

# FILIBUSTERISM IN NICARAGUA.

## POLITICAL REVIEW OF THE LAST TWO YEARS.

### SECRET HISTORY OF THE WALKER EXPEDITION.

#### How it was Initiated, Aided and Supported, and is now Opposed by the Transit Company.

Connection of Messrs. Vanderbilt, White, Garrison, Morgan, Randolph, George Law, Soule and Goicouria with the Movement.

#### Interesting and Important Historical Details, &c., &c., &c.

The secret history of the Walker expedition to Nicaragua, and of the career of the filibusters there, has not yet been written. The generally accepted version of that invasion is, that Walker was invited by the chiefs of the revolution, in 1854, to come to their aid with all the force he could muster; that he accepted the invitation, went there, and after some defeats and misfortunes finally set himself up as military dictator of the republic. To a certain extent that view is correct. Our object, however, on the present occasion, is to show that the idea of inviting Walker and his band was not an original one with the revolutionary or democratic party in Nicaragua; that it originated with the principal managers and agents of the Nicaragua Transit Company in New York and San Francisco; that money, arms, ammunition and transportation were furnished him by that company, and that the present imbroglio, in which Messrs. Walker, Goicouria, Vanderbilt, Garrison, Morgan, Randolph, Heiss and George Law, are mixed up, has arisen from as curious a combination of scheming, intriguing and cheating all round the board, as any Richelieu, Talleyrand or Beaumarchais has ever been engaged in.

#### NICARAGUA IN 1854-5.

To understand the matter correctly it will be necessary to go back some two years, and take a glance at the then condition of Nicaragua. Its President, in 1854, was Don Fruto Chamorro. Since the establishment of the independence of the Central American States, in 1821, there has been, in all of them, save Costa Rica—and particularly in Nicaragua—an unceasing struggle going on between the conservative and democratic parties, or at least between parties adopting those titles. Chamorro was the President and representative of the conservative party in Nicaragua. In the spring of 1854 a revolution was organized against his government. Its principal leaders were Don Francisco Castillon—formerly Cabinet Minister—and General Maximo Jerez, who assumed military command of the insurgents. In May, 1854, a battle was fought, the results of which were the defeat of Chamorro and his army, and the occupation by the revolutionists of the city of Leon, a town next in importance to and the rival of Granada, the capital. Thenceforth there were two governments in the republic—Chamorro, the actual *de jure* President, governed in Granada; and Castillon, who assumed the title and duties of Provisional President, governed in Leon. For some ten or twelve months this state of things continued. At length the Chamorristas—as the troops who supported the President were called—were besieged in Granada. Chamorro defended the place with much bravery for several months. He died on 12th March, 1855, and the Presidency passed into the hands of Don Jose Maria Estrada. The neighboring States made some efforts to effect a compromise between the contending factions, but without success. San Salvador proposed through her Commissioner a plan of settlement. This was to declare on both sides a general oblivion of the past and a complete amnesty; that the mutual expenses of the war should be charged as a debt to the State; that Estrada should be recognized as President for the space of one year, after which a Constituent Assembly should be convoked; and that Castillon should be provided with a diplomatic mission in Europe. This proposition, favorable as it was to all sides, fell through, and the internecine strife continued.

#### WALKER INVITED TO NICARAGUA.

It was in this condition of things that Castillon was induced to propose to Col. William Walker to come to the aid of the revolutionary or democratic party of Nicaragua. Walker had given evidence on a former occasion of his readiness to embark in such an enterprise. He had in 1854 organized an expedition into Sonora, and declared himself President of Lower California. He did not, however, long enjoy this self-created distinction, but managed to make his way back, with six of his followers, to San Francisco, where he was arrested for violation of the neutrality laws, put on his trial, and acquitted. On this trial he defended himself—for to his principal rôle of filibuster, Walker adds the minor rôles of lawyer, physician, journalist and linguist. By this *fiasco* of his he acquired much celebrity, and thus recommended himself to the attention of Castillon, Salazar, and other revolutionary leaders. A certain Mr. Byron Cole, a friend of Walker's, and who had been prospecting Honduras and Nicaragua as the agent of a mining and trading company, was employed to treat with Walker. The bargain was easily concluded. Walker received his commission as a General in the Nicaraguan army, and a grant of 58,000 acres of land; and on the 5th of May he set sail from San Francisco, in the brig Vesta, with a party of fifty-six men who had been with him in Sonora, and included several who had served in the war against Mexico, and in the filibustering expedition against the island of Cuba.

#### REAL ORIGIN OF WALKER'S INVITATION.

As we have intimated, the idea of inviting Walker and his party to aid in the defeat of the Chamorrista party of Nicaragua did not originate with Castillon or Salazar. It was a brilliant idea of the managers and principal agents of the Transit Company. The incessant state of revolution in which Nicaragua found herself was highly injurious to the interests of the Company. Its property was being constantly subject to taxation, and its treasury to hauls for the benefit of one or the other of the contending factions. Besides, the prosperity of the country on which the profits of the Company were more or less dependent, was impeded and prevented by these sanguinary struggles. And so, between Morgan and Jo. White in New York, and Garrison, the agent of Company, in San Francisco, the scheme was concocted of getting up an independent filibustering forsy, seizing upon the Nicaragua route and the territory within which it is embraced, and thereby avoiding in future the system of extortion and inconvenience to which they had been subjected. The political condition of Nicaragua afforded them at the same time a motive for and a means of accomplishing this movement. Castillon was, by them or their agents, induced to make to Walker the proposition to which we have referred and thus was laid the foundation of that movement which has annihilated Nicaraguan nationality, and which now embraces within its scope the organization of a grand federal republic, to be composed of all the States of Central America, Mexico and such of the Southern States as desire secession from this Union.

#### THE FILIBUSTER INVASION COMMENCED.

Garrison, as the San Francisco agent of the Company, furnished Walker with the means of calling;

