

TROUBLE CRISIS IN BLAINE'S LIFE.

In 1884 He Said He Was Afraid He Was Going to Be Nominated at Chicago.

DREADED ASSASSINATION.

How He Received the News That Harrison Had Been Chosen.

The News Didn't Interest Him, But Mrs. Blaine Said She Was Sorry It Couldn't Have Been Her Husband—The So-Called Florence Letter—His Language When He Learned the Politicians Did Not Take Him at His Word—He Received Election Returns in His Augusta Home.

It was a time when political crises were no more striking than they are to-day. James G. Blaine, who has been recognized for years as the most prominent American citizen. There is no one in whom the public is more interested.

Blaine was seen in various public positions during the last 15 years. He was with him during the campaign of 1884, and traveled in a special car with him for three months at that time. I saw him at various places in Europe during his long absence from this country prior to the campaign of 1888, which resulted in the election of Mr. Harrison. This recital of some of the incidents in Mr. Blaine's career may be of interest upon his present attitude and may explain to everybody's satisfaction why it is he is resolved never to be a candidate for the Presidency.

His Remarkable Political Judgment. As a politician Mr. Blaine has a remarkably clear vision. When free from the influence of personal interests his political judgment is almost unerring. In the selection of his library I would rather have his judgment on a future political situation than that of any politician. This clearness of vision and absence of prejudice is shown in the political history written by him. This ability to dismiss from his mind all personal prejudice and pass judgment upon men and events dispassionately and calmly is a strong trait in his character.

Forsew His Own Nomination. This was such a peculiar expression that I asked Mr. Blaine what he meant by it. He replied that the drift was clearly going to the left, and that the Republican steps to counteract it by an absolute refusal to permit his name to be used, he would renege the nomination. He foresaw the whole situation with remarkable clearness, and estimated very justly the strength of the other candidates.

The reason why he feared the nomination was his profound belief that the Republican party could not win in the coming campaign. His reasons for that were given with great exactness. There was great distress throughout the country. Times were hard and all eyes were turned toward him, and he had accumulated during years of Republican administration he believed would culminate in that year. Nearly everything that ordinary men would regard as a hindrance to his campaign had been a good thing to him. He had a serene atmosphere of prosperity. He has nearly all his life been battling against the reverse position.

Blaine is very sensitive. In 1870 the extraordinary attack made upon him from the House of Representatives came near causing his death. The stroke during the Cincinnati Convention was indirectly one of the results of the enormous strain he had undergone prior to that time. His enemies then said that the illness was a sham to create sympathy. When Garfield was shot Mr. Blaine stood at his side. That he was a shock from which he never recovered. He is a very sensitive man and he is extremely emotional, and has a dread of physical pain or sickness far beyond that of the ordinary man. For his contentment and happiness he needs bright surroundings, and a serene atmosphere of prosperity. He has nearly all his life been battling against the reverse position.

In the morning with him in the spring of 1884 he spoke of the Presidency and the tragic fate of Garfield and a deepening gray pallor upon his face as if the White House was a place to be dreaded. He spoke also of people who had haunted the neighborhood of his house prior to the Garfield assassination, and it was evident from the burden of his talk that he was impressed with the idea that he himself had had a narrow escape from assassination. When finally he was nominated at Chicago he thought that by his own personal efforts he might be able to counteract the nomination which he saw setting in against the continuation of the Republican party in power. There was one of the reasons why he made such an extraordinary effort at the time. And he regarded it as both impolitic and unwise. There is nothing vindictive in Mr. Blaine's character and it is not true that he considered life altogether too short to be devoted to any system of revenge.

"When a man adopts such a policy," said he, "would never be able to lay long enough to carry out all his projects of retaliation, and I can imagine no misery more complete than that of a fully satisfied revenge."

Under a Tremendous Strain. He stalked almost his life in that campaign. He traveled day in and day out, resting only the seventh day in each week. The strain upon his physical resources was very great. To a man of such sensitive and sensitive temperament the burden was wearing to the last degree. I traveled with Mr. Blaine in the special train from New York to Augusta on elec-

tion day. On the way home Mr. Blaine was very quiet. Everybody on the train was confident of his election. He was not. He foresaw the effect of the Burchard speech. The only incident which seemed to arouse him from his abstraction was when a poor, crazy man mounted the train at Lynn to apply for a Cabinet position under the new administration.

That night at the Blaine house, in August, Mr. Sherman, now Consul General at Liverpool and for many years private secretary to Mr. Blaine, was installed as telegraph operator in the library to receive dispatches. The first reports were very conflicting. There was absolutely nothing to indicate that the election had gone. Mr. Blaine walked up and down in an adjoining room. He seemed to be gifted with clairvoyant powers. Before anything positive had come over the wires he declared his conviction that the election had gone against him and he went up stairs to bed. His collapse was a physical one. The day he was extremely nervous. He left him very weak. He did not rally for a number of days.

Mrs. Blaine Felt the Abuse. I remember at one time during the evening it looked as if the Republicans carried the country that Mrs. Blaine said, with very deep emotion (her eyes filling with tears)—"There is no White House, there is no Presidency that can ever com-

penate me for the horrible suffering of this terrible campaign of persecution and infamous slanders." Mrs. Blaine has been often represented as a cold, ambitious woman. The reverse of this is nearer the truth. A more kind-hearted, trusting woman never lived. Her ambition is that of any woman who wishes to see her husband succeed in what he undertakes. It is not of a personal character. He was a man who was not satisfied unless he had been called upon to endure during the last 15 years any personal ambition, if it had existed, would have been completely smothered.

Blaine's Letter to Chairman Jones. Only on one condition would Mr. Blaine have consented to again become a candidate. This was divulged in a conversation I had with him in Paris, just after he had written the letter of November, 1887, to B. F. Jones, announcing that he would not be a candidate under any circumstances. Mr. Blaine said then, in the course of a private conversation, that he had been elected to the position of chief of the Republican public party by his nomination at Chicago in 1884. That was a position which, after having led his party to defeat, he could not feel justified in retaining only by the unanimous consent of every other candidate. He said that he would have consented to run again if no one of prominence had felt obliged to accept his renomination. But when he saw that candidate after candidate was announced for the next Chicago Convention he resolved to write the letter to Mr. Jones.

He used all the means known to cheap detectives to gather material which could have one effect—that of annoying Mr. Blaine. He was never permitted to enter any place where Mr. Blaine was stopping. Yet, by using money freely, he succeeded in obtaining scraps of information from servants. He would even waylay people going in or coming out of Mr. Blaine's apartments to trick and snare the public, and he would try to obtain every scrap of information that he could get in his hands, and would use it to his advantage. The length to which this was carried was shown during Mr. Blaine's stay upon Mr. Carnegie's estate in Scotland. Here Mr. Carnegie gave such orders to his servants that the man was refused admission to the grounds. But one morning, during the stay of Mr. Blaine at the hotel, a number of servants were discharged, and even the earnest desire of the landlord to protect him could not secure for Mr. Blaine freedom from annoyance when he left the hotel. If he went out for a walk, the spy took at his heels. If he took a cab the spy took on also. His most innocent acts were misconstrued, and made the basis of a constant malignity.

Just Like the Present Situation. I was then directed from New York to go and see Mr. Blaine and the reason he was in earnest in writing the letter of declination, and whether he would persistently refuse to permit his name to be used before the Chicago Convention. His letter, I am told, had had the effect of bringing out so many candidates that none of them at that time were strong. Public opinion in the Republican party was turned so much in his direction that the report came to me from New York that if he would say the word all the other candidates would withdraw and he would be nominated on the first ballot. This seemed to me to indicate the condition of affairs which would justify Mr. Blaine in permitting his name to be used. I traveled to Italy on my snowy morning in

liberation, because it had been in his mind during the year that he could not be a candidate except on the untenable condition named in Paris. He had written the letter in good faith, and he had taken him at his word. For him to change his decision would be tantamount to admitting either that he was fickle minded or that he was seeking to trick and snare the public, which would justify the charges made by his enemies. They had freely asserted that the letter was no inoffensive electioneering device.

There was no Florence Letter. This view of the matter, as given in a cable despatch from Florence, attracted a deal of attention. The declaration made in that conversation was so positive that in a short time Florence became associated in the minds of the public with his refusal to be a candidate. It is a common thing to-day to see Mr. Blaine's formal refusal referred to as "the one indicated in his Florence letter." He wrote no letter to Florence. He did not seek to deepen the impression of that letter. He did not ask me to publish anything concerning it. Neither did he ever give me a report of the conversation that I had with him at that place until after it had been printed in New York. I told him at the close of my last visit that he was free to publish in what he had told me. He said in reply: "That is right. You cannot put it too strongly that I am out of the list of candidates, and that no earthly power can make me change the decision expressed over my signature at Paris."

the editor, in a few moments, became quite cheerful and even exuberant. Mr. Blaine has a great fascination of manner in private conversation when he cares to exercise it. In his happiest vein he fell into a talk upon the campaign, and politely bantered his visitor upon his part in it. His former opponent, however, professed to have a great personal admiration for Mr. Blaine. It was his sense of duty as a party leader, he asserted, which had made him use possibly harsher terms to defeat him. After expressing in flowing phrases his personal admiration for the brilliant qualities of Mr. Blaine, and his opinion that he stood head and shoulders above any one else in his party in ability, the editor added that the day of personal campaigning was over in America. "You need fear nothing from me in the future," he said. "I intend to conduct my journal upon more independent lines and to strip it of all partisan character. I am now rich and free," he continued, with a sweeping gesture, and then enough to save a conscience.

Willful to Receive American News. When I called at Mr. Blaine's hotel, in Washington, which overlooks the Arno, I was met by the porter, who refused to take me to his room. He was, however, ordered upon the subject, and he said "no." He added then with an Italian stolidity and impertinence unusual in men of his place that he was weary of my presence, and that Mr. Blaine only had to have them refused. His scruples, however, were very quickly overcome, and he carried it up. I was the first visitor to Mr. Blaine that received orders upon his arrival. He knew that I was fresh from London, and doubtless surmised that I had the latest American news.

Mr. Blaine returned to Italy only a few weeks before the Chicago Convention of 1888. After leaving Florence he went to Rome, and from then on he was very well and enjoyed the last half of his visit much more than he had expected. He found a year a very long time to remain away. After he had been absent six months he was anxious to return home. He came straight to London from Italy, and there joined a

coaching party organized by Andrew Carnegie to drive from London through the North of Europe and take refuge in Scotland to Mr. Carnegie's place. This time Mr. Blaine was followed by two New York newspaper correspondents. They were, however, gentlemen and representatives of the party, and he treated them with respect and in accordance with the requirements of an honorable pursuit of the newspaper profession. Each of the party had a separate room at the hotel, and the movements of the Carnegie party in a way that could have been objectionable to no one. At the various stopping places Mr. Blaine was interviewed. Interview Mr. Blaine, but he would not talk about American politics. Mr. Carnegie, however, was very talkative, and it was plain to see that he was well satisfied with the matter. He said that he had written his Paris letter without due de-

termining the contest in the Chicago Convention I received a dispatch from New York to see Mr. Blaine at Edinburgh. I arrived there on Monday afternoon, and the Monday when the nomination of Mr. Harrison was made. I saw Mr. Blaine at the Royal McGreggor Hotel and had a brief talk with him. He was in a very good mood. He was seated at a long table which was literally covered with cables and dispatches. I did not go through the form of asking Mr. Blaine again he would refuse to accept the nomination, although the nomination soon came up. He had before him numerous cables from various leaders in the Convention saying that if he would permit his name to be used he would be elected. He was nominated on the first ballot on the following Monday. Mr. Blaine did not appear to be moved in the slightest degree. I had no more to say to him, and he did not appear to be surprised in my question came very promptly.

He seemed to be endowed with the same spirit of prophecy that he had manifested in his house in Lafayette square when he predicted, four years before, the defeat of the Republican party. He said during the conversation that he had been in the mind of the public with his refusal to be a candidate. It is a common thing to-day to see Mr. Blaine's formal refusal referred to as "the one indicated in his Florence letter." He wrote no letter to Florence. He did not seek to deepen the impression of that letter. He did not ask me to publish anything concerning it. Neither did he ever give me a report of the conversation that I had with him at that place until after it had been printed in New York. I told him at the close of my last visit that he was free to publish in what he had told me. He said in reply: "That is right. You cannot put it too strongly that I am out of the list of candidates, and that no earthly power can make me change the decision expressed over my signature at Paris."

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and then I was to turn my attention with lightning like rapidity to photographing the expressions and emotions of Mrs. Blaine.

Proved a Very Tame Assignment. I have an idea that the journalistic chieftain who was then issuing orders by various wires and cables to me in Scotland labored under the impression that Mr. Blaine, or some other member of his family, would be thrown into hysterics or do something that would create a dramatic situation. Perhaps he expected from Mr. Blaine something akin to Cardinal Wolsey's farewell to ambition, but in real life the actual rarely equals the imaginary, and what happened was from the standpoint of sensational journalism disgustingly tame.

The coaching party arrived about five o'clock in the afternoon, and soon after set down to a hearty repast. About half-past six Mr. Blaine and several members of the party were in the hall of the hotel, and the telegraph office closed at the hour that the post office closes. This is generally at 6 o'clock. If, however, you want to have the office open later, this concession can be obtained by paying half a crown (20 cents) an hour to the postmaster. I took occasion to make arrangements of this kind, and if I had not Mr. Blaine would not have returned before the following Tuesday morning. This would not have made any difference to him, as he knew the result in Edinburgh, but it had a pleasant effect upon the word there which could produce but one result, and that was to secure the nomination of the candidate selected by him as the most desirable.

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How Blaine Received the News. I walked straight through the crowd and touched Mr. Blaine upon the arm. He turned and said, "Well!" "I have just received a dispatch announcing Mr. Harrison's nomination at Chicago," Mr. Blaine said nothing for a moment and did not ask to see the dispatch. "A most excellent nomination," he replied in a perfunctory manner, and then, turning, resumed his study of the gateway.

A few moments later I called upon Mrs. Blaine in the drawing room of the little hotel. I found her seated by an open fire reading an American magazine. She listened to the news and then said, with great frankness, "Well, I am sorry, after all, it could not have been Mr. Blaine." Her manner showed relief, however, that the matter was decided.

Mr. Blaine is singularly refined and clean in his taste. He lives very simply. He is never smoked, nor has he been in the habit of using liquor in any form. It is only in very recent years that he takes an occasional glass of wine. He has never committed any excesses. I saw him for three months in the intimacy of the narrow confines of a private car in the campaign of 1884, and I never heard him in that time use a coarse word or make an indelicate allusion, although the visitors who thronged the car every day were often very free-talking politicians.

His Buoyancy of Spirit Saves Him. He is most impressive, if he were always surrounded by the brightness and brilliancy of summer. I do not believe he would be found in bed with illness. His extreme buoyancy of spirit that has

carried him through his many struggles and disappointments. He is thoroughly American in his spirit, and really has greater ideas and nobler aims than any other man of his country than almost any man in it. He has been able to make them felt in his present position in the State Department. There he is especially contented and at home. Mr. Blaine is, however, so great a man that he can afford to be criticized. I think he is often a disappointing man to those who come nearest to him. His mind is so concentrated upon his work, upon his dreams of power and honor for his country, that personalities become small in his sight except as a means to an end. People always object to be considered as mere pawns in a game, however skillful the player. So you are always hearing stories of disappointment from those who have been basked in the light of Mr. Blaine's smiles, or who have been brought for the first time under the charming influence of his engaging manner.

Mr. Blaine is interested in everyone who has a new idea or who can tell him anything he does not know. He has the genius of a natural-born journalist for gathering news and for forging copies of newspaper facts in hand. This explains his geniality, his happy manner in turning people inside out, and it is not his fault if they think he is interested in them every good fortune. In reality, Mr. Blaine cares less for people in a personal sense than almost any man I have ever known who has held a position of great importance. It is simply one of his characteristics of his mental makeup. It is this undercurrent of coldness that has preserved him from breaking down under unusual strains placed upon him.

With him the intellectual is always uppermost. It is the controlling element of his mind. This English understanding of him when nothing is the matter with him, or brings him out of it smiling and buoyant when the physicians are convinced there is no hope for him.

No Question of His Present Attitude. Those who knew his attitude in political affairs when in England understood him questioning what his position must be in the coming campaign. When he dictated the nomination of Mr. Harrison at Chicago and took up the water of the fountain he selected what he regarded as his future life work. The same pride that dictated his letter from Paris would have prevented him from entering any contest against other candidates. Honor would have forbidden his remaining in the Cabinet to work against the renomination of Mr. Harrison. He has the strength and health for the work he has laid out for himself to do in the State Department. He has no reserve, however, for supporting on his own shoulders the burden of a campaign.

He receives nearly everyone who comes to see him with great simplicity. He does not not think it either in accordance with dignity or good sense to reaffirm to every caller who comes to see him his refusal to be a candidate. That he is regarded in Europe as one of the most potent influences for the advancement of the power of this country on this continent is shown by the opposition to him in countries whose interests are threatened by any increase in our growth. No one is so represented and misrepresented and criticized in the English press. His retirement from power would be hailed with delight by every Englishman interested in the vast resources of South American territories.

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placed her saddle horse at my disposal on many occasions. I also received from her some sheet music and a complete score of "Pinaroff." The songs were all old and worn. I was in America, but here they were entirely new, and it was while the lady who often acted as music teacher at the school was going into raptures over "The Old Song Book in the Lane," that I conceived the idea of ascertaining what talent I could muster on the ship in the minstrel line. I first spoke to the Captain, who was much pleased with the idea, and gave me permission to go ashore any time when I was not needed by the mate on the ship. For several days I was busily at work preparing the program, and including my own original songs, and collecting the names of the old and new songs, etc. When I was in doubt as to a line I improvised, and the good people never knew the difference.

I was invited to sing in the church choir, as I was the possessor of a heavy bass voice. I attended regularly every Sunday, also at rehearsal on Friday evening. It was here I was acquainted with a young lady who was gifted with a beautiful soprano voice, which made sad havoc with my heart, and it was with a trembling hand that I drew her arm within mine, after our first rehearsal, to escort her to her home. It was the first time for nearly two years I had been accorded the treatment of a gentleman in my life. It is very strange that we were not walking a few hundred yards from each other, but I never had the opportunity.

The other members of the crew soon found me out, and I was subjected to an unmerciful amount of chaff, but, as I know, it was triflingly promoted by envy, it only added to my enjoyment. At length I had prepared a programme which I thought was within the scope of our means, and one evening we met in an old barn for rehearsal. The programme consisted of a selection from Shakespeare, and the lady music teacher was to officiate at the piano and also favor the audience with two solos. When I unfolded my list of jokes for the opening negro minstrel scene, I was assured by the storekeeper that I must carefully purge it of anything which related to the Bible, and so I was obliged to draw a line through Noah and old "Knee-high-shin," and other Biblical characters.

We wished to obtain the schoolhouse for our use, but as there never had been a "show" in town, the wisecracks were obliged to consult the law in regard to schoolhouses, and finally ascertained that it could not be used for such purposes unless the proceeds of the entertainment were to be devoted to charity. We immediately offered to give said proceeds, if any, to a poor wretched named Usher, whom the Portuguese invariably called "Miss Ashes."

This silenced their scruples, and on the appointed night we made our appearance as burnt-cork artists to a crowded house. The public press was not represented in Monongah, so we could not advertise our "greatest show on earth," but for a fortnight it had been the talk of the town, and on the day in question the settlers from outlying districts came in on horseback, some of them traveling over 30 miles to see their first "show." Not only was every available inch of room inside taken by patrons at 16¢ per head, but outside the windows were boxes upon which scores were perched, and even the large trees were loaded with living fruit, and anxious to get even a peep at what was to them simply marvelous.

As general manager and chief performer I was beginning to get excited. I had not calculated on the sensation we would create, and when I saw the bag of silver which represented the receipts at the door, and thought of the performance we were about to inflict on the unsuspecting public, my nerve nearly failed, and I was braced for a stump speech, interlocator, a clog dance

CHAPTER VIII. WE ANTONISH OUR NATIVES. For several days after our arrival we were busy landing our oil, as we found that it was leaking badly. We had a supernatural old cooper who had outlived his usefulness in his trade, and he was too weak to drive a hoop securely, and many were the anathemas heaped upon his devoted head by the crew while engaged in the laborious work of towing the huge casks ashore, rolling them up through the soft sly, and turning them up and down and up again while he refitted hoops and plugged up leaks. We left a quantity on shore until we called the next season, in order to make room for fresh water in the hold. Our bark was leaking badly, and we improved this opportunity to run her ashore in the mud, and at low tide we found a large hole in the forefoot, where the ends of the planks had started. The carpenter repaired the damage as best he could, and we hoped the trouble was over for the voyage.

A small river empties into the harbor and is navigable for boats, and a mile above the settlement wild peach trees overhung the water so thickly that we could wall down the branches and load our boat in a very short time with the delicious fruit. Wild honey is very plentiful, and the settlers gladly exchanged pure strained honey for an equal amount of molasses of a very inferior quality, as it is an almost unobtainable luxury there. Tobacco is 75¢ per pound—about \$1 in our money—and not plentiful. The climate is perfect, the winter consisting of a rainy season lasting about three months, and frost is rarely, if ever known. I was astonished to find that there was no doctor within 100 miles, a fact which speaks volumes for the climate, and no doubt is an important factor in the longevity of the inhabitants.

I found that the old man had noticed my absence from drunken rows and other diversions to which many of the crew were very partial, and as a consequence I was soon invited to many of the houses, where I found unbounded hospitality was the rule, and spent many pleasant evenings. Among other articles in the box I had received from home by the ship Horatio, was a small telescope and a number of views of Nantucket scenery. Nothing of the kind had ever been seen here, and I kindly believed it was passed all over the place, and finally I presented it to a pretty New Zealand girl who had generously

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