

SPENCER AND HIS COSTA RICAN PARTY.

The following account of the party of Costa Ricans under command of Spencer, at Punta Arenas and on the San Juan river, has been kindly furnished us by Col. Ruder, of the Nicaraguan Army, who arrived in the steamship Texas.—N. O. Picayune.

The steamer La Virgin left Virgin Bay on the 20th of December, for Fort San Carlos and Toro Rapids. On our arrival at Castillo the next morning we found the steamerboat Col. Wheeler and Scott. The Scott had arrived the day before from Punta Arenas. Capt. Wood, of the Scott, reported that on his way up, he passed two large empty rafts between the Serapiqui and San Carlos rivers, which he looked on as auspicious; we proceeded down the river the same day. On passing the mouth of the San Carlos river, we saw a raft with men on it coming down, which satisfied us that the Costa Ricans were in the vicinity. A man by the name of Spencer, who formerly had been in the employ of the Transit Company, and who, as we afterwards found, was in command, had previously arrived, and was waiting with 150 men in ambush at the wood-landing where the boats usually take in wood, to capture the boat.

Capt. Townsend, of the Col. Wheeler, thought it prudent not to stop. The boat passed without being fired on. Spencer's excuse for not firing on her was that there were too many women on board. After we passed he immediately embarked his men in bungaloes, and proceeded down the river. He landed his forces about three miles above Serapiqui, where there was a company of forty men stationed, commanded by Capt. F. A. Thompson. Spencer made his way down within sight of Thompson's camp, and lay until the men were at their dinner, when he charged in upon them, taking them by surprise, so much so that not more than two or three were able to get their arms. The Costa Ricans' first fire dealing death and dismay among them, all save those who were killed, jumped in the river and were drowned, except six, who succeeded in reaching Punta Arenas, some days after.

To Capt. Thompson is much blame attached. He had timely notice of the rafts coming down the San Carlos river; his failing to put out pickets, and neglect of instituting the necessary precautions, made him responsible for the surprise and destruction of his command. It is said that he fought bravely, and was wounded in several places with bayonets. His life was saved by Spencer. After Spencer took that post, he proceeded down the river and arrived in the harbor of San Juan on the morning of the 23d December, bringing with him Captain Thompson as prisoner. On his arrival, he at once proceeded on board of a British man-of-war, laying in the harbor, and delivered despatches from the President of Costa Rica, to the commander of the British fleet. Capt. Thompson was left on board the man-of-war, to have his wounds attended to.

Before Spencer left, the commander told him to go on with his work, and that he would assist him in the morning. This took place about 8 o'clock A. M. Spencer waited until daylight before he landed on the point, taking the agent and employees by surprise. Spencer told them that if there was a single shot fired, he would not permit a single life to be taken.

As soon as Spencer had taken possession of the Transit Company's building, and the steamer then laying there, three man-of-war gun-boats, manned each with thirty men and one six-pounder, were posted in such a position as to completely command the Transit Company's buildings.—The commander of these gun-boats, seeing there would be no resistance, ordered them to retire. There was not a shot fired on either side, and Spencer was permitted to take away the three river steamers without molestation.

During the day, Spencer got steam on the boats to proceed up the river. Through some mismanagement, two of the boats, when cast off, drifted over on the Greytown shore. Spencer found some difficulty in getting them off, which the English fleet noticing, they magnanimously sent him chains and anchors to assist him.

While the boats were laying on the Greytown shore, some citizens of that place, to whom the Transit Company was indebted, got out attachments in order to detain the boats. One was served on Spencer, which he tore up and threw the fragments in the face of the officer. Take note of this, ye gods, and weep. For once be it said the authority of His Majesty, the Mosquito King was disregarded. His Honor, T. J. Martin, the Chief Magistrate of Greytown, felt the insult keenly, and made a formal demand on the Commodore of the British fleet to see that the authority of His Majesty, the Mosquito King, was respected. The answer to this formal demand was that he could not interfere. The boats were got off, and proceeded up the river to Castillo.

Gen. Walker having no troops at this point, Spencer had no trouble to obtain possession. Here lay the steamer Scott, which they secured. The steamer Ogden was at the Toro Rapids. Spencer made the agent, under pain of death in case of refusal, write an order to Capt. Mahoney to bring her down to Castillo; which he did. Spencer in the meantime placed his men in a large warehouse. The Captain, on his arrival, made the steamer fast, thinking all was right; when this was done, the doors of the warehouse were thrown open, and the Costa Ricans marched on board, taking all hands prisoners. Capt. Mahoney and crew were compelled to take the steamer up to Toro Rapids, where lay the lake steamer La Virgin. Capt. Bunker, seeing Capt. Mahoney and his crew at this port, did not have the least suspicion of anything wrong, until Spencer with the Costa Ricans, stepped on board his boat and seized her.

On the 30th they proceeded to Fort San Carlos, and took that point by surprise without firing a gun. Capt. Bunker and his crew were also compelled to take the steamer La Virgin to San Carlos. There were certain signals established between the steamers and the fort, which were always exchanged on approaching in the night; these signals were exchanged. The steamer proceeded as usual to a point near the fort, where she stops to communicate with the shore. Captain Kruger boarded the steamer with five men. He was told to repair to the upper deck, where he was informed that he was a prisoner, and that if he made any signals to his men in the fort, he would be instantly shot, and was compelled to write an order for his command to surrender.

The steamer San Carlos with the California and Nicaraguan passengers, left Virgin Bay on Friday morning at about one o'clock, and proceeded on her way across the lake, arriving at Fort San Carlos, about 10 A. M. of the same day. The usual signals were exchanged, and the steamer was boarded by two men. Dr. Hardcastle and Lieut. Tyler, attached to the post, went on shore, and the steamer started down the river San Juan. We had gone but a few miles, however, before we were met by another steamer, commanded by the ubiquitous Spencer, who hailed, and startled us with the intelligence that all the lake steamers were in possession of the Costa Ricans, and that Fort San Carlos, which we had just left, Castillo, and Serapiqui, had been taken. This Spencer is the same man who a few years since killed Capt. Frasher, and only saved his neck for want of evidence.

RIVAS, Dec. 29, 1856.

Friend Pic:—I wrote to you under date of the 16th December from San George, which was left in the command of Col. Jaquess, with the Second Infantry, until all the sick and wounded, ammunition, &c., could be removed to Rivas, all of which was not fully completed until Saturday the 20th, and on Sunday morning, the 21st, the Second Infantry marched out of San George, leaving it in quiet possession of the natives, and arrived here about 11 o'clock, A. M. same day, the distance being a little less than two miles.

The town has a somewhat gloomy appearance. On entering the Plaza, on one side, a very large church has been commenced and completed to the first story, but how many years since, I cannot say, as it looks now more like a ruin than a new building. On the opposite side are the ruins of the buildings fired by the enemy at the last battle in this place. These ruins, in the most conspicuous part of the town, give it, on first entering, a somewhat dreary appearance, but after passing these eye sores, things change for the better, and finer quarters, both for officers and men, are found here than even in Granada.

The fortifications made here by the enemy are the best and strongest I have yet seen in the country, and if they had remained to fight from behind them, it would, no doubt, have caused the loss of many of our troops before they could have been taken. The strongest kind of barricades, both of adobe and logs, were thrown up across the roads and streets; trenches at least five feet deep were dug to communicate with the different barricades, covering a man entirely in crossing from one to the other; house-barricaded, towers for sharpshooters erected on the corners of streets, on the tops of houses, built of solid logs, ball proof, entirely covering the men, and pierced with port-holes on all sides—in fact, every precaution was taken for a vigorous defence. All the barricades were erected in the upper part, which is considered the strongest and most inaccessible part of the town. Now, the question arises, why did they leave the town which cost them so many days hard labor to fortify? Was it that they feared Gen. Walker's cannon? or was it dissensions among themselves? I believe myself it was caused by both.

I am informed that they heard the evening before they left that Gen. Walker would attack them in the morning, and knowing that he had arrived from Granada with all his cannon, and also knowing that reinforcements had arrived, they no doubt decided that discretion was the better part of valor, and marched off towards Masaya, before daylight. I am also informed that they quarreled with themselves, and came near fighting that morning, and that when they marched off they divided into two separate parties, and marched out of town by different roads. The general impression is, however, that they were too weak to stand a siege, and could not have held the town against the force that Gen. Walker could bring against it.

Nothing further has been heard from them since they left, with the exception that they are at Masaya, quarreling among themselves; and further, that the enemy were seen in considerable force by the rangers, at a small town called Nandima, about twelve miles from Granada, on the 25th. Shots were exchanged, but no damage done.

The following is a list of promotions and appointments in the Army on the 25th November last:

- Sergeant James H. Hearsay, promoted to Captain.
- 2d Lieut. James H. Hearsay, promoted to 2d Lieutenant.
- Sergeant M. Scully, promoted to 2d Lieutenant.
- Sergeant Thomas Fellows, promoted to 2d Lieutenant.
- Private E. W. Morgan, promoted to 2d Lieutenant.
- Private Henry Malcolm, promoted to 2d Lieutenant.
- Private Dan Shea, promoted to 2d Lieutenant.
- December 9.—Col. E. J. Sanders, promoted to Brigadier General, commission to date from Nov. 18.
- Major A. Schwartz, promoted to Lieutenant Col. commission to date from Nov. 18.
- Capt. Geo. E. Farren, promoted to Major, commission to date from Nov. 18.
- 1st Lieut. C. W. West, promoted to Capt. commission to date from Nov. 18.
- Major J. P. Waters, promoted to Lieutenant Col.; commissioner to date from Dec. 8.
- Capt. Jno. M. Baldwin, promoted to Major, commission to date from Dec. 8.
- Capt. J. P. Lewis, promoted to Major, commission to date from Dec. 8.
- 2d Lieut. Caspell, promoted to 1st Lieut., commission to date from Dec. 8.
- Corporal M. G. Hall, promoted to 2d Lieut., commission to date from Dec. 8.
- Private M. D. Smith, promoted to 2d Lieutenant, commission to date from Dec. 8.

Private L. H. Klockner, promoted to 2d Lieut., commission to date from Nov. 18.

2d Lieut. S. H. Clark, promoted to 1st Lieut., commission to date from Dec. 8.

December 16.—Brig. Gen. C. F. Henningsen, promoted to Major General; Lieut. Col. John C. O'Neal, promoted to Col.; 1st Rifle; Major P. B. Craño, Commissary Department, promoted to Lieut. Col.; Major Thomas Henry, Quartermaster Department, promoted to Lieut. Col.; 1st Lieut. W. H. Buttrick, promoted to Captain; 1st Lieut. James S. West, promoted to Captain; Surgeon C. S. Coleman, promoted to Lieut. Col. and Acting Surgeon General; Surgeon A. Callahan, promoted to Major; Maj. E. W. Rawie, Ordnance Department, promoted to Lieut. Col. by Brevet; Major Henry L. Potter, Ordnance Department, promoted to Lieut. Col. by Brevet; Captain A. Swingle, Ordnance Department, promoted to Major; Maj. A. Swingle, Ordnance Department, promoted to Lieut. Col. by Brevet of Artillery; 1st Lieut. Sumpter Williamson, promoted to Captain of Rifles; Sergeant Major Jackson, promoted to 2d Lieut. of Rifles; Sergeant G. D. Brown, promoted to 2d Lieut.; Sergeant B. Le Sueur, promoted to 2d Lieut.

December 19.—Major G. W. M. Leonard, promoted to Brevet Lieutenant Colonel; Major W. P. Cayce, promoted to Brevet Lieutenant Colonel; Capt. Thomas Dolan, promoted to Major; Sergeant J. W. Grangle, promoted to 1st Lieutenant; Sergeant Clark, promoted to 2d Lieutenant; Sergeant Gillam, promoted to 2d Lieutenant; Thomas Mollhenny, M. D., Assistant Surgeon with rank of Captain.

December 23.—1st Lieut. Thomas F. Wright, promoted to Brevet Captain; Private H. P. De Shields, promoted to 2d Lieut.; Private Ephraim Mann, promoted to Captain; David Martin, promoted to Captain; 2d Lieut. Hy. Malcolm, promoted to 1st Lieut.

December 26.—1st Lieut. Chas. Wilkinson, promoted to Captain of Rifles; Private John Franklin, promoted to 2d Lieut.

December 28.—Lieutenant Colonel John P. Waters, promoted to Colonel, to date from the 13th December.

APPOINTMENTS.—S. A. Lockridge, Lieut. Col.; Farrell, Captain; M. A. Wilson, Captain; Higley, Captain; Course, Captain; C. Cunningham, 1st Lieut.; Crasley, 1st Lieut.; W. S. Bacon, 1st Lieut.; B. F. Harwell, 1st Lieut.; Scamneron, 1st Lieut.; Rayburn, 1st Lieut.; B. F. Whittier, Assistant Quartermaster, rank of Captain; R. M. Blackman, 2d Lieutenant; W. G. Course, 2d Lieutenant; John G. Chalmers, 2d Lieut.; Geo. B. Bouton, M. D., Assistant Surgeon, rank of Captain; John W. Servier, 1st Lieutenant.

RESIGNATIONS.—Lieut. Col. Leonidas McIntosh, 21 Nov. Gen. B. D. Fry, 16 December; Assistant Surgeon Wm. L. Lundy, 23 Dec.

ON LEAVES OF ABSENCE TO THE STATES.—Gen. C. C. Hornsby, Major Warren Raymond, Lieut. Geo. F. Beamish, Lieut. Thos. G. Flournoy, Lieut. Col. A. F. Ruder, Capt. Lewis D. Watkins, Capt. Snow, D. McChesney, S. S. Livingston, Capt. J. G. Dreux, Col. Mark B. Skerrett, Lieut. Col. E. H. McDonald.

As I start in a few moments for San Juan del Sur, I must close this letter, but before doing so I must wish you and all your readers a merry Christmas and nappy New Year, and may you all realize your brightest anticipations the ensuing year. Christmas day here was rather a dull affair. We missed the usual sound of firecrackers which usher in the holidays, and the bright faces and sparkling eyes of the juveniles on their way to the shops; we missed also the cold weather which, with you, generally accompanies these days of sociability and general happiness; but we did not miss the egg-nog. We had the good luck to procure some eggs, and through the kindness of a friend we were supplied with sufficient of the argenteo to make a good sized gourd full.

Yours truly, H. R.

RIVAS, Jan. 2, 1857.

I open this merely to add that I returned from San Juan yesterday; that nothing new has happened, everything being perfectly quiet here. No further news about the enemy. How long this state of affairs will last I cannot say, but from present appearances nothing important will be done for some time. The health of the army is improving rapidly.

Yours, H. R.