

Part Five:

THE PHANTOM

Phantom of Astarte. Manfred!

Manfred. Say on, say on--

I live but in the sound--it is thy voice!

Phantom. Manfred! to-morrow ends thine earthly ills.
Farewell!

.....

[The Spirit of Astarte disappears.]

Nemesis. She is gone, and will not be recall'd;
Her words will be fulfill'd. Return to the earth.

A Spirit. He is convulsed.--This is to be a mortal
And seek the things beyond mortality.

Lord Byron.

Manfred.

24. Don Juan and the Bride

In September, 1857, a Nashville schoolmate of Walker confirmed to a reporter, "in the strongest manner," the accounts of Billy's "reserve at school." He said Billy "was the puniest, quietest milksop of a boy he had ever known; so much so, as to be an object of derision to his schoolfellows, who called him 'honey,' 'missy,' and other similar contemptuous names." The only thing by which he distinguished himself was that he always knew his lesson better than anyone else; and the moment school was over, he ran home to his mother. In his leisure moments his favorite pastime was reading the Bible.

According to his schoolmate, Billy was at first attracted to Ellen Gait Martin--"the beautiful and intellectual, but deaf and dumb girl at New Orleans"--out of "sympathy for her melancholy privation." As tenderer feelings soon arose, Ellen became "passionately attached" to Billy:

Indeed, not being aware of the usual restraints which the conventionalities of society impose on females under such circumstances, she even displayed her affection in a more open manner than was pleasing to her friends. This led to some restraint and misunderstanding and estrangement; and the poor beautiful, but speechless girl, thinking herself deserted, sickened and died. From that moment Walker was a changed man. He went to California, fought a duel, and then joined a band of desperadoes. Thenceforth the sickly, studious milksop was the stern and daring adventurer.

The reporter commented that the story sounded romantic, but that it was the only intelligible clue he had yet received

to the strange revolution which was known to have taken place in Walker's character; that it must have required some great mental shock to transform the sickly, "yellow-haired laddie" of Nashville into the stern Nicaraguan filibuster: "Why should it not be blasted love, and the vision of his broken-hearted deaf-mute, dead for love of him? To an imagination such as his must be, a vision like this may well become a permanent and powerful reality, casting its dark hue over his whole career and character."¹

A few months later, when Walker visited Washington after his arrest by Commodore Paulding, the *New York Tribune* correspondent observed:

It is as good as a play--or rather it is better than most plays--to attend a levee of Walker's, and see him receive the Texan Generals and California Colonels who seek an introduction--great, burly, strapping, bearded, fierce-looking, loud-voiced fellows, frank, hearty and unceremonious, they stride into the room, and, on encountering the impassive face and frigid fingers and divinity-student air of the redoubted filibuster, they subside suddenly into the condition of men who, supposing themselves invited to a feast, find themselves at a funeral.

The correspondent added that if William Walker was a rascal, as he had been called on the floor of Congress, he was certainly no common rascal; and that he was not a Cortés, a Pizarro, an Almagro, or a De Soto, either. Seeking a parallel for Walker, as he appeared in Washington, he remembered "the ingenious and renowned" Master Ambrose de Lamela, the "worthy valet of Gil Blas," to whom Walker bore a striking personal resemblance "for his piety, and his simple, religious

¹"Filibuster Walker," *Alta*, 10/29/1857, p.1, c.3.

aspect." But, on the whole, a better comparison would be Conrad, the Corsair of the poem of that name, by Byron:

*But who that CHIEF? his name on every shore
Is famed and fear'd--they ask and know no more.
With these he mingles not but to command;
Few are his words, but keen his eye and hand.
Ne'er seasons he with mirth their jovial mess,
But they forgive his silence for success.*

The *Tribune's* Washington correspondent added: "I suspect that Walker has consciously formed his manner and his character on the model of that imaginary hero."²

Seen in the light of Walker's Inner Crescent City, expounded in Book One, both journalists were right: Ellen [Mary-Allen] had indeed become a permanent and powerful reality, casting its dark hue over the Gray-Eyed Man of Destiny's career and character, and he in turn, consciously or unconsciously, formed his manner and his character on the model of Byron's Imaginary heroes.

We saw in Book One how Byron's Manfred furnished the key to Walker's Oedipus. Another Byron creation, "The Bride of Abydos," was the stimulus for Walker's Poem on the Crucifixion. The following excerpts, read in conjunction with Walker's poem (Book One, p. 124), make it apparent:

*The Bride of Abydos
A Turkish Tale.*

*Know ye the land where the cypress and myrtle
Are emblems of deeds that are done in their clime?
Where the rage of the vulture, the love of the turtle,
Now melt into sorrow, now madden to crime!*

² From Our Own Correspondent, *New York Tribune*, 1/18/1858, p.3, c.5.

Where the virgins are soft as the roses they twine,
 And all, save the spirit of man, is divine?
 'Tis the clime of the East, 'tis the land of the Sun--
 Can he smile on such deeds as his children have done?
 Oh! wild as the accents of lovers' farewell
 Are the hearts which they bear, and the tales which they tell.

With Giaffir is none but his only son,

Still standing at the Pacha's feet:
 For son of Moslem must expire,
 Ere dare to sit before his sire!

So lovelily the morning shone,
 That--let the old and weary sleep--
 I could not; and to view alone
 The fairest scenes of land and deep,

I on Zuleika slumber broke,

Before the guardian slaves awoke
 We to the cypress groves had flown,
 And made earth, main, and heaven our own!

Old Giaffir gazed upon his son
 And started; for within his eye
 He read how much his wrath had done;
 He saw rebellion there begun:
 'Come hither, boy--what, no reply?
 I mark thee--and I know thee too;
 But there be deeds thou dar'st not do:
 But if thy beard had manlier length,
 And if thy hand had skill and strength,
 I'd joy to see thee break a lance,
 Albeit against my own perchance.'

And sneeringly these accents fell,
 On Selim's eye he fiercely gazed:

*That eye return'd him glance for glance,
And proudly to his sire's was raised,
Till Giaffir's quail'd and shrunk askance--*

But hark!--I hear Zuleika's voice

*He lived, he breathed, he moved, he felt;
He raised the maid from where she knelt;
His trance was gone, his keen eye shone
With thoughts that long in darkness dwelt;*

*What other hath Zuleika seen
From simple childhood's earliest hour?
What other can she seek to see
Than thee, companion of her bower,
The partner of her infancy?*

*And Night's descending shadows hide
That field with blood bedew'd in vain,
The desert of old Priam's pride;
The tombs, sole relics of his reign,
All--save immortal dreams that could beguile
The blind old man of Scio's rocky isle!*

*Oh! yet--for there my steps have been;
These feet have press'd the sacred shore,
These limbs that buoyant wave hath borne--
Minstrel! with thee to muse, to mourn,
To trace again those fields of yore,*

*The night hath closed on Helle's stream,
Nor yet hath risen on Ida's hill
That moon, which shone on his high theme:
No warrior chides her peaceful beam,
But conscious shepherds bless it still.
Their flocks are grazing on the mound
Of him who felt the Dardan's arrow*

*All that can eye or sense delight
 Are gather'd in that gorgeous room:
 But yet it hath an air of gloom.*

*It might be only that the night
 Disguised things seen by better light:*

*His robe of pride was thrown aside,
 His brow no high-crown'd turban bore,
 But in its stead a shawl of red,
 Wreathed lightly round, his temples wore:
 That dagger, on whose hilt the gem
 Were worthy of a diadem,
 No longer glitter'd at his waist,
 Where pistols unadorn'd were braced;
 And from his belt a sabre swung,
 And from his shoulders loosely hung
 The cloak of white capote*

*But were it not that high command
 Spake in his eye, and tone, and hand*

then forth my father's scimitar,

*The father slowly rued thy hate,
 The son hath found a quicker fate:*

*They scarce can bear the morn to break
 That melancholy spell.³*

By placing excerpts from both texts, side by side, it immediately becomes apparent that "The Bride of Abydos" inspired Walker's poem on the Crucifixion:

³ Frederick Page, ed., *Byron--Poetical Works*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), pp. 264-276.

THE BRIDE OF ABYDOS

The East, fairest scenes
 The Night's descending shadows
 That melancholy spell
 The night disguised things seen
 by better light
 The partner of her infancy
 But Hark!--I hear Zuleika's
 voice
 His trance was gone
 These limbs
 To trace again those fields of
 yore
 An air of gloom
 The blind old man
 The shepherds flocks grazing on
 the mound
 If thy beard had manlier length
 His brow no high-crowned turban
 bore; wreathed lightly around
 his temples
 That dagger, on whose hilt the
 gem
 From his belt a sabre swung
 My father's scimitar
 From his shoulders loosely hung
 the cloak of white capote
 High command spake in his eye
 Giaffir's quail'd and shranked
 askance

POEM ON THE CRUCIFIXION

Syria's sacred scenes
 The day was fast declining
 With melancholy musings
 Light appears dark, and dark,
 light
 Companion of my youth
 But hark! What sound was that
 which well might cause
 Sometime entranced
His limbs
 We thought of things past
 There was aught of gloom around
 There knelt an old man
 A ploughman drove a sturdy ox
 hard by Calvary mound
 A long beard cold black
 'bout his bronzed brow was
 wreathed an ample turban
 The jewelled hilt
 A curved scimitar hung at his
 side
 O'er his limbs were loose
 floating folds of finest linen
 With lip of scorn and angry eye
 His wan face upturned to heaven,
 seemed seeking pardon

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The story of "The Bride of Abydos"--Sellm's incest with his sister Zuleika, and his death, slain by his father--give additional proof that the Freudian Oedipus Complex interpretation of Walker's poem on the Crucifixion, is correct.

Another Byron creation, *Don Juan*, exerted a special influence on Walker (on Billy) through a stanza [5.4] that overtly hit at the very heart of his Oedipus:

*I have a passion for the name of 'Mary,'
 For once it was a magic sound to me;
 And still it half calls up the realms of fairy,
 Where I beheld what never was to be;
 All feelings changed, but this was last to vary,
 A spell from which even yet I am not quite free:
 But I grow sad--and let a tale grow cold,
 Which must not be pathetically told.*

That stanza was obviously in Walker's mind when he wrote "A Sad History"--John Jones' Farewell, Book One, p. 157--in the wake of Ellen's death:

*'Tis an old tale, and one too quickly told
 Of woman's faithlessness and bosoms cold.*

Don Juan is also present in other lines of the John Jones' farewell, as well as in Peter Muggins' and fellow Inner Crescent City inmates' biographical sketches given by Walker [Timothy Tucker] to the world during the upheaval caused by the death of Ellen. For instance:

*"Tis not,' said Juan, 'for my present doom
 I mourn, but for the past;--I loved a maid;--
 He paused, and his dark eye grew full of gloom;
 Don Juan [5.18]*

*But let that pass:--I think I have heard your name
 [7.60]*

*As carelessly as hurls the moth her wing
 Against the light wherein she dies: he clung [8.118]*

*But let that pass, I mourn not for my fate,
A few months past I loved a maiden, fair
Maidens, like moth, are ever caught by glare.*

"A Sad History" [l. 5, 9, 13]

But it is time that I should hoist my 'blue peter,'

Don Juan [11.83]

Like the author of "Childe Harold," he loved the name of "Mary," and was also doomed to awaken from a dream of bliss to find his idol was but mortal. . . . He became emphatically "Blue Peter," and often vowed to run himself up as a signal.

"Why Muggins degenerated . . .," [Book One, p. 160]

Wounded and fetter'ed, 'cabin'd, cribb'd, confined,'

Don Juan [4.75]

Rey is now in the Parish Prison--'cabin'd, cribb'd, confined.'

"Rey in a Dungeon!!" [Book One, p. 170]

*As through his palms Bob Acres' valour oozed,
So Juan's virtue ebb'd, I know not how;*

Don Juan [5.142]

In the time of trial his valor oozes not out of his fingers' ends like Bob Acres.

"John Smith" [Book One, p. 242]

*The rest were Jacks and Gills and Wills and Bills,
But when I have added that the elder Jack Smith
Was born in Cumberland among the hills,
And that his father was an honest blacksmith,
I've said all I know of a name that fills*

Don Juan [7.20]

Tucker, from his cradle [William (Billy) in Nashville, by the Cumberland river], showed a precocity most remarkable. He was a seeker after wisdom from the moment that his infant lips could pronounce the word "bah," which was taken for the paternal name by his attentive

listeners. No! Timothy Tucker cried "bah" when he was told that:

*"Jack fell down and broke his crown,
And Gill came tumbling after."*

"Timothy Tucker" [Book One, p. 249]

Don Juan's presence is likewise apparent in Billy's poem on the Crucifixion, contributing words like "Methought," "scorched" and "Pharisaic," and lines like "Light appear dark, and dark, light," which Billy got from "Methink," "scorch'd," "Pharisaic," and "those who love to say that white is black" in Byron's poem [8.90, 8.134, 11.90].

It thus appears that Walker linked his innermost thoughts and feelings with those of Byron's creations: that Byron's fictional characters peopled the fantasy world in Walker's Inner Crescent City, embodied in inmates who posed as real-life Manfreds and Don Juans. In other words, Walker's imagination moved him to form his manner and his character on the model of Byron's imaginary heroes.

25. Oedipus in Rivas

When he wrote *The War in Nicaragua*, late in 1859 and early in 1860, William Walker's alter ego, Timothy Tucker, reminisced [p. 37] that when "the Americans drew up at the wharf of Realejo and leaped ashore for the first time in Nicaragua," on June 16, 1855, "The deep gloom of the tropical forests was more impressive from the ocean of sunshine which surrounded it; and the stillness of all nature affected the beholder with an awe which commanded silence and reflection." On June 28 [p. 46], marching from El Gigante to his first battle at Rivas, drenched by rain that "came down in torrents" during the night, Walker at dawn enjoyed "the balmy effects of the soft, mild air, which seemed a fluid altogether different from the atmosphere of northern climates." It felt "as if a thin, and vapory exhalation of opium, soothing and exhilarating by turns, was being mixed at intervals with the common elements of the atmosphere."

Reflecting on the vapory exhalation of opium, in the wake of the storm, *Don Juan* appears full-blown in Walker's Inner Crescent City:

*The evaporation of a joyous day
Is like . . .
. . . a billow left by storms behind,
Without the animation of the wind;*

*Or like an opiate, which brings troubled rest.*¹

Approaching Rivas to do battle under the influence of *Don Juan's* soothing and exhilarating opiate, on that joyous day Walker's eye beheld:

. . . a vision of enchantment. The lake of Nicaragua lay in full view, and rising from it, as Venus from the sea, was the tall and graceful cone of Omotepe [*sic*]. The dark forests of the tropics clothed the side of the volcano, which seemed to repose under the influence of the soft sunshine around it. The form of the mountain told its history as if written in a book; and the appearance of the volcano was so much that of a person enjoying a siesta, the beholder would not have been surprised to see it waken at any moment and throw the lava from its burning sides. The first glimpse of the scene almost made the pulse stand still.²

Walker's vision of enchantment--the island of Omotepe with its two conical volcanoes--in the Inner Crescent City was Lady Gulbeyaz, the Sultana, with her "Paphian pair," from Byron's *Don Juan* [5.96]:

*The lady rising up with such an air
As Venus rose from the wave, on them
Bent like an antelope a Paphian pair*³
Of eyes, which put out each surrounding gem;

¹Byron, *Don Juan*, 16.9-10.

²Walker, *The War*, p. 49.

³PAPHIAN\adj, usu cap (fr. *Paphos*, ancient city of Cyprus that was the center of worship of the Greek goddess of love Aphrodite). 1: of, relating to or characteristic of Paphos or of the people of Paphos. 2: relating esp. to illicit love [Webster's Third New International Dictionary]. Two conical volcanoes--Concepción and Madera--rise side by side on Omotepe island in Lake Nicaragua (See p. 258 and Book 3, p. 7).

*And raising up an arm as moonlight fair,
 She sign'd to Baba, who first kiss'd the hem
 Of her deep purple robe, and speaking low,
 Pointed to Juan, who remain'd below.*

Lady Gulbeyaz, the Sultan's bride, rising as Venus from the sea: "Her presence was as lofty as her state; / Her beauty of that overpowering kind, / Of forms and features; it would strike you blind / her years / Were ripe, they might make six-and-twenty springs, / But there are forms which Time to touch forbears, / And turns aside his scythe to vulgar things / Such as was Mary's Queen of Scots;"⁴ / turning to Juan,

*Without more preface, in her blue eyes blending
 Passion and power, a glance on him she cast,
 And merely saying, 'Christian, canst thou love?'
 Conceived that phrase was quite enough to move.⁵*

And move it did, making Walker's pulse stand still. His bizarre, "waxing poetic" reaction at the sight of a volcano in Tucker's narrative of *The War*, which *Don Juan* explains, shows sublimation at work: the psychological mechanism analyzed in Book One when Walker displaced the love formerly directed to Mary-Ellen, onto the object of his mission, which from 1855 until his death, was Nicaragua.

Byron's *Don Juan*, in lines preceding the oplate stanza [16.7], conveys a thought that furnishes a link to *Manfred*:

*I merely meant to say what Johnson said,
 That in the course of some six thousand years,
 All nations have believed that from the dead
 A visitant at intervals appears;*

⁴ Byron, *Don Juan*, 5.97-98.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 5.116.

*And what is stranger upon this strange head,
Is, that whatever bar the reason rears
'Gainst such belief, there's something stronger still
In its behalf, let those deny who will.*

Tying the pieces together, it may be said that in Walker's Inner Crescent City, Nicaragua was the Phantom of Mary-Ellen, which appeared to the inmates as the Phantom of Astarte appeared to Manfred in Byron's dramatic poem [2.4]. Thereafter, Walker yearned to possess Nicaragua, but was instead possessed by Mary-Ellen's Phantom, until his death.

For Walker, the conquest of Nicaragua meant the vicarious satisfaction of his oedipal urge. His opponents represented his father, and he discharged full oedipal hostility unto his rivals. Each rival he killed, he committed parricide by proxy.

That first battle of Rivas, June 29, 1855, and his other battles on Nicaraguan soil, repeatedly pitted Walker against his father and reenacted his unending oedipal tragedy. The castration anxiety aroused when the Legitimists defeated him, was promptly relieved by the thought, expressed in appropriate Freudian symbolic language by Tucker in *The War* [p. 53], that "After such a day, the Legitimists were not much in the humor of pursuing those who had taught them a first lesson in the use of the rifle."

Of Walker's casualties, one Timothy Crocker stands ten feet tall in Tucker's narrative of the battle:

But it was not in numbers that the loss of the Americans was to be computed. The chivalrous spirit of Kewen would have weighed against a host of common men; and the death of Crocker was a loss hardly to be repaired. A boy in appearance, with a slight figure, and a face almost feminine in its delicacy and beauty, he had the heart of a lion; and his eye, usually mild and gentle, though steady in its expression, was quick to perceive a false movement on the part of an adversary, and then

its flash was like the gleam of a scimitar as it falls on the head of a foe. With little military experience and less military reading, he was a man to lead others where danger was to be met; and none who knew him feared he would get a command into any position from which his courage and address would be unable to extricate them. To Walker he was invaluable; for they had been together in many a trying hour, and the fellowship of difficulty and danger had established a sort of freemasonry between them.⁶

Timothy Tucker's eulogy of Timothy Crocker is a transparent William Walker self-portrait. The almost identical names made the connection, and the gleam of a scimitar in his eye instantly connects Crocker to Walker's Oedipus complex in his poem on the Crucifixion (Book One, p. 125).

The capture of Granada--capital of Nicaragua--meant for Walker the possession of Mary-Ellen's Phantom; and when forced to abandon the city, he destroyed it rather than allow his rivals to regain it. Tucker explained it, as usual, by means of projection, attributing to others what, in fact, were Walker's innermost feelings:

The attachment of the old Chamorristas to Granada was strong and peculiar. They had for their chief city a love like that of a woman; and even after years have passed tears come to their eyes when they speak of the loss of their beloved Granada.⁷

Walker's attachment to the Phantom was indeed strong and peculiar--a love of a woman--which a journalist noticed and recorded in 1859 in these words: "The 'little gray-eyed man

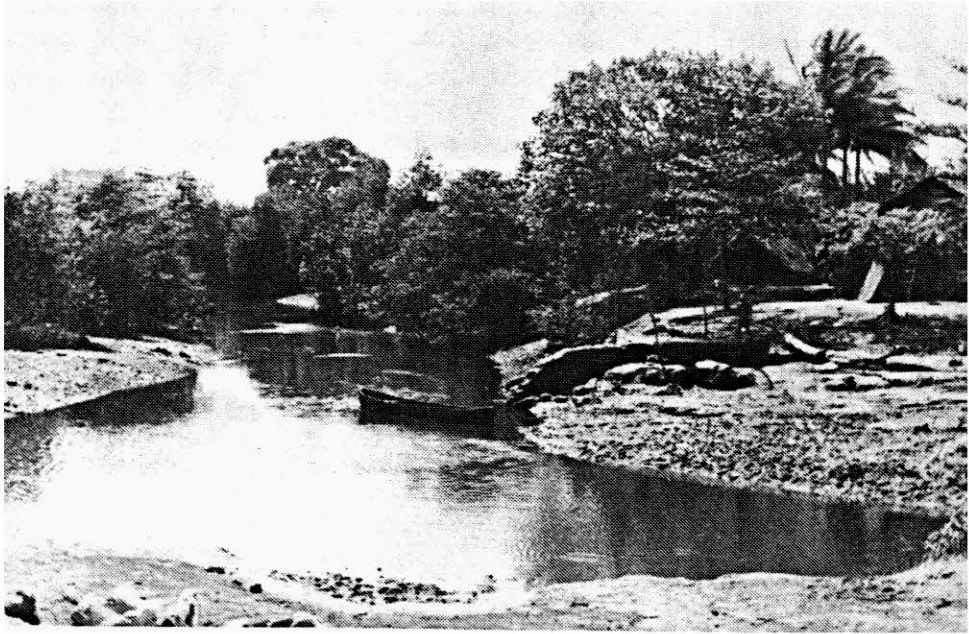
⁶Walker, *The War*, p. 53.

⁷Walker, *The War*, p. 340.

of destiny' is surely fascinated by the hills of Nicaragua, unless it be the pleasure of playing Emperor, which has so mighty power over him."⁸

Playing Emperor on the hills of Nicaragua was Walker's everlasting obsession once possessed at Rivas by Mary-Ellen's Phantom.

⁸"Movements of the Filibusters," *New York Herald*, 6/24/1859, p.1, c.l. Carr, also, noticed that Walker was "infatuated" with Nicaragua "as if it had been a woman." Albert Z. Carr, *The World and William Walker*, (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1963), p. 120.



El Realejo

"the stillness of all nature affected the beholder with an awe which commanded silence and reflection" (p. 250)



Ometepe
Concepción volcano
"a vision of enchantment . . ." (p. 251)

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Ometepe

Concepción and Madera volcanoes

"Walker's vision of enchantment . . . her Paphian pair" (p. 251)

26. Ugolino in Hell

In Book Three (p. 292), it was mentioned that in this volume I would analyze the unconscious, irresistible psychological forces that led Walker astray when he wrote in *The War in Nicaragua*, "Let us pass Mora in exile, as Ugolino in Hell, afar off and with silence." For Dante's Poets do not pass Ugolino afar off and with silence, as pretended by Walker. Dante's "Let us not speak of them; look, and pass on," in Canto III of *The Inferno*, refers to The Opportunists, "a never-ending rout of souls in pain" in the Vestibule of Hell.¹

When Walker wrote *The War in Nicaragua*, Mora was in New York, having arrived on September 13, 1859, expelled from Costa Rica after being deposed in August. Crisanto Medina, C. Medina, Jr., A. Bonilla, and Manuel Argüello accompanied him. The elder Medina was a merchant and banker of San José.

Charles J. Macdonald thought he saw an opportunity and wrote to Walker for his permission to contact Medina and perhaps join forces with the Costa Rican exiles for a counter-revolution that would put Walker back in power in Nicaragua. Walker's reply came instantly and clear: "There can be no objection to treat with Medina, provided he does not ask the return of Mora to political power."²

¹ Dante Alighieri, *The Inferno*, translated by John Ciardi. (New York: The New American Library, Inc., 1954), pp. 41-43; 266-277.

² Walker to Macdonald (New Orleans, 11/23/1859), Item 69, Fayssoux Collection, Tulane.

In 1856, Costa Rican President Don Juan Rafael Mora had been Walker's arch-rival for possession of Nicaragua, and in 1859 it was still psychologically impossible for Walker to help Mora regain political power in Costa Rica. Ugolino explains the reason why.

Count Ugolino, in Canto XXXII of Dante's *Inferno*, is at the very bottom of The Pit, fixed in ice among the sinners guilty of treachery against those to whom they were bound by special ties.

This is Dante's symbolic equivalent of the final guilt. The treacheries of these souls were denials of love and of all human warmth. Only the remorseless dead center of the ice will serve to express their natures. As they denied God's love, so are they furthest removed from the light and warmth of His Sun. As they denied all human ties, so are they bound only by the unyielding ice.

Let us picture Walker reading *The Inferno*, Dante's immortal drama of a journey through hell, towards the end, as Dante descends to the dead center of the Pit:

*Leaving him then, I saw two souls together
in a single hole, and so pinched in by the ice
that one head made a helmet of the other.*

*As a famished man chews crusts--so the one sinner
sank his teeth into the other's nape
at the base of the skull, gnawing his loathsome dinner.*

There begins a series of stanzas in which Ugolino narrates the story of his treachery to his sons, leading to the following:

" . . . I heard them say:

*'Father, it would give us much less pain
if you ate us: it was you who put upon us
this sorry flesh; now strip it off again.'*

.

*Two days I called their names, and they were dead.
then fasting overcame my grief and me."*

*His eyes narrowed to slits when he was done,
and he seized the skull again between his teeth
grinding it as a mastiff grinds a bone.³*

The reading of Dante's masterpiece forcefully rekindled William Walker's castration anxiety, so he halted the unpleasant experience by the defense mechanism of *denial*, blotting out the perception by withdrawing his attention from it. In retrospect, he recalls an Ugolino in hell, whom he passes afar off and with silence.

Likewise with President Mora, Walker's chief rival for possession of Nicaragua, the surrogate of his father who drove him out from paradise. Timothy Tucker's free association linking Mora with Ugolino, eloquently confirms what *Don Juan* revealed in Rivas, that in the depths of Walker's unconscious, Nicaragua is the Phantom of Mary-Ellen.

³ Dante Alighieri, *The Inferno*, pp. 41-43; 271, 276-277.

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27. The Hero Prepares to Depart

At Wallack's Theatre in New York, on June 18, 1857, during a pause in the performance the audience called loudly on General Walker for a speech. In compliance, he arose and delivered the following:

Ladies and Gentlemen--Permit me, in replying to your gracious reception, to recall to your minds a scene painted by the great dramatic novelist of the century. When the simple Scotch maiden, Jeannie Deans, goes to her countryman, the great Duke of Argyle, to beg the favor of her sister's life, she bears with her the tartan of her clan; and after having gained her suit, she remarked to his grace, "I thought my lord, your heart would have warmed to the tartan;" and the Duke answered, "When the heart of Macallam More ceases to warm to the tartan, may it lie cold under the sod." Allow me to reply to the expression of sympathy by saying, when this heart ceases to beat to the laws and institutions of its native land, and to the expressions of approbation on the part of my countrymen, may it lie cold under the sod.¹

As usual, the speech shows Walker possessed by Mary-Ellen: Mary, his mother, a Scot, and Ellen, his would-be-bride, none other than "the simple Scotch maiden," because in Sir

¹"General Walker's Movements," *New York Herald*, 6/19/1857, p.5, c.3.

Walter Scott's *The Heart of Midlothian*, Helen Walker is the prototype of the fictitious Jeannie Deans.²

Possessed by the Phantom of Mary-Allen, Walker thought he had regained his beloved when suddenly, on December 8, 1857, Commodore Paulding expelled him from Paradise. The press reported that the Gray-Eyed Man of Destiny "shed tears when he hauled down his flag" from the Nicaraguan soil he had conquered.³ The scene as he boarded the *Fulton* was recorded by a special correspondent of the *New York Herald* at San Juan de Nicaragua:

This morning, Sunday, Dec. 6, the *Wabash*, with Commodore Paulding's broad pennant at her fore, hove in sight . . .

Tuesday, the 8th of December . . .

After two verbal messages to the General about the details of the surrender, Captain Engles returned and invited General Walker on board the *Fulton*. The General immediately acceded, and going into the captain's gig, was soon on board the *Fulton*. I had preceded him, and was standing abaft the mizenmast when the General came over the rail. Every eye in all the crowd of officers, sailors and marines was strained to see the "gray-eyed man," and a thousand sympathies were expressed for his fortunes. Com. Paulding inquired of me if "that was the General," and on being told it was, he politely removed his cap, and gracefully advancing, met the General halfway between the gangway and cable, saying--

"This is General Walker, I believe," at the same time

²"As young woman Helen Walker had refused to tell a lie to save her sister who was accused of child-murder. When her sister was condemned to death Helen walked to London to seek a pardon, and obtained it through the good offices of 'the late Duke of Argyle'." Sir Walter Scott, *The Heart of Midlothian*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), p. viii.

³"Walker Shedding Tears," *New York Tribune*, 12/28/1857, p.5, c.5.

extending his hand.

"I am General Walker," responded the prisoner, and taking the Commodore's hand, both stood for a moment in suspense, the large and commanding form of the naval officer almost shading from sight the small but compact figure of the civilian and military chieftain. The two took chairs to converse, when the General was so overcome by the great injustice of this sudden and appalling reverse that had thus stricken him down in his victorious career, that his eyes were red with tears. I have every reason to believe that the Commodore expressed a sympathy for his fortunes, but plead the inexorable calls of duty in extenuation of the step he had thus taken.⁴

On December 10, Paulding wrote to his wife:

I interchanged several messages with Walker, the object on my part being consideration for him, but at last there was an impertinence that offended me and I commanded his instant embarkation. Upon this he came to see me, and this lion-hearted devil, who had so often destroyed the lives of other men, came to me, humbled himself, and wept like a child. You may suppose it made a woman of me, and I have had him in the cabin since as my guest. We laugh and talk as if nothing had happened, and you would think, to see him with the Captain and myself, that he was one of us. He is a smart fellow, and requires a sharp fellow to deal with him.⁵

In a fleeting loss of control of himself, Walker wept like a child before the father-figure who chastised him, separating

⁴"Sketch of Walker's Movements to the Time of his Arrest and Arrival at Aspinwall," *New York Herald*, 12/28/1857, p.1, c.1.

⁵Rebecca Paulding Meade, *Life of Hiram Paulding*, p. 190.

him from his illicit love-object and ending his bliss. But he rapidly regained composure and confined his sentiments where they belonged: in the darkness of his Inner Crescent City. Shortly afterwards, Timothy Tucker allowed another glimpse at his pent-up feelings in a letter to Mrs. Thomas Smith--nee Elizabeth Robertson, "Nashville's Madame de Stael" and Billy's "intimate friend" [Book One, p. 26]--whose cordial welcome of the Gray-Eyed Man revived ancient childhood memories during his February, 1858 visit to his hometown:

New Orleans, March 3rd, 1858.

My dear Madam:

You see I am faithful to my promise. How often and how long since I left you have I thought of the promises--one in particular--that you made me, and how I have wondered whether or not you would be able to keep it. Remember you are responsible if the widow marries within the year--above all, if she thinks of such a step and you do not inform me of it even though I be at the ends of the earth.

Truly and seriously the glimpse I got at Nashville of quiet and domestic life has taken, I begin to believe, some of the temper out of my soul. For years I have seen but little save of the harder and harsher sides of life and I had begun to think myself pretty well steeled and somewhat insensible to the softer emotions. But who can curiously behold the "sheen of beauty's cheek nor feel the heart can never all grow cold"? Don't you think, now, that I am pretty well softened when I begin to quote poetry? Really you are responsible for the whole of it; and if I am like a madman who but you has been the cause of the folly?

I parted with Alice and her husband and children at Paducah. After that I felt desolate and alone in the world. Every turn of the steamer's wheel seemed to carry me away from happiness, and I felt as if my heart strings would break at this tearing myself away from

her. She loves me more than most sisters love their brothers; and not only in this but in the friendships I have formed through life I have been particularly fortunate. Why then, you may ask, should I repine at my lot. Ah, no: you are a woman and will not ask any such foolish question, for your sex instinctively divines all the secrets of emotion and affection.

But what a simpleton and vain fellow I am thus to be writing so much about my own feelings and sentiments. The truth is I have nothing else to write. I am a poor hand at picking up news, and even if I had any gossip do not know what would be agreeable to you.⁶

The unnamed widow was never again mentioned, before or after, but the poetry quoted by Tucker in the letter, as always, carried a hidden message from the Inner Crescent City, found in the preceding and succeeding lines. The poetry, of course, is Byron's:

*Secure in guarded coldness, he had mix'd
Again in fancied safety with his kind,
And deem'd his spirit now so firmly fix'd
And sheath'd with an invulnerable mind,
That, if no joy, no sorrow lurked behind;
And he, as one, might 'midst the many stand
Unheeded, searching through the crowd to find
Fit speculation; such as in strange land
He found in wonder-works of God and Nature's hand.*

*But who can view the ripen'd rose, nor seek
To wear it? who can curiously behold
The smoothness and the sheen of Beauty's cheek,
Nor feel the heart can never all grow old?
Who can contemplate Fame through clouds unfold*

⁶William Walker to Mrs. T. Smith, ALS in the Weiss Collection, THS ac. no. 31, Tennessee State Library and Archives, Nashville.

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*The star which rises o'er her steep, nor climb?
Harold, once more, within the vortex, roll'd
On with the giddy circle, chasing Time,
Yet with a nobler aim than in his Youth's fond prime.*

*But soon he knew himself the most unfit
Of men to herd with Man; with whom he held
Little in common; untaught to submit
His thoughts to others . . .⁷*

Tucker seemed to be saying that Walker no longer belonged to the people of Nashville--with whom he held little in common--but to Fame and the star: to the Phantom of Mary-Ellen he had found in strange land. The same message came through clear three months later in Walker's defense speech at the trial in New Orleans, in which he was acquitted of having violated the neutrality laws:

General Walker, probably, has his own skill as a Court-room orator to thank for coming through this trouble unscathed. When called upon for his defence, he delivered a speech, which is by far the most earnest, determined and well-worded he has yet spoken. Its effect was necessarily marked. In it he distinctly avows his unalterable determination to ride his Nicaraguan hobby so long as he lives and Nicaragua don't run away, or somebody else get it. At the same time, he disavows any intention to violate the laws of the United States, and, in effect, disfranchises himself as an American, virtually throwing off his allegiance to this country, and declaring himself henceforth a Nicaraguan.⁸

⁷Byron, *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, 3.10-12.

⁸"General Walker's Trial at New Orleans," *New York Times*, 6/11/1858, p.4, c.4.

Walker's transformation was complete on January 31, 1859, when he became a Catholic at Mobile, as reported by the *Mobile Mercury* the next morning:

Yesterday afternoon at four o'clock a large concourse of citizens and many strangers visiting our city were attracted to the Catholic Cathedral by a rumor that General Wm. Walker would at that time be initiated into the bosom of the Catholic church. All the surroundings rendered the occasion one of solemn interest. The season of the year and the hour gave to the Cathedral that "dim, religious light" so favorable to serious impressions. The venerable Vicar General, in his gorgeous robes, and the attendants priests, in their sacred vestments, the deep response, the solemn chant, the burning tapers, and vessels of the sanctuary, inspired in the beholders wonder and reverence. But the most striking feature of the scene was General Walker himself--the hero of many fields, the statesman and law giver--kneeling there with the humility of a child, and listening to the instructions of those to whom, it is claimed, God has committed the authority of the Church and the dispensation of his Gospel. We cannot give the details of what occurred, but suffice it to say that General Walker is now a member of the Catholic Church, to whose fold he has been led, we have no doubt, by overwhelming conviction, as he was reared after the straitest sect a Presbyterian, and, we have heard, prepared himself for the services of the pulpit in that denomination.⁹

Of course, everybody knew that Walker became a Catholic because of the law passed in Nicaragua. The Managua *New*

⁹"The Admission of General Walker into the Catholic Church," *New York Herald*, 2/8/1859, p.1, c.2.

York Herald correspondent reported that, upon receipt of the news, Nicaraguans immediately saw it was a sham conversion:

The conversion of Mr. Walker to the Catholic faith has created a great deal of ridicule, and the press has had a chance to pitch into him. Nobody here believes in the overwhelming conviction, but that he has some political object in view; perhaps, as the new constitution requires the President to be a Catholic, he might have turned Catholic for that purpose.¹⁰ ---

That obvious political motivation, however, fails to explain the fact that Walker really became and died a Catholic, as will be seen in Chapter 31. Consequently, additional causes must be sought. In my view, the transformation of Walker, possessed by the Phantom, made him break with his Nashville Presbyterian upbringing and to embrace the Catholic faith of Nicaragua.

Thereupon, after failing once more with the *Philadelphia* expedition, Walker wrote his memoirs. Clearly, his heart had ceased to beat to the laws and institutions of its native land, and to the expressions of approbation on the part of his countrymen, for it belonged to the Phantom. Walker's heart was then ready--as he had announced in 1857 at Wallack's Theater in New York--to lie cold under the sod. Thwarted in all his efforts to conquer the Phantom of Mary-Ellen, he would go meet her in another world, like Manfred had gone to Astarte. Told in a different language, the Hero was prepared to depart.

Closing chapter eight of his Memoirs, the Hero went through the motions of appealing to the South to follow his forlorn cause:

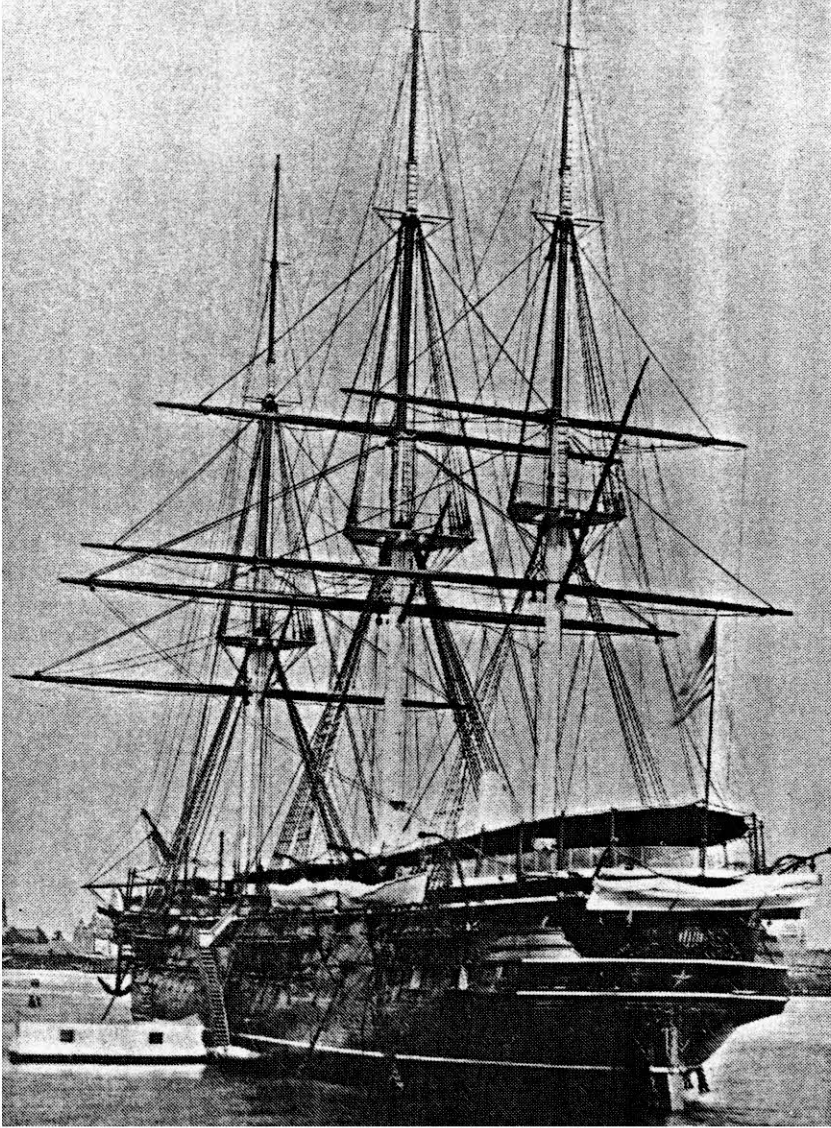
¹⁰"Our Managua Correspondence," *New York Herald*, 6/12/1859, p. 8, c. 1.

Something is due from the South to the memory of the brave dead who repose in the soil of Nicaragua. In defence of slavery these men left their homes, met with calmness and constancy the perils of a tropical climate, and finally yielded up their lives for the interests of the South. . . . These martyrs and confessors in the cause of Southern civilization surely deserve recognition at its hands. . . .

. . . let her, taught by the past, discard the delusions and abstractions with which politicians have agitated her passions without advancing her interests. It is time for slavery to spend its efforts on realities and not beat the air with wanton and ill-advised blows. The true field for the exertion of slavery is in tropical America . . .¹¹

There Walker let out the truth about his original aim for going to Nicaragua in 1855, when he called the Americans who died under his banner on Nicaraguan soil, "martyrs and confessors in the cause of Southern civilization. But in 1860 the South was in fact spending its efforts on the realities of the irrepressible conflict kindled by John Brown at Harper's Ferry, and Southern leaders wisely discarded the delusions of the little gray-eyed man of destiny who beat the air with wanton and ill-advised blows.

¹¹ Walker, *The War*, p. 279.



USS WABASH

"Sunday, Dec. 6, the Wabash, with Commodore Paulding's broad pennant at her fore, hove in sight" (p. 263)



Commodore Hiram Paulding

"Walker wept like a child before the father-figure who chastised him" (p. 264)