

**THE PROUDEST  
CHAPTER IN HIS LIFE**

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The proudest chapter in his life by Thomas H. Talbot

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**THOMAS H. TALBOT**

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*From the Author*

THE PROUDEST

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CHAPTER IN HIS LIFE.

MR. BLAINE'S ADMINISTRATION OF THE STATE  
DEPARTMENT. HIS CONDUCT OF SOUTH  
AMERICAN AFFAIRS.

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BY

THOMAS H. TALBOT,

*(Boston, Massachusetts).*

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## THE PROUDEST CHAPTER IN HIS LIFE.

### I. WHAT MR. BLAINE'S "BEST MEN" SAY: HE BACKS THEM.

SEVERAL of Mr. Blaine's friends have declared what manner of administration they expect his to be. Some of these expressions were made in Mr. Blaine's presence; and all on occasions and by persons who give them weight.

Mr. Rand, of Nevada, who took part in the nomination of Mr. Blaine, speaking of him at Portland, Maine, said:—

"He represented the American idea. The people of this country wanted a man for President who would make this country respected abroad."

Hon. John Sherman, distinguished by long service in the Senate, and still more distinguished as Secretary of the Treasury, said, at Washington:—

"It is said that Blaine is bold and aggressive: that he will obstruct the business interests of the country. I would like to try such a President. He might shake off some of the cobwebs of diplomacy, and invite the attention of mankind to the existence of this country."

General Logan, also of the United States Senate, and now candidate for Vice-President, on the same ticket with Mr. Blaine, said, at Bangor, speaking of him as the candidate of the Republican party:—

"They felt that it would be prudent to take for a candidate a man who understands and appreciates our foreign relations."

And at Ellsworth, in the same State of Maine:—

"The people of this country" "want a man" "who can and will, in proper manner, establish relations with our sister republics of Mexico and South America."

That now venerable statesman, Hannibal Hamlin, the first Republican Vice-President, and of earlier senatorial service than even Mr. Sherman, is reported as saying, at Houlton, that "Blaine was a great statesman, who would introduce a brilliant foreign policy."

Besides these declarations, made in the State where is Mr. Blaine's home, our own member of Congress, Mr. Rice, who so creditably represents the Worcester district, is reported as saying, in Boston, as follows:—

"Are we in favor of the monarchies of Europe controlling the commerce on this American continent? He thought not; and now that we are through with our own little troubles it is time to take our place among the nations of the earth, branch out in a new departure, and assert our principles and have them respected and made effectual. To that policy the Republican party has pledged itself in the nomination of James G. Blaine."

All these expressions, you will note, refer to Mr. Blaine in connection with the administration of our foreign affairs, and my friend, Mr. Rice, serving on the committee on foreign affairs in Congress, his words have especial weight. But all these expressions are significant; they come from Mr. Blaine's political next friends—from his partisan nearest of kin.

And Mr. Blaine himself has encouraged their hopes of his special success in handling our foreign relations. When he had, as he undoubtedly did have, his choice of places in which he would serve the administration of President Garfield, he took the office of Secretary of State, as that in which he could render valuable service to his country and win honorable distinction for himself.

And although his term of service was short, it included matter of great importance. A war, not quite closed, had been going on between some of our sister republics of South America, between Chili on the one side and Peru and Bolivia on the other; and in relation to this matter Mr. Blaine's action was certainly conspicuous. It has commanded, and it deserves, attention, for this reason, besides others: Mr. Blaine himself has passed his judgment upon it; he has reflected upon it and found it entirely to his satisfaction. It seems to him good, very good.

Within a few months after he retired from the State Department he was examined as a witness before a committee of the House of Representatives; and when the questions of the committee were exhausted, and Mr. Blaine was allowed to speak as he would, he closed his testimony with these words:—



"If there is any chapter in my life (associated with a great man that is gone) of which I am proud, and of the complete and absolute vindication of which I feel sure, it is that in connection with the policy laid down by the administration of President Garfield with respect to the South American States."

Here he holds up this piece of his public administration to public admiration. He challenges the criticism of all comers; he invites our special attention. Let us accept his invitation, and consider his action.

## II. THE SITUATION, AS MR. EVARTS MADE AND LEFT IT.

The war between these South American states was swift in its course. On February 12, 1879, the Chilean minister to Bolivia was instructed to demand his passports: and in eight days thereafter the whole territory which had been in dispute between Bolivia and Chili was held by Chilean troops. It was April 5 that war was declared against Peru: and before the middle of October the Peruvian navy was disabled, and Chili was undisputed master of the sea. Before the year ended the constitutional President of Peru was overthrown and a dictator ruled in his stead: Peru's calamities in the war causing this revolution. Under this new régime Peru began to show some signs of life and to put forth more vigorous efforts for national defence. Before the next midwinter, that is, in June, 1880, however, the Chileans had large possessions in Peru; they held the department of Tarapacá, part of that of Moquegna, and had taken the city of Arica.

Our minister to Peru, Judge Christiancy, was now of opinion that "the end cometh," or ought to come soon. He ventured to suggest to the supreme chief of that country that Peru should consent to receive propositions of peace, if Chili should see fit to make any such. Into this effort to bring the war to a close Minister Christiancy entered very actively, this object having the approval of our own government at that time, that is, the administration of President Hayes, with Mr. Evarts as Secretary of State. Mr. Christiancy visited the capital of Chili and had interviews with that government in this matter. At length, with the approval of our government, a conference was brought

about between the belligerents. In October, 1880, the representatives, respectively of Chili, Peru, and Bolivia, met on board the United States Steamer Lackawanna, the ministers of the United States to those countries with them, for a conference in the interests of peace. This was in the Bay of Arica, and is known as the Conference of Arica. Our minister to Chili, Mr. Osborn, acted as chairman, by seniority.

The plenipotentiaries of Chili, at the first meeting, presented their propositions or basis of peace; and its first condition was that Peru should cede to Chili the department of Tarapacá. This cession Peru refused absolutely; and upon this demand and refusal the conference came to nothing: leaving the difficulties which lay beyond this first proposition out of our present consideration.

The war was resumed; and now it was a war with this for one of its causes, publicly avowed and recognized as one of its causes: namely, Chili demanded, and Peru refused, cession of the department of Tarapacá.

War was resumed. The Chilean plenipotentiaries fell back, and the Chilean armies once more moved forwards. Their summer, the opening season of their year, was coming on; and in January, 1881, not long after midsummer, the Chilean forces smote the Peruvian army in front of the city of Lima, so that it fled before their face — completely disbanded; and then they entered and took possession of the capital of Peru. And the precise situation of affairs in this country at this time, and from this time forwards, is set forth in a dispatch from our minister at Lima, under a little later date, that of August 10, 1881. He thus wrote:—

“The military situation is perfectly simple. Peru is effectually conquered. She has no longer any army or navy; she has no soldiers, no ships-of-war, no fortresses, no guns in position or in the field, no munitions of war, no means of buying any, no revenue, no treasury.

“War, as such, is finished so far as she is concerned, and has been for six months.

“The Chileans have captured or destroyed her navy; have occupied and still hold her entire sea-coast, her capital city, and her custom-houses. They have occupied in force the territory of Tarapacá, with its nitrate beds; and they hold the guano deposits, and all the accessible and fertile valleys debouching on the sea.

They collect the duties at all the ports. They sell the nitrates and guanos."

"In the interior there is some show of resistance, but infinitely more show than substance."

Lima fell as the administration in our country of Mr. Hayes was drawing to its close. Mr. Evarts's note to Mr. Osborn, upon receiving information of the occupation of Lima by the Chilians, was the last which he sent to Chili. He wrote:—

"It is naturally to be inferred that the time has come when the Peruvian government would not refuse to treat upon any supportable basis.

"I have, to-day, instructed Mr. Christiancy to press upon the government of Peru, and upon such Chilean authorities as he may have access to, the earnest desire of this government to bring about a peace without delay and upon reasonable and honorable terms, compatible with the true welfare of all the belligerents so as to be lasting. Your own urgent efforts will be exerted in the same direction."

He used those words well knowing that, during its latter stage, the war had been carried on by Chili because Peru had refused a cession of territory; that the capital of Peru had been captured by the Chilians in order to compel such cession; that such cession was a condition without which Chili would not make peace. Yet he makes no protest against this demand. He does not even suggest that Chili should moderate it. On the other hand, he now expects an altered tone on the part of Peru. The time has come, in his opinion, when she will make peace upon any supportable basis.

This is the aspect in which Mr. Evarts left this affair. This is the situation upon which Mr. Blaine entered. If there was, then, any one fact in the relations of this diplomacy between Chili on the one side and Peru and Bolivia on the other side, well known to the State Department of the United States, it was that Chili demanded a cession of territory from each of her adversaries. The State Department had intimation of this early in the war, very early.

That Chili had definite intentions in this direction in the contingency which actually occurred, our minister to Chili, Mr. Osborn, and our ministers to Peru, Mr. Gibbs and Mr.