

WALKER  
WILLIAM

GEN. WILLIAM WALKER, OF NICARAGUA.—[FROM A PHOTOGRAPH BY MEADE BROTHERS.]

#### THE NICARAGUAN LEADERS.

THE portraits which accompany these lines are those of men whose names are familiar to every one. Those who hold them in least esteem must admit that they have filled a large space in the public eye, and that they will necessarily occupy a conspicuous page in history.

Two of them—Captain Farnum and General Wheat—have not filled positions of so high responsibility as to render their career very important; but the other two—Walker and Henningsen—are men of decided mark.

General William Walker is certainly one of the most remarkable men of the age. Macaulay somewhere remarks that one of the chief proofs of the wisdom of the Roman Catholic Church is the tact with which it has conciliated and rendered available the independent energies of men who, had it been attempted to coerce or subjugate them, would have deserted the orthodox banner and founded heresies; adding that the Pope would have known

better than to lose the services of such men as Knox, Whitfield, and Wesley, had they ever belonged to his fold. In like manner it may be said that, had William Walker been an Englishman, or a Frenchman, he would never have become a "fill-buster," but would have found ample scope for the exercise of his extraordinary qualities in the legitimate service of his country. Our Government, like the Church of England, discards and loses such adherents.

The son of a Scotch lawyer, born at Nashville, Tennessee, in 1824, William Walker displayed while at school the qualities which distinguish him still. He could not be taught, for he could not subject himself to the school routine. Unusual ability carried him safely through school and college, in spite of his roving tendencies, and he made a brief and unsatisfactory essay of the professions of law and medicine. Neither suited him; so, after a brief tour through Europe, he fell back on the profession which absorbs all the restless intellect of the country—the press. We find him, in

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1851, an editor of a daily paper in San Francisco, California.

These were the times when the unbounded prosperity of this country, and the patent abuse of heaven's blessings by the Spanish Americans, prompted a Lopez and a Rancoset du Boulton to filibusterism. William Walker caught the infection, and one day the public heard that a northern territory of Mexico had been "invaded," and that General William Walker had constituted himself Governor of the same, styling his realm the Independent Republic of Lower California. It was as if a fly should light on a man's nose and proclaim a conquest of the human face divine. Walker was starved out, surrendered himself to the first United States officer at hand, was tried for the breach of the neutrality laws, and, by a jury resolved to show their contempt of an absurd law, promptly acquitted.

Taught by experience, Walker received with wise caution a proposal from the Democrats of Nicaragua to interfere on their behalf against the aristocratic party. The two parties in the State of Nicaragua had fought for thirty odd years, and had succeeded in nothing save in ruining the country. The Democrats offered Walker twenty thousand acres of land to fight on their side. A similar offer led Sir De Lacy Evans to fight against the Caristas in Spain, General Guyon to take a command in the Hungarian army of independence, Lord Cochran to take a leading command in South America. Lafayette and Stouven fought for less in the United States, General Church was satisfied with less in Greece, Colonel Upton in Russia; and the British Government, when it entered into negotiations with General Qulman for the raising of a *d'armée* to serve in the Crimea, thought it unusual to offer a few hundred acres. Walker, however, made some further stipulations on behalf of his men, then chartered his vessel.

Just two years ago that vessel, the *Franklin*, in the harbor of San Francisco, with General Walker and fifty-six men on board. She was under seizure. A deputy-sheriff's officer had possession. At midnight on Monday, the 4th May, Walker requested the sheriff's officer to step below to examine some documents in the cabin. The unsuspecting official complied. The door shut, he was informed that he was a prisoner.

"There, Sir," said Walker, in a slow drawling voice, "are cigars and Champagne; and there are handcuffs and iron. Pray take your choice."

The deputy, a sensible man, took the former, and was in a very happy frame of mind when he was put on board the steam-boat to be taken back to the scene of his official duties. In the month of June General Walker arrived in Nicaragua. The Serviles were prepared in force to resist him; he fought a battle every three weeks. The capture of Granada was quickly followed by the massacre at Virgin Bay, and the necessary inauguration of General Walker's power in Nicaragua.

The war still continued. Instead of expending their whole strength to the great work of developing the resources of Nicaragua and encouraging immigration, the Democrats under Walker, the Serviles under Corral, exhausted themselves in efforts to destroy each other. Sensible of the folly of this course, General Walker made overtures for peace, which were ultimately accepted by Corral. A treaty was signed between the two Generals, by which the nominal supreme power was placed in the hands of a native named Patricio Rivas, while the command of the army was vested in General Walker. Corral, who perceived a day too late that he had sacrificed himself to his patriotism, followed the bent of his Spanish nature and conspired. Walker committed the first fault of his career, by revenging himself in a manner worthy of a native Spanish American. He had Corral shot. It was a terrible mistake, and more followed.

Nicaragua, in virtue of its position, its extent, its resources, and its influx of Anglo-Saxon settlers, is entitled to the pre-eminence among the Central American States. A judicious policy might have ended in a reorganization of the Guatemalan Confederacy, with Nicaragua at its head. Walker committed his second mistake in intrusting a delicate relation to Costa Rica to a wretched German Jew named Schlesinger, whom the soldiers pronounced a Menel descendant of Judas. Schlesinger quarrelled with the Costa Ricans; provoked them easily to fight; ran away at the first battle, and let them kill his men and defeat his *corps d'armée*. In high feather at their victory over the *Armée du Nord*, the Costa Ricans invaded Nicaragua and laid siege to Rivas. It was a bad business for them. Walker fell upon them like a whirlwind, and, with some assistance from the cholera, utterly discomfited them. But the prestige of the "Regenerator of Central America" was impaired.

Other mistakes injured him. He accredited to this country an American citizen whose character did not stand high either with the Government or the citizens of the United States, and thus supplied the administration with an extraneous reason for rejecting him. He pushed to extremity a just quarrel with the Accessory Transit Company, and, in order to gratify the cupidity of certain narrow-minded and selfish merchants, broke up their enterprise, and conceded the grant to others. He thus voluntarily deprived himself of the most essential commodity required for his ultimate success—supplies of immigrants from the United States.

These errors were followed by one still more fatal. Don Patricio Rivas, a simple-minded, ignorant Spaniard, had been set at the head of the Government, with the tacit understanding that he was to be the instrument of General Walker. Don Patricio did not object to this somewhat humble rôle. He was content with the glory of having his name trumpeted forth as the master, while he

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