

THE AMERICAN CHINAMAN.

AN ADVENTURER'S ROMANTIC CAREER.

SKETCH OF COL. FRANK ANDERSON, FORMERLY WILLIAM WALKER'S LIEUTENANT, NOW SPECIAL POLICE OFFICER IN THE CHINESE QUARTER OF SAN FRANCISCO.

(FROM A STAFF CORRESPONDENT OF THE TRIBUNE.)

SAN FRANCISCO, Aug. 7.—Any account of the Chinese in California would be incomplete without an allusion to Col. Frank Anderson, who is probably the best informed person in San Francisco on the habits, manners, religion, and daily life of the American Chinaman. And if in this land of remarkable characters there is one more remarkable than Anderson, his career ought to be printed in letters as enduring as brass. To use the Colonel's own words, he "began life at a very young age." He is the son of the late Robert Anderson of New-York, one of the oldest printers in the city, who worked at the case with Horace Greeley, and died respected and beloved by a large circle of friends.

Frank Anderson earned his military spurs in the Mexican war, carried them with him into Nicaragua, and cast them off after a hapless career in the Confederacy under Gen. Lee. He enlisted in the famous Col. Jonathan Stevenson's regiment in 1846 for the Mexican war, and was sent to California, where he arrived in March, 1847. He was therefore in at the very start of the gold excitement, which ran through the world like a hurricane in 1849. He had little fighting to do, and at the close of the war, and even before, he dug gold. He tells of the excitements, the privations, the frightful cost of living, the murders, the thefts, the desperate characters that flock to every new country, the low price of gold-dust, the recklessness with which it went in handfuls to the sharpers, and of his trip to New-York, he having been among the first to take to that city practical proofs of the existence of gold in large quantities in California.

His stories, if true, are marvelous, and if false, are none the less dramatic and interesting. A varied career, in which riches and poverty chased each other backward and forward many times, brought Anderson down to 1855, when he became acquainted with Byron Cole and William Walker. They were publishing a newspaper in this city. Cole had a contract with Castillon, President of Nicaragua, to furnish 500 men, ostensibly as emigrants to Nicaragua, but in reality to support by arms the shattered fortunes of Castillon. Each emigrant was to receive 500 acres of land, but it was well understood that they would have an important standing in regulating the Government and profiting thereby. Walker took the contract of Cole, but when they set sail for Nicaragua there were, all told, only 50 men including Walker. The sea voyage, the landing, the arming, and the first battle against the enemy were all graphically described to me by Anderson.

WALKER'S DESPERATE COURAGE.

At Rivas the first important battle occurred, and it was disastrous to Walker and his party, particularly to Anderson, who was shot in the head and leg, and had two ribs broken. Anderson says Walker was the bravest man that a soldier ever followed. Nothing ever excited, daunted, or frightened him. He hesitated at no obstacles, and although he attempted desperate things, such as fighting 1,000 men with 50, he never lost his coolness and self-possession. In Rivas, when surrounded by the whole army of the enemy, who had fired the building in which with his men he had taken refuge, he said, in the most deliberate and moderate tone, "Well, boys, I think it is about time we were getting out of here." Then he burst open the door, and with frightful yells, followed by his shouting comrades, he dashed through the enemy's lines, sweeping about him with his sword, and shooting rapidly with his navy revolver. The natives were no match for such bravery, and Walker escaped, leaving nearly half of his force on the field dead or wounded. Anderson got away with him, although terribly wounded. Those who escaped were more or less used up. Some were wounded, all were hungry and worn with fatigue, and their feet were full of thorns. They were in a swampy forest or jungle, going they knew not whither, and usually fearing they would be overtaken and slaughtered by the natives. It was Walker's purpose to reach Costa Rica, which he thought was 30 miles distant. He knew he would be safe there on neutral ground. But the party were unequal to the journey, and after hobbling along in the desperation of defeat and fear of death for about fifteen miles, the leader struck for the coast. Fortunately for him and his followers, a brig laden with coffee lay to near the shore for water. It was the work of half an hour to capture the brig, and the crew, numbering a half dozen men, were sent ashore to shift for themselves. The half-starved adventurers then sailed away. They landed at San Juan del Sur—Anderson at the point of death and Walker swinging in his hammock and burning with fever. Here they met a man named Girard, who, if I mistake not, keeps, or lately kept, the De Soto House in Bleeker-st., New-York. Girard gave Anderson, whose wounds were full of fly blows, two eggs, a cup of coffee, and a thin soup, which he thinks saved his life.

WALKER'S CONQUEST OF NICARAGUA.

It would be interesting to follow the fortunes of the filibusters. They fought again and again, sometimes as winners, sometimes as losers. Walker had natives under him, but they were as a rule cowardly. However, he finally succeeded, and became master of the country, as though he had been its acknowledged ruler. Anderson got well. An ambassador, Parker H. French, who lost an arm in the Mexican war, was sent to Washington, and Nicaragua was at peace for six months, with Walker at the helm of State. Anderson was sent to the United States to recruit a regiment for Walker's service, and opened an office at No. 3 Broadway, New-York. He said he had 400 or 500 men, and every arrangement made for shipping them on Morgan & Garrison's line to Nicaragua. This firm had agreed to assist Walker in every way possible, and Anderson said that George Law was one of the most active and liberal friends of the Nicaragua undertaking.

To one cause, and only one, does Anderson attribute the failure of Walker. But for this he thinks Walker would have owned and controlled the whole of Central America. That one cause was the opposition of Mr. Vanderbilt. The latter (I tell the story as it was told to me) owed the Nicaraguan Government \$10,000. Walker demanded payment. Mr. Vanderbilt refused to pay, and a quarrel arose between them. Mr. Vanderbilt, as the story goes, fought up all opposition, the steamers of Morgan & Garrison were withdrawn, and the regiment of Col. Anderson remained in New-York. Walker never got his \$10,000, Mr. Vanderbilt monopolized the Nicaraguan trade, and finally Walker lost his life. Although Anderson could not take his regiment he embarked alone as soon as he could to join Walker. Before he reached Nicaragua the story of Walker's failure overtook him. His chief had surrendered and suffered an ignominious death. It was no place for Anderson.

Writing as I do, many days after my conversation with Anderson, I cannot recall the name of the place at which Walker surrendered, but I think it was at Rivas, the scene of two or three battles. A United States man-of-war had received orders from Washington to suppress Walker. Capt. Davis of the navy was in command. He demanded of Walker a surrender. Walker sent back the following noble message, fearing that his native enemy would revenge himself on the inhabitants of the town: "If you will throw the mantle of your protection over the women and children, I will raise the siege and retire." Capt. Davis refused all concessions and demanded a surrender without conditions. Walker was at last forced to comply. The uprising in Nicaragua, the turning over of Walker to his enemies and his tragic death are familiar to the reader. My only purpose in introducing this Nicaraguan matter is to show something of the character and history of Col. Anderson. I need not follow him into the Confederacy as Colonel of the 59th Virginia Regiment, nor dwell at any length on his capture by Gen. Burnside on Roanoke Island, and his imprisonment for five months after the close of the war in Fort Lafayette, nor of the active friendship of A. T. Stewart for him and his family. It is only necessary to mention that as soon as Frank Anderson was free he made quick tracks for California, and here he is. The man who has been worth hundreds of thousands of dollars, whose experiences fill pages in the most dramatic epochs of the country's history, a man of courage, ability, and experience, is poor enough now. What position, think you, reader, he occupies to-day. He is simply a special officer of police, paid by the Chinese residents of San Francisco at the rate of \$50 a month.