

the Costa Rica Railway, carrying freight over the mountain, and it usually takes a week for them to make the journey of thirty-five miles, often longer, for on religious festivals, which occur with surprising frequency, all the transportation business is suspended. A traveller who intends to take a steamer at Punta Arenas must send his baggage on a week in advance. He leaves the train at Alajuela, mounts a mule, rides over the mountain to the town of Atenas, where he spends the night. The next morning at daybreak he resumes his journey and rides fifteen miles to San Mateo, breakfasts at eleven, takes his siesta in a hammock until four or five in the afternoon, then mounting his mule again, covers the ten miles to Esparza by sunset, where he dines and spends the night, usually remaining there, to avoid the heat at Punta Arenas, until a few hours before the steamer leaves; and then, if the ox-carts have come with his baggage, makes the rest of his trip by rail.

The journey is not an unpleasant one. The scenery is wild and picturesque. The roads are usually good, except in the dry season, when they become very dusty, and after heavy rains, when the mud is deep. But under the tropical sun and in the dry air moisture evaporates rapidly, and in six hours after a rainfall the roads are hard and good. The uncertainty as to whether his trunks will arrive in time makes the inexperienced traveller nervous. The Costa Rican cartmen are the most irresponsible and indifferent beings on earth. They travel in long caravans or processions, often with two or three teams in a line. When one chooses to stop, or meets with an accident, all the rest waits for him if he wastes a week. None will start until each of his companions is ready, and sometimes the road is blocked for miles, awaiting

the repair of some damage. The oxen are large white patient beasts, and are yoked by the horns, and not by the neck as in modern style, lashings of raw cowhide being used to make them fast. They wear the yokes continually. The union is as permanent as matrimony in a land where divorce laws are unknown. The cartmen are as courteous as they are indifferent. They always lift their hats to a caballero as he passes them and say, "May the Virgin guard you on your journey!" Thousands of dollars in gold are often intrusted to them, and never was a penny lost. A banker of San Jose told me that he usually received \$30,000 in coin each week during coffee season by these ox carts, and considered it safer than if he carried it himself, although the caravan stands in the open air by the roadside every night. Highway robbery is unknown, and the cartmen with their wages of thirty cents a day, would not know what use to make of the money if they should steal it. Nevertheless they always feel at liberty to rob the traveller of the straps on his trunks, and no piece of baggage ever arrives at its destination so protected unless the strap is securely nailed; and then it is usually cut to pieces by the cartmen as revenge for being deprived of what they consider their perquisite.—*W. E. Curtis, in Harper's Magazine.*

THE SOVEREIGN. — The British sovereign, or pound sterling, is a legal tender to unlimited amount, and contains 113 grains of fine gold, alloyed with two grains of copper to every twenty-two grains fine. Under the act of 1816, when our silver standard was abolished, the gold pound was made to constitute the sole unit and standard of value of our monetary system. Coins of gold first came into use in the reign of Edward III., his "noble" being valued at 6s. 8d.,