cocoa plantations, owned and worked by natives. They seemed to be confident of a good crop every year.

The next day we obtained a little boat, or rather cheap passage on a small boat to San George, where we hired a native to carry a part of our baggage, and proceeded on to Virgin Bay on foot.

VIRGIN BAY.

As we came in sight of Virgin Bay, it exhibited more signs of civilization than any place we had seen in months. It was well settled by Americans, the houses built in American style, with plank floors. It was grandeur to us. As we entered the St. Charles hotel we were astonished to hear our heels resounding on the floor, and hearing so many speaking English. The town is built near the lake, with a long wharf built out into the lake, to meet the supposed transit road leading from San Juan del Sur through Virgin Bay, where it connects with the lake boat crossing the lake at the St. Charles, and there connecting with the river boats navigating the San Juan river, and connecting with the ocean steamers from San Francisco.

On the 17th, four hundred passengers passed through from San Francisco *en route* for New York, making things look lively for awhile. Hotels and saloons did a good business, but as soon as the pas-

sengers were aboard of the lake boat, the business was "dead as a door nail," and everything restored to quiet. After remaining in Virgin Bay for some time, I went across to San Juan del Sur, when I found myself in one of the dirtiest and most unhealthy spots in the country. During the time I remained, the fever broke out, and of course I had it with the rest. I had not escaped any of the evils of the country so far, and expected to have all that was going. It was by mere accident I escaped the cholera. I returned to Virgin Bay about the time the passengers were due again from San Francisco. I awaited the arrival, and got on board the lake boat with them for Greytown. Crossing the lake, we arrived at the St. Charles, where we took a boat and proceeded down the river. The scenery along the river was beautiful; the tropic vegetation and luxuriant floral display is scarcely equaled on the continent. On arriving at Castillo our attention was drawn to the old ruined fort, that presented a grand scene. It was erected on a very high hill, projecting from the water's edge. Walker's guards had demolished it in some places—or rather demolished its beauty—but guards were seen pacing its walls. Opposite the fort is a fall or rapids in the river, that defies navigation in the dry season. Here we found about a mile of railroad cars, drawn by mules, for the purpose of conveying the freight and baggage to the boats below the falls, the passengers being obliged to walk.

Down the river we were charmed with the scen-

ery; the songs of gorgeously feathered birds and the perfumes of tropic blossoms loading every breath of air. Several of the passengers amused themselves with shooting at the alligators as we passed them basking their rough backs in the sun. We made good time down the river to Greytown, and the sight of the ocean steamer, that lay at anchor ready to exchange passengers, was a welcome sight to all, but particularly to me.

GREYTOWN.

Greytown is inhabited mostly by Americans and foreigners. Though not remaining long, and taking but few notes, I saw about all there was of interest in the place. So long as this route from San Francisco to New York was kept open, Greytown flourished and became a port of some importance. I accomplished my business at this town, and returned with the returning steamer and the New York passengers, intending to go with them to San Francisco, and abandon my wild explorations in Nicaragua. The company were not long in exchanging freight and passengers, and we were steaming up the river, though at a much slower rate of speed than when we came down.

On our return nothing occurred worthy of note until we reached *San Juan del Sur*, where we took the ocean steamer *America*, and in October, on the 24th day, we sailed from the port of San

Juan del Sur for San Francisco, having been absent just seventeen months in Central America.

Our ocean trip was a pleasant one, varied with the usual routine of steamer life. We took pains to note the distance accurately from San Juan del Sur to San Francisco, which is 2,700 miles. November the sixth found us sailing into the harbor, through the "Golden Gate," thankful to set foot in the "city by the sea" once more.