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General William Walker
The King of the Filibusters

It is safe to say that to members of the younger generation the name of William Walker conveys absolutely nothing. To them, as a name, "William Walker" awakens no pride of race or country. It certainly does not suggest poetry and adventure. To obtain a place in even this group of Soldiers of Fortune, William Walker, the most distinguished of all American Soldiers of Fortune, the one who but for his own countrymen would have single-handed attained the most far-reaching results, had to wait his turn behind adventurers of other lands and boy officers of his own. And yet had this man with the plain name, the name that to-day means nothing, accomplished what he adventured, he would on this continent have solved the problem of slavery, have established an empire in Mexico and in Central America, and, incidentally, have brought us into war with all of Europe. That is all he would have accomplished.

In the days of gold in San Francisco among the "Forty-niners" William Walker was one of the most famous, most picturesque and popular figures. Jack Oakhurst, gambler; Colonel Starbottle, duelist; Yuba Bill, stage-coach driver, were his contemporaries. Bret Harte was one of his keenest admirers, and in two of his stories, thinly disguised under a more appealing name, Walker is the hero. When, later, Walker came to New York City, in his honor Broadway from the Battery to Madison Square was bedecked with flags and arches. "It was roses, roses all the way." The house-tops rocked and swayed.

In New Orleans, where in a box at the opera he made his first appearance, for ten minutes the performance came to a pause, while the audience stood to salute him.

This happened less than fifty years ago, and there are men who as boys were out with "Walker of Nicaragua," and who are still active in the public life of San Francisco and New York.

Walker was born in 1824, in Nashville, Tenn. He was the oldest son of a Scotch banker, a man of a deeply religious mind, and interested in a business which certainly is removed, as far as possible, from the profession of arms. Indeed, few men better than William Walker illustrate the fact that great generals are born, not trained. Everything in Walker's birth, family tradition, and education pointed to his becoming a member of one of the "learned" professions. It was the wish of his father that he should be a minister of the Presbyterian Church, and as a child he was trained with that end in view. He himself preferred to study medicine, and after graduating at the University of Tennessee, at Edinburgh he followed a course of lectures, and for two years travelled in Europe, visiting many of the great hospitals.

Then having thoroughly equipped himself to practice as a physician, after a brief return to his native city, and as short a stay in Philadelphia, he took down his shingle forever, and proceeded to New Orleans to study law. In two years he was admitted to the bar of Louisiana. But because clients were few, or because the red tape of the law chafed his spirit, within a year,

as already he had abandoned the Church and Medicine, he abandoned his law practice and became an editorial writer on the New Orleans *Crescent*. A year later the restlessness which had rebelled against the grave professions led him to the gold fields of California, and San Francisco. There, in 1852, at the age of only twenty-eight, as editor of the San Francisco *Herald*, Walker began his real life which so soon was to end in both disaster and glory.

Up to his twenty-eighth year, except in his restlessness, nothing in his life foreshadowed what was to follow. Nothing pointed to him as a man for whom thousands of other men, from every capital of the world, would give up their lives.

Negatively, by abandoning three separate callings, and in making it plain that a professional career did not appeal to him, Walker had thrown a certain sidelight on his character; but actively he never had given any hint that under the thoughtful brow of the young doctor and lawyer there was a mind evolving schemes of empire, and an ambition limited only by the two great oceans.

Walker's first adventure was undoubtedly inspired by and in imitation of one which at the time of his arrival in San Francisco had just been brought to a disastrous end. This was the De Boulbon expedition into Mexico. The Count Gaston Raoulx de Raousset-Boulbon was a young French nobleman and Soldier of Fortune, a *chasseur d'Afrique*, a duelist, journalist, dreamer, who came to California to dig gold. Baron Harden-Hickey, who was born in San Francisco a few years after Boulbon at the age of thirty was shot in Mexico, also was inspired to dreams of conquest by this same gentleman adventurer.

Boulbon was a young man of large ideas. In the rapid growth of California he saw a threat to Mexico and proposed to that government, as a "buffer" state between the two republics, to form a French colony in the Mexican State of Sonora. Sonora is that part of Mexico which directly joins on the south with our State of Arizona. The President of Mexico gave Boulbon permission to attempt this, and in 1852 he landed at Guaymas in the Gulf of California with two hundred and sixty well-armed Frenchmen. The ostensible excuse of Boulbon for thus invading foreign soil was his contract with the President under which his "emigrants" were hired to protect other foreigners working in the "Restauradora" mines from the attacks of Apache Indians from our own Arizona. But there is evidence that back of Boulbon was the French government, and that he was attempting, in his small way, what later was attempted by Maximilian, backed by a French army corps and Louis Napoleon, to establish in Mexico an empire under French protection. For both the filibuster and the emperor the end was the same; to be shot by the fusillade against a church wall.

In 1852, two years before Boulbon's death, which was the finale to his second filibustering expedition into Sonora, he wrote to a friend in Paris: "Europeans are disturbed by the growth of the United States. And rightly so. Unless she be dismembered; unless a powerful rival be built up beside her (*i.e.*, France in Mexico), America will become, through her commerce, her trade, her population, her geographical position upon two oceans, the inevitable mistress of the world. In ten years Europe dare not fire a shot without her permission. As I write fifty Americans prepare to sail for Mexico and go perhaps to victory. *Voila les Etats-Unis.*"

These fifty Americans who, in the eyes of Boulbon, threatened the peace of Europe, were led by the ex-doctor, ex-lawyer, ex-editor, William Walker, *aged twenty-eight years*. Walker had attempted but had failed to obtain from the Mexican government such a contract as the one it had granted De Boulbon. He accordingly sailed without it, announcing that, whether the Mexican government asked him to do so or not, he would see that the women and children on the border of Mexico and Arizona were protected from massacre by the Indians. It will be remembered that

when Dr. Jameson raided the Transvaal he also went to protect "women and children" from massacre by the Boers. Walker's explanation of his expedition, in his own words, is as follows. He writes in the third person: "What Walker saw and heard satisfied him that a comparatively small body of Americans might gain a position on the Sonora frontier and protect the families on the border from the Indians, and such an act would be one of humanity whether or not sanctioned by the Mexican Government. The condition of the upper part of Sonora was at that time, and still is [he was writing eight years later, in 1860], a disgrace to the civilization of the continent...and the people of the United States were more immediately responsible before the world for the Apache outrages. Northern Sonora was in fact, more under the dominion of the Apaches than under the laws of Mexico, and the contributions of the Indians were collected with greater regularity and certainty than the dues of the tax-gatherers. The state of this region furnished the best defense for any American aiming to settle there without the formal consent of Mexico; and, although political changes would certainly have followed the establishment of a colony, they might be justified by the plea that any social organization, no matter how secured, is preferable to that in which individuals and families are altogether at the mercy of savages."

While at the time of Jameson's raid the women and children in danger of massacre from the Boers were as many as there are snakes in Ireland, at the time of Walker's raid the women and children were in danger from the Indians, who as enemies, as Walker soon discovered, were as cruel and as greatly to be feared as he had described them.

But it was not to save women and children that Walker sought to conquer the state of Sonora. At the time of his expedition the great question of slavery was acute; and if in the states next to be admitted to the Union slavery was to be prohibited, the time had come, so it seemed to this statesman of twenty-eight years, when the South must extend her boundaries, and for her slaves find an outlet in fresh territory. Sonora already joined Arizona. By conquest her territory could easily be extended to meet Texas. As a matter of fact, strategically the spot selected by William Walker for the purpose for which he desired it was almost perfect. Throughout his brief career one must remember that the spring of all his acts was this dream of an empire where slavery would be recognized. His mother was a slave-holder. In Tennessee he had been born and bred surrounded by slaves. His youth and manhood had been spent in Nashville and New Orleans. He believed as honestly, as fanatically in the right to hold slaves as did his father in the faith of the Covenanters.

Today one reads his arguments in favor of slavery with the most curious interest. His appeal to the humanity of his reader, to his heart, to his sense of justice, to his fear of God, and to his belief in the Holy Bible not to abolish slavery, but to continue it, to this generation is as amusing as the topsy-turvyisms of Gilbert or Shaw. But to the young man himself slavery was a sacred institution, intended for the betterment of mankind, a God-given benefit to the black man and a God-given right of his white master.

White brothers in the South, with perhaps less exalted motives, contributed funds to fit out Walker's expedition, and in October, 1852, with forty-five men, he landed at Cape St. Lucas, at the extreme point of Lower California. Lower California, it must be remembered, in spite of its name, is not a part of our California, but then was, and still is, a part of Mexico. The fact that he was at last upon the soil of the enemy caused Walker to throw off all pretence; and instead of hastening to protect women and children, he sailed a few miles farther up the coast to La Paz. With his forty-five followers he raided the town, made the governor a prisoner, and established a republic with himself as president. In a proclamation he declared the people free of the tyranny of Mexico. They had no desire to be free, but Walker was determined, and, whether they liked it

or not, they woke up to find themselves an independent republic. A few weeks later, although he had not yet set foot there, Walker annexed on paper the State of Sonora, and to both states gave the name of the Republic of Sonora.

As soon as word of this reached San Francisco, his friends busied themselves in his behalf, and the danger-loving and adventurous of all lands were enlisted as "emigrants" and shipped to him in the bark *Anita*.

Two months later, in November, 1852, three hundred of these joined Walker. They were as desperate a band of scoundrels as ever robbed a sluice, stoned a Chinaman, or shot a "Greaser." When they found that to command them there was only a boy, they plotted to blow up the magazine in which the powder was stored, rob the camp, and march north, supporting themselves by looting the ranches. Walker learned of their plot, tried the ringleaders by court-martial, and shot them. With a force as absolutely undisciplined as was his, the act required the most complete personal courage. That was a quality the men with him could fully appreciate. They saw they had as a leader one who could fight, and one who would punish. The majority did not want a leader who would punish, so when Walker called upon those who would follow him to Sonora to show their hands, only the original forty-five and about forty of the later recruits remained with him. With less than one hundred men he started to march up the peninsula through Lower California, and so around the Gulf to Sonora.

From the very start the filibusters were overwhelmed with disaster. The Mexicans, with Indian allies, skulked on the flanks and rear. Men who in the almost daily encounters were killed fell into the hands of the Indians, and their bodies were mutilated. Stragglers and deserters were run to earth and tortured. Those of the filibusters who were wounded died from lack of medical care. The only instruments they possessed with which to extract the arrow-heads were probes made from ramrods filed to a point. Their only food was the cattle they killed on the march. The army was barefoot, the cabinet in rags, the president of Sonora wore one boot and one shoe.

Unable to proceed farther, Walker fell back upon San Vicente, where he had left the arms and ammunition of the deserters and a rear-guard of eighteen men. He found not one of these to welcome him. A dozen had deserted, and the Mexicans had surprised the rest, lassoing them and torturing them until they died. Walker now had but thirty-five men. To wait for further reinforcements from San Francisco, even were he sure that reinforcements would come, was impossible. He determined by forced marches to fight his way to the boundary line of California. Between him and safety were the Mexican soldiers holding the passes, and the Indians hiding on his flanks. When within three miles of the boundary line, at San Diego, Colonel Melendrez, who commanded the Mexican forces, sent in a flag of truce, and offered, if they would surrender, a safe-conduct to all of the survivors of the expedition except the chief. But the men who for one year had fought and starved for Walker, would not, within three miles of home, abandon him.

Melendrez then begged the commander of the United States troops to order Walker to surrender. Major McKinstry, who was in command of the United States Army post at San Diego, refused. For him to cross the line would be a violation of neutral territory. On Mexican soil he would neither embarrass the ex-president of Sonora nor aid him; but he saw to it that if the filibusters reached American soil, no Mexican or Indian should follow them.

Accordingly, on the imaginary boundary he drew up his troop, and like an impartial umpire awaited the result. Hidden behind rocks and cactus, across the hot, glaring plain, the filibusters could see the American flag, and the gay, fluttering guidons of the cavalry. The sight gave them heart for one last desperate spurt. Melendrez also appreciated that for the final attack the moment had come. As he charged, Walker, apparently routed, fled, but concealed in the

rocks behind him he had stationed a rear-guard of a dozen men. As Melendrez rode into this ambush the dozen riflemen emptied as many saddles, and the Mexicans and Indians stampeded. A half hour later, footsore and famished, the little band that had set forth to found an empire of slaves, staggered across the line and surrendered to the forces of the United States.

Of this expedition James Jeffrey Roche says, in his "Byways of War," which is of all books published about Walker the most intensely and fascinatingly interesting and complete: "Years afterward the peon herdsman or prowling Cocupa Indian in the mountain by-paths stumbled over the bleaching skeleton of some nameless one whose resting-place was marked by no cross or cairn, but the Colts revolver resting beside his bones spoke his country and his occupation—the only relic of the would-be conquistadores of the nineteenth century."

Under parole to report to General Wood, commanding the Department of the Pacific, the filibusters were sent by sailing vessel to San Francisco, where their leader was tried for violating the neutrality laws of the United States, and acquitted.

Walker's first expedition had ended in failure, but for him it had been an opportunity of tremendous experience, as active service is the best of all military academies, and for the kind of warfare he was to wage, the best preparation. Nor was it inglorious, for his fellow survivors, contrary to the usual practice, instead of in barrooms placing the blame for failure upon their leader, stood ready to fight one and all who doubted his ability or his courage. Later, after five years, many of these same men, though ten to twenty years his senior, followed him to death, and never questioned his judgment nor his right to command.

At this time in Nicaragua there was the usual revolution. On the south the sister republic of Costa Rica was taking sides, on the north Honduras was landing arms and men. There was no law, no government. A dozen political parties, a dozen commanding generals, and not one strong man.

In the editorial rooms of the San Francisco *Herald*, Walker, searching the map for new worlds to conquer, rested his finger upon Nicaragua.

In its confusion of authority he saw an opportunity to make himself a power, and in its tropical wealth and beauty, in the laziness and incompetence of its inhabitants, he beheld a greater, fairer, more kind Sonora. On the Pacific side from San Francisco he could reinforce his army with men and arms; on the Caribbean side from New Orleans he could, when the moment arrived, people his empire with slaves.

The two parties at war in Nicaragua were the Legitimists and the Democrats. Why they were at war it is not necessary to know. Probably Walker did not know; it is not likely that they themselves knew. But from the leader of the Democrats Walker obtained a contract to bring to Nicaragua three hundred Americans, who were each to receive several hundred acres of land, and who were described as "colonists liable to military duty." This contract Walker submitted to the attorney-general of the state and to General Wood, who once before had acquitted him of filibustering; and neither of these federal officers saw anything which seemed to give them the right to interfere. But the rest of San Francisco was less credulous, and the "colonists" who joined Walker had a very distinct idea that they were not going to Nicaragua to plant coffee or to pick bananas.

In May, 1855, just a year after Walker and his thirty-three followers had surrendered to the United States troops at San Diego, with fifty new recruits and seven veterans of the former expedition he sailed from San Francisco in the brig *Vesta*, and in five weeks, after a weary and stormy voyage, landed at Realejo. There he was met by representatives of the Provisional Director of the Democrats, who received the Californians warmly.

Walker was commissioned a colonel, Achilles Kewen, who had been fighting under Lopez in Cuba, a lieutenant-colonel, and Timothy Crocker, who had served under Walker in the Sonora expedition, a major. The corps was organized as an independent command and was named "La Falange Americana." At this time the enemy held the route to the Caribbean, and Walker's first orders were to dislodge him.

Accordingly, a week after landing with his fifty-seven Americans and one hundred and fifty native troops, Walker sailed in the *Vesta* for Brito, from which port he marched upon Rivas, a city of eleven thousand people and garrisoned by some twelve hundred of the enemy.

The first fight ended in a complete and disastrous fiasco. The native troops ran away, and the Americans surrounded by six hundred of the Legitimists' soldiers, after defending themselves for three hours behind some adobe huts, charged the enemy and escaped into the jungle. Their loss was heavy, and among the killed were the two men upon whom Walker chiefly depended: Kewen and Crocker. The Legitimists placed the bodies of the dead and wounded who were still living on a pile of logs and burned them. After a painful night march, Walker, the next day, reached San Juan on the coast, and, finding a Costa Rican schooner in port, seized it for his use. At this moment, although Walker's men were defeated, bleeding, and in open flight, two "gringos" picked up on the beach of San Juan, "the Texan Harry McLeod and the Irishman Peter Burns," asked to be permitted to join him.

"It was encouraging," Walker writes, "for the soldiers to find that some besides themselves did not regard their fortunes as altogether desperate, and small as was this addition to their number it gave increased moral as well as material strength to the command."

Sometimes in reading history it would appear as though for success the first requisite must be an utter lack of humor, and inability to look upon what one is attempting except with absolute seriousness. With forty men Walker was planning to conquer and rule Nicaragua, a country with a population of two hundred and fifty thousand souls and as large as the combined area of Massachusetts, Vermont, Rhode Island, New Hampshire, and Connecticut. And yet, even seven years later, he records without a smile that two beachcombers gave his army "moral and material strength." And it is most characteristic of the man that at the moment he was rejoicing over this addition to his forces, to maintain discipline two Americans who had set fire to the houses of the enemy he ordered to be shot. A weaker man would have repudiated the two Americans, who, in fact, were not members of the phalanx, and trusted that their crimes would not be charged against him. But the success of Walker lay greatly in his stern discipline. He tried the men, and they confessed to their guilt. One got away; and, as it might appear that Walker had connived at his escape, to the second man was shown no mercy. When one reads how severe was Walker in his punishments, and how frequently the death penalty was invoked by him against his own few followers, the wonder grows that these men, as independent and as unaccustomed to restraint as were those who first joined him, submitted to his leadership. One can explain it only by the personal quality of Walker himself.

Among these reckless, fearless outlaws, who, despising their allies, believed and proved that with his rifle one American could account for a dozen Nicaraguans, Walker was the one man who did not boast or drink or gamble, who did not even swear, who never looked at a woman, and who, in money matters, was scrupulously honest and un-self-seeking. In a fight, his followers knew that for them he would risk being shot just as unconcernedly as to maintain his authority he would shoot one of them.

Treachery, cowardice, looting, any indignity to women, he punished with death; but to the wounded, either of his own or of the enemy's forces, he was as gentle as a nursing sister and

the brave and able he rewarded with instant promotion and higher pay. In no one trait was he a demagogue. One can find no effort on his part to ingratiate himself with his men. Among the officers of his staff there were no favorites. He messed alone, and at all times kept to himself. He spoke little, and then with utter lack of self-consciousness. In the face of injustice, perjury, or physical danger, he was always calm, firm, dispassionate. But it is said that on those infrequent occasions when his anger asserted itself, the steady steel-gray eyes flashed so menacingly that those who faced them would as soon look down the barrel of his Colt.

The impression one gets of him gathered from his recorded acts, from his own writings, from the writings of those who fought with him, is of a silent, student-like young man believing religiously in his "star of destiny"; but, in all matters that did not concern himself, possessed of a grim sense of fun. The sayings of his men that in his history of the war he records, show a distinct appreciation of the Bret Harte school of humor. As, for instance, when he tells how he wished to make one of them a drummer boy and the Californian drawled: "No, thanks, colonel; I never seen a picture of a battle yet that the first thing in it wasn't a dead drummer boy with a busted drum."

In Walker the personal vanity which is so characteristic of the soldier of fortune was utterly lacking. In a land where a captain bedecks himself like a field-marshal, Walker wore his trousers stuffed in his boots, a civilian's blue frock-coat, and the slouch hat of the period, with, for his only ornament, the red ribbon of the Democrats. The authority he wielded did not depend upon braid or buttons, and only when going into battle did he wear his sword. In appearance he was slightly built, rather below the medium height, smooth shaven, and with deep-set gray eyes. These eyes apparently, as they gave him his nickname, were his most marked feature.

His followers called him, and later, when he was thirty-two years old, he was known all over the United States as the "Gray-Eyed Man of Destiny."

From the first Walker recognized that in order to establish himself in Nicaragua he must keep in touch with all possible recruits arriving from San Francisco and New York, and that to do this he must hold the line of transit from the Caribbean Sea to the Pacific. At this time the sea routes to the gold-fields were three: by sailing vessel around the Cape, one over the Isthmus of Panama, and one, which was the shortest, across Nicaragua. By a charter from the Government of Nicaragua, the right to transport passengers across this isthmus was controlled by the Accessory Transit Company, of which the first Cornelius Vanderbilt was president. His company owned a line of ocean steamers both on the Pacific side and on the Atlantic side. Passengers *en route* from New York to the gold-fields were landed by these latter steamers at Greytown on the east coast of Nicaragua, and sent by boats of light draught up the San Juan River to Lake Nicaragua. There they were met by larger lake steamers and conveyed across the lake to Virgin Bay. From that point, in carriages and on mule back, they were carried twelve miles overland to the port of San Juan del Sud on the Pacific Coast, where they boarded the company's steamers to San Francisco.

During the year of Walker's occupation the number of passengers crossing Nicaragua was an average of about two thousand a month.

It was to control this route that immediately after his first defeat Walker returned to San Juan del Sud, and in a smart skirmish defeated the enemy and secured possession of Virgin Bay, the halting place for the passengers going east or west. In this fight Walker was outnumbered five to one, but his losses were only three natives killed and a few Americans wounded. The Legitimists lost sixty killed and a hundred wounded. This proportion of losses shows how fatally effective was the rifle and revolver fire of the Californians. Indeed, so wonderful was it that

when some years ago I visited the towns and cities captured by the filibusters, I found that the marksmanship of Walker's Phalanx was still a tradition. Indeed, thanks to the filibusters, today in any part of Central America a man from the States, if in trouble, has only to show his gun. No native will wait for him to fire it.

After the fight at Virgin Bay, Walker received from California fifty recruits—a very welcome addition to his force, and as he now commanded about one hundred and twenty Americans, three hundred Nicaraguans, under a friendly native, General Valle, and two brass cannon, he decided to again attack Rivas. Rivas is on the lake just above Virgin Bay; still further up is Granada, which was the headquarters of the Legitimists.

Fearing Walker's attack upon Rivas, the Legitimist troops were hurried south from Granada to that city, leaving Granada but slightly protected.

Through intercepted letters Walker learned of this and determined to strike at Granada. By night, in one of the lake steamers, he skirted the shore, and just before daybreak, with fires banked and all lights out, drew up to a point near the city. The day previous the Legitimists had gained a victory, and, as good luck or Walker's "destiny" would have it, the night before Granada had been celebrating the event. Much joyous dancing and much drinking of aguardiente had buried the inhabitants in a drugged slumber. The garrison slept, the sentries slept, the city slept. But when the convent bells called for early mass, the air was shaken with sharp reports that to the ears of the Legitimists were unfamiliar and disquieting. They were not the loud explosions of their own muskets nor of the smooth bores of the Democrats. The sounds were sharp and cruel like the crack of a whip. The sentries flying from their posts disclosed the terrifying truth. "The Filibusteros!" they cried. Following them at a gallop came Walker and Valle and behind them the men of the awful Phalanx, whom already the natives had learned to fear: the bearded giants in red flannel shirts who at Rivas on foot had charged the artillery with revolvers, who at Virgin Bay when wounded had drawn from their boots glittering bowie knives and hurled them like arrows, who at all times shot with the accuracy of the hawk falling upon a squawking hen.

There was a brief terrified stand in the Plaza, and then a complete rout. As was their custom, the native Democrats began at once to loot the city. But Walker put his sword into the first one of these he met, and ordered the Americans to arrest all others found stealing, and to return the goods already stolen. Over a hundred political prisoners in the cartel were released by Walker, and the ball and chain to which each was fastened stricken off. More than two-thirds of them at once enlisted under Walker's banner.

He now was in a position to dictate to the enemy his own terms of peace, but a fatal blunder on the part of Parker H. French, a lieutenant of Walker's, postponed peace for several weeks, and led to unfortunate reprisals. French had made an unauthorized and unsuccessful assault on San Carlos at the eastern end of the lake, and the Legitimists retaliated at Virgin Bay by killing half a dozen peaceful passengers, and at San Carlos by firing at a transit steamer. For this the excuse of the Legitimists was, that now that Walker was using the lake steamers as transports it was impossible for them to know whether the boats were occupied by his men or neutral passengers. As he could not reach the guilty ones, Walker held responsible for their acts their secretary of state, who at the taking of Granada was among the prisoners. He was tried by court-martial and shot, "a victim of the new interpretation of the principles of constitutional government." While this act of Walker's was certainly stretching the theory of responsibility to the breaking point, its immediate effect was to bring about a hasty surrender and a meeting between the generals of the two political parties. Thus, four months after Walker and his fifty-seven followers landed in Nicaragua, a suspension of hostilities was arranged, and the side for

which the Americans had fought was in power. Walker was made commander-in-chief of an army of twelve hundred men with salary of six thousand dollars a year. A man named Rivas was appointed temporary president.

To Walker this pause in the fight was most welcome. It gave him an opportunity to enlist recruits and to organize his men for the better accomplishment of what was the real object of his going to Nicaragua. He now had under him a remarkable force, one of the most effective known to military history. For although six months had not yet passed, the organization he now commanded was as unlike the phalanx of the fifty-eight adventurers who were driven back at Rivas, as were Falstaff's followers from the regiment of picked men commanded by Colonel Roosevelt. Instead of the undisciplined and lawless now being in the majority, the ranks were filled with the pick of the California mining camps, with veterans of the Mexican War, with young Southerners of birth and spirit, and with soldiers of fortune from all of the great armies of Europe.

In the Civil War, which so soon followed, and later in the service of the Khedive of Egypt, were several of Walker's officers, and for years after his death there was no war in which one of the men trained by him in the jungles of Nicaragua did not distinguish himself. In his memoirs, the Englishman, General Charles Frederic Henningsen, writes that though he had taken part in some of the greatest battles of the Civil War he would pit a thousand men of Walker's command against any five thousand Confederate or Union soldiers. And General Henningsen was one who spoke with authority. Before he joined Walker he had served in Spain under Don Carlos, in Hungary under Kossuth, and in Bulgaria.

Of Walker's men, a regiment of which he commanded, he writes: "I often have seen them march with a broken or compound fractured arm in splints, and using the other to fire the rifle or revolver. Those with a fractured thigh or wounds which rendered them incapable of removal, shot themselves. Such men do not turn up in the average of everyday life, nor do I ever expect to see their like again. All military science failed on a suddenly given field before such assailants, who came at a run to close with their revolvers and who thought little of charging a gun battery, pistol in hand."

Another graduate of Walker's army was Captain Fred Townsend Ward, a native of Salem, Mass., who after the death of Walker organized and led the ever victorious army that put down the Tai-Ping rebellion, and performed the many feats of martial glory for which Chinese Gordon received the credit. In Shanghai, to the memory of the filibuster, there are today two temples in his honor.

Joaquin Miller, the poet, miner, and soldier, who but recently was a picturesque figure on the hotel porch at Saratoga Springs, was one of the young Californians who was "out with Walker," and who later in his career by his verse helped to preserve the name of his beloved commander. I. C. Jamison, living today in Guthrie, Oklahoma, was a captain under Walker. When war again came, as it did within four months, these were the men who made Walker President of Nicaragua.

During the four months in all but title he had been president, and as such he was recognized and feared. It was against him, not Rivas, that in February, 1856, the neighboring republic of Costa Rica declared war. For three months this war continued with varying fortunes until the Costa Ricans were driven across the border.

In June of the same year Rivas called a general election for president, announcing himself as the candidate of the Democrats. Two other Democrats also presented themselves, Salazar and Ferrer. The Legitimists, recognizing in their former enemy the real ruler of the country,

nominated Walker. By an overwhelming majority he was elected, receiving 15,835 votes to 867 cast for Rivas. Salazar received 2,087; Ferrer, 4,447.

Walker now was the legal as well as the actual ruler of the country, and at no time in its history, as during Walker's administration, was Nicaragua governed so justly, so wisely, and so well. But in his success the neighboring republics saw a menace to their own independence. To the four other republics of Central America the five-pointed blood-red star on the flag of the filibusters bore a sinister motto: "Five or None." The meaning was only too unpleasantly obvious. At once, Costa Rica on the south, and Guatemala, Salvador, and Honduras from the north, with the malcontents of Nicaragua, declared war against the foreign invader. Again Walker was in the field with opposed to him 21,000 of the allies. The strength of his own force varied. On his election as president the backbone of his army was a magnificently trained body of veterans to the number of 2,000. This was later increased to 3,500, but it is doubtful if at any one time it ever exceeded that number. His muster and hospital rolls show that during his entire occupation of Nicaragua there were enlisted, at one time or another, under his banner 10,000 men. While in his service, of this number, by hostile shots or fever, 5,000 died.

To describe the battles with the allies would be interminable and wearying. In every particular they are much alike: the long silent night march, the rush at daybreak, the fight to gain strategic positions either of the barracks, or of the Cathedral in the Plaza, the hand-to-hand fighting from behind barricades and adobe walls. The outcome of these fights sometimes varied, but the final result was never in doubt, and had no outside influences intervened, in time each republic in Central America would have come under the five-pointed star.

In Costa Rica there is a marble statue showing that republic represented as a young woman with her foot upon the neck of Walker. Some night a truth-loving American will place a can of dynamite at the foot of that statue, and walk hurriedly away. Unaided, neither Costa Rica nor any other Central American republic could have driven Walker from her soil. His downfall came through his own people, and through an act of his which provoked them.

When Walker was elected president he found that the Accessory Transit Company had not lived up to the terms of its concession with the Nicaraguan Government. His efforts to hold it to the terms of its concession led to his overthrow. By its charter the Transit Company agreed to pay to Nicaragua ten thousand dollars annually and ten percent of the net profits; but the company, whose history the United States Minister, Squire, characterized as "an infamous career of deception and fraud," manipulated its books in such a fashion as to show that there never were any profits. Doubting this, Walker sent a commission to New York to investigate. The commission discovered the fraud and demanded in back payments two hundred and fifty thousand dollars. When the company refused to pay this, as security for the debt Walker seized its steamers, wharves, and storehouses, revoked its charter, and gave a new charter to two of its directors, Morgan and Garrison, who, in San Francisco, were working against Vanderbilt. In doing this, while he was legally in the right, he committed a fatal error. He had made a powerful enemy of Vanderbilt, and he had shut off his only lines of communication with the United States. For, enraged at the presumption of the filibuster president, Vanderbilt withdrew his ocean steamers, thus leaving Walker without men or ammunition, and as isolated as though upon a deserted island. He possessed Vanderbilt's boats upon the San Juan River and Nicaragua Lake, but they were of use to him only locally.

His position was that of a man holding the centre span of a bridge of which every span on either side of him has been destroyed.

Vanderbilt did not rest at withdrawing his steamers, but by supporting the Costa Ricans with money and men, carried the war into Central America. From Washington he fought Walker through Secretary of State Marcy, who proved a willing tool.

Spencer and Webster, and the other soldiers of fortune employed by Vanderbilt, closed the route on the Caribbean side, and the man-of-war *St. Marys*, commanded by Captain Davis, was ordered to San Juan on the Pacific side. The instructions given to Captain Davis were to aid the allies in forcing Walker out of Nicaragua. Walker claims that these orders were given to Marcy by Vanderbilt and by Marcy to Commodore Mervin, who was Marcy's personal friend and who issued them to Davis. Davis claims that he acted only in the interest of humanity to save Walker in spite of himself. In any event, the result was the same. Walker, his force cut down by hostile shot and fever and desertion, took refuge in Rivas, where he was besieged by the allied armies. There was no bread in the city. The men were living on horse and mule meat. There was no salt. The hospital was filled with wounded and those stricken with fever.

Captain Davis, in the name of humanity, demanded Walker's surrender to the United States. Walker told him he would not surrender, but that if the time came when he found he must fly, he would do so in his own little schooner of war, the *Granada*, which constituted his entire navy, and in her, as a free man, take his forces where he pleased. Then Davis informed Walker that the force Walker had sent to recapture the Greytown route had been defeated by the janissaries of Vanderbilt; that the steamers from San Francisco, on which Walker now counted to bring him re-enforcements, had also been taken off the line, and finally that it was his "unalterable and deliberate intention" to seize the *Granada*. On this point his orders left him no choice.

The *Granada* was the last means of transportation still left to Walker. He had hoped to make a sortie and on board her to escape from the country. But with his ship taken from him and no longer able to sustain the siege of the allies, he surrendered to the forces of the United States. In the agreement drawn up by him and Davis, Walker provided for the care, by Davis, of the sick and wounded, for the protection after his departure of the natives who had fought with him, and for the transportation of himself and officers to the United States.

On his arrival in New York he received a welcome such as later was extended to Kossuth, and, in our own day, to Admiral Dewey. The city was decorated with flags and arches; and banquets, fetes, and public meetings were everywhere held in his honor. Walker received these demonstrations modestly, and on every public occasion announced his determination to return to the country of which he was the president, and from which by force he had been driven. At Washington, where he went to present his claims, he received scant encouragement. His protest against Captain Davis was referred to Congress, where it was allowed to die.

Within a month Walker organized an expedition with which to regain his rights in Nicaragua, and as, in his new constitution for that country, he had annulled the old law abolishing slavery, among the slave-holders of the South he found enough money and recruits to enable him to at once leave the United States. With one hundred and fifty men he sailed from New Orleans and landed at San del Norte on the Caribbean side. While he formed a camp on the harbor of San Juan, one of his officers, with fifty men, proceeded up the river and, capturing the town of Castillo Viejo and four of the Transit steamers, was in a fair way to obtain possession of the entire route. At this moment upon the scene arrived the United States frigate *Wabash* and Hiram Paulding, who landed a force of three hundred and fifty blue-jackets with howitzers, and turned the guns of his frigate upon the camp of the President of Nicaragua. Captain Engel, who presented the terms of surrender to Walker, said to him: "General, I am sorry to see you here. A

man like you is worthy to command better men." To which Walker replied grimly: "If I had a third the number you have brought against me, I would show you which of us two commands the better men."

For the third time in his history Walker surrendered to the armed forces of his own country.

On his arrival in the United States, in fulfillment of his parole to Paulding, Walker at once presented himself at Washington a prisoner of war. But President Buchanan, although Paulding had acted exactly as Davis had done, refused to support him, and in a message to Congress declared that that officer had committed a grave error and established an unsafe precedent.

On the strength of this Walker demanded of the United States Government indemnity for his losses, and that it should furnish him and his followers transportation even to the very camp from which its representatives had torn him. This demand, as Walker foresaw, was not considered seriously, and with a force of about one hundred men, among whom were many of his veterans, he again set sail from New Orleans. Owing to the fact that, to prevent his return, there now were on each side of the isthmus both American and British men-of-war, Walker, with the idea of reaching Nicaragua by land, stopped off at Honduras. In his war with the allies the Hondurans had been as savage in their attacks upon his men as even the Costa Ricans, and finding his old enemies now engaged in a local revolution, on landing, Walker declared for the weaker side and captured the important seaport of Trujillo. He no sooner had taken it than the British warship *Icarus* anchored in the harbor, and her commanding officer, Captain Salmon, notified Walker that the British government held a mortgage on the revenues of the port, and that to protect the interests of his government he intended to take the town. Walker answered that he had made Trujillo a free port, and that Great Britain's claims no longer existed.

The British officer replied that if Walker surrendered himself and his men he would carry them as prisoners to the United States, and that if he did not, he would bombard the town. At this moment General Alvarez, with seven hundred Hondurans, from the land side surrounded Trujillo, and prepared to attack. Against such odds by sea and land Walker was helpless, and he determined to fly. That night, with seventy men, he left the town and proceeded down the coast toward Nicaragua. The *Icarus*, having taken on board Alvarez, started in pursuit. The President of Nicaragua was found in a little Indian fishing village, and Salmon sent in his shore-boats and demanded his surrender. On leaving Trujillo, Walker had been forced to abandon all his ammunition save thirty rounds a man, and all of his food supplies excepting two barrels of bread. On the coast of this continent there is no spot more unhealthy than Honduras, and when the Englishmen entered the fishing village they found Walker's seventy men lying in the palm huts helpless with fever, and with no stomach to fight British bluejackets with whom they had no quarrel. Walker inquired of Salmon if he were asking him to surrender to the British or to the Honduran forces, and twice Salmon assured him, "distinctly and specifically," that he was surrendering to the forces of her Majesty. With this understanding Walker and his men laid down their arms and were conveyed to the *Icarus*. But on arriving at Trujillo, in spite of their protests and demands for trial by a British tribunal, Salmon turned over his prisoners to the Honduran general. What excuse for this is now given by his descendants in the Salmon family I do not know.

Probably it is a subject they avoid, and, in history, Salmon's version has never been given, which for him, perhaps, is an injustice. But the fact remains that he turned over his white brothers to the mercies of half-Indian, half-negro, savages, who were not allies of Great Britain,

and in whose quarrels she had no interest. And Salmon did this, knowing there could be but one end. If he did not know it, his stupidity equalled what now appears to be heartless indifference. So far as to secure pardon for all except the leader and one faithful follower, Colonel Rudler of the famous phalanx, Salmon did use his authority, and he offered, if Walker would ask as an American citizen, to intercede for him. But Walker, with a distinct sense of loyalty to the country he had conquered, and whose people had honored him with their votes, refused to accept life from the country of his birth, the country that had injured and repudiated him.

Even in his extremity, abandoned and alone on a strip of glaring coral and noisome swamp land, surrounded only by his enemies, he remained true to his ideal.

At thirty-seven life is very sweet, many things still seem possible, and before him, could his life be spared, Walker beheld greater conquests, more power, a new South controlling a Nicaragua canal, a network of busy railroads, great squadrons of merchant vessels, himself emperor of Central America. On the gunboat the gold-braided youth had but to raise his hand, and Walker again would be a free man. But the gold-braided one would render this service only on the condition that Walker would appeal to him as an American; it was not enough that Walker was a human being. The condition Walker could not grant.

"The President of Nicaragua," he said, "is a citizen of Nicaragua."

They led him out at sunrise to a level piece of sand along the beach, and as the priest held the crucifix in front of him he spoke to his executioners in Spanish, simply and gravely: "I die a Roman Catholic. In making war upon you at the invitation of the people of Ruatan I was wrong. Of your people I ask pardon. I accept my punishment with resignation. I would like to think my death will be for the good of society."

From a distance of twenty feet three soldiers fired at him, but, although each shot took effect, Walker was not dead. So, a sergeant stooped, and with a pistol killed the man who would have made him one of an empire of slaves.

Had Walker lived four years longer to exhibit upon the great board of the Civil War his ability as a general, he would, I believe, today be ranked as one of America's greatest fighting men.

And because the people of his own day destroyed him is no reason that we should withhold from this American, the greatest of all filibusters, the recognition of his genius.