

future no man can limit. The wooden buildings must soon be superseded by brick, iron, or stone; and better municipal regulations necessarily following from the infusion of the Saxon element in the population, will remove the features which now strike the stranger as objectionable. There is here a small ant which is most destructive to wooden buildings; it works with untiring energy, and will destroy a large house in a few years. It makes large nests a foot or eighteen inches in diameter, and builds them in an incredibly short period in the corners and along the crevices of the very rooms in use. Mr. Gibbons the agent of the Pacific Company mentioned that his house was destroyed, undermined by them; and they can be seen working in myriads in their nests, on the fences, and among the debris of wrecks lying in the rear of his house. The residence of the agent of the English Steamship Company, is an imported house of corrugated iron, and consequently unassailable by such insects.

Large numbers of vultures are seen in every direction about the town, lazily perched on leafless old trees, and along the ridge poles of the houses stretched out to their full lengths, with their broad wings expanded, and so perfectly motionless, that it is difficult at first sight to believe them living animals. They are the scavengers of the city, and consume the offal and filth that would otherwise putrify and endanger health. There is a fine of two dollars for killing one, and consequently, as if conscious of security they are undisturbed by the approach of man, or the business and turmoil around them.

Before enjoying the comforts of the Railway, let us see what difficulties its constructors had to overcome. The contract made by Messrs, Aspinwall, Chauncey, and Stephens, with the government of New Granada, has already been mentioned. Among the most important concessions by the terms of this contract, was one guaranteeing that all public lands lying along the line of the Road were to be used gratuitously by the Company. Also a gift of two hundred and fifty thousand acres of land to be selected by the grantees from any public lands on the Isthmus; two ports, one on the Atlantic and the other on the Pacific, which were to be the termini of the Road, were to be made *free ports*, and a privilege was granted of establishing such tolls for the transit across as the Company might think proper. The contract was to continue in force for forty-nine years, subject to the right of New Granada to take possession of the