

## BLAINE'S LIFE TRAGEDY.

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### I.

In each individual of the fifteen hundred millions of the human race there is an indefinable something that eludes the photographer, that the painter cannot capture, nor the sculptor reproduce, and that no biographer can record.

This subtle, evasive element, *animula, vagula, blandula*, is the Ego, the personality, that essence and quality which differentiates every man from his fellows and makes him what he is.

Of this being there is no portrait nor any history. It exists only in the minds of others, as the beauty of the landscape is in the eye of the beholder; the eloquence of the oration, the spell of the song, the prosperity of the jest, in the ear of the hearer, and the charm of the woman beloved in the soul of her worshiper.

The mirror cannot tell us the image we leave in the consciousness of others, nor can we communicate to them the impression they make upon our own.

I remember the first time I saw General Grant—the evening before his second inauguration. I had seen innumerable pictures of him, and read countless sketches of his dimensions, bearing, features, and apparel, so that I had his clear delineation in my mind. But the instant I held his hand, looked into his eyes and heard his voice, this disappeared like a dis-

solving view from the screen of a cosmorama, and was succeeded by another which is imperishable, but which art cannot copy nor language portray.

The secret of personal popularity, the power of exciting irrational and vehement devotion to its object, has never been detected. If it is not possessed, it cannot be acquired. It is an art for which there is no text-book nor any teacher. A man may well enough say he will be learned, upright, successful, respected, a politician, or a diplomat, but not that he will be the idol of the people. This is beyond his acumen. The gift is rare. Its beneficiary seldom appears oftener than once in a generation. It is quite independent of endowment and capacity. Calhoun was a greater man than Clay, and Webster was intellectually far the superior of either; but Clay aroused in the masses of his party a passionate fervor of adoration that was like religious fanaticism in its intensity.

When he was defeated, men wept with emotions of irreparable personal sorrow and inconsolable bereavement. His speeches that have come down to us and the achievements of his career offer no solution of the mystery. It is as inexplicable as the sway of Mary Filton, the dark, dwarfish maid of honor, whose faithlessness wrung from Shakespeare's tortured spirit the One Hundred and Twenty-ninth Sonnet, or the surrender of Antony to Cleopatra, for whom the infatuated conqueror thought the world, with its thrones and triumphs, well lost.

As in the case of Clay, posterity will be equally at a loss to comprehend the tremendous sovereignty and dominion of Blaine over the masses of the Republican party, and his contemporaries in every party, with whom he came in personal touch and communication, for the last twenty years of his life.

There were giants in those days, warriors and statesmen, between whom and Blaine in service, capacity, and equipment, there was no comparison. Other reputations may far surpass his in the annals of the Macaulay of our times, but in the power to move and stir and thrill, to inspire uncontrollable enthusiasm, the name of Blaine, like that of Abou Ben Adhem, will lead all the rest. Other leaders were admired, loved, honored, revered, respected; but the sentiment for Blaine was delirium. The mention of his name in the convention was the signal for a cyclone. Applause was a paroxysm. His appearance in a campaign aroused frenzy that was like the madness of intoxication.

In 1876 Blaine was in his perihelion. Barring the three great military chieftains, he was the foremost figure in the Republic. His orbit had hitherto been planetary rather than meteoric. His progress upward was gradual and orderly. His apprenticeship in the Maine Legislature gave him advantage in Congress, where he took his seat December 7, 1863. He spoke seldom, and did not at first impress himself very powerfully upon the House. He was studious, ready, and attentive, and in his second term came into prominence, largely by his altercation with Conkling in the case of Provost-Marshal General Fry, a quarrel whose consequences cost him the Presidency, and ended only with his life.

He was chosen Speaker the day of Grant's first inauguration, and served three terms with great distinction. He was an ideal presiding officer. He had the parliamentary instinct. His acquaintance with rules, practice, and precedents of procedure was accurate. His memory of names, faces, and localities seemed automatic. His mental processes were exceedingly rapid and precise. His decisions of points of order in

debate were usually off-hand and very seldom reversed. His facility in counting a rising vote was phenomenal. Holding the head of the gavel, he swept the circuit of the House with the handle, announcing the result so promptly that it seemed like a feat of legerdemain. He explained that he segregated the members into blocks of ten.

His relations with the House seemed intimate and personal, rather than official, and he regarded himself as its minister, and not its master.

The Forty-fourth Congress was Democratic, and March 3, 1875, Blaine resumed his seat as Representative of the Third District of Maine.

In January, 1876, the bill for general amnesty to all Southerners was brought forward, and Blaine opposed the extension to Jefferson Davis upon the ground that as Commander-in-Chief of the Confederate armies he was directly responsible for the horrors and atrocities of Andersonville.

The debate caused intense interest and excitement North and South, and through the efforts of Blaine and Garfield amnesty was defeated.

Blaine said: "I except Jefferson Davis on the ground that he was the author, knowingly, deliberately, guiltily, and willfully of the gigantic murders and crimes at Andersonville. I have taken occasion to read some of the historic cruelties of the world. I have read over the details of those atrocious murders of the Duke of Alva in the Low Countries, which are always mentioned with a thrill of horror throughout Christendom. I have read the details of the massacre of Saint Bartholomew, that stands out in history as one of the atrocities beyond imagination. I have read anew the horrors untold and unimaginable of the Spanish Inquisition. And I here,

before God, measuring my words, knowing their full extent and import, declare that neither the deeds of the Duke of Alva in the Low Countries, nor the massacre of Saint Bartholomew, nor the thumbscrews and engines of torture of the Spanish Inquisition, begin to compare in atrocity with the hideous crimes of Andersonville."

The Southern Democracy never forgave this utterance.

As the end of Grant's second term drew near the contest for the succession became animated.

Conkling was the Administration candidate, and strangely enough, as it seems in the light of events, he was the favorite of the gamblers and book-makers, and had "the hurrah" at Washington. Those best informed regarded Morton as the strongest candidate. He was aggressively radical, and relied largely upon the support of the South, which sent delegates, but cast no votes.

After the Andersonville debate, Blaine developed phenomenal strength both in New England and the West. Many States hitherto supposed to be safe for other candidates trod on each other's heels in their eagerness to choose Blaine delegations. Early in April the managers of "the machine" saw with rage and consternation that Blaine would start with more votes than Morton and Conkling combined, and unless the movement in his favor was checked, he would stampede the convention.

Back-firing is a favorite method of arresting the spread of a conflagration. It is not unknown in politics.

Vague, intangible rumors affecting Blaine's personal and official integrity were set afloat at Indianapolis and other places in the West, and repeated in New York. It was alleged in obscure journals catalogued as Republican that as Speaker of

the House he had used his power in favor of certain Western railroads, from which he had received vast sums in money, stock, and bonds as compensation.

It was not difficult, after the Jeff Davis episode, to induce a Democratic House to appoint a committee to investigate these accusations; but Blaine for the time baffled the conspirators by a personal statement on the floor April 24, 1876.

On May 2d a resolution was introduced to investigate an alleged purchase by the Union Pacific Railway, at a price much greater than their actual value, of certain bonds of the Little Rock and Fort Smith Railroad Company, of which it was whispered Blaine was the owner.

He insisted upon prompt and immediate examination of the charges, but his enemies were in no hurry. They wanted the black cloud of distrust and suspicion to darken the splendor of his fame and cast its ominous shadow over the convention.

It was an epoch of sensations. The country was startled one morning by the story that Mulligan, a confidential clerk of Blaine's Boston broker, had arrived in Washington with a bundle of Blaine's letters, purloined from the files, showing his relations with the railroad companies and conclusively establishing his guilt.

Suddenly the announcement was made that Blaine, after offering to Mulligan a place in the foreign service, and threatening to commit suicide, had obtained possession of the letters by an act of bad faith, and that they would not appear in evidence.

The whole transaction was mysterious, and it may as well be said here as elsewhere that its effect on Blaine was distinctly injurious. He never recovered from it. It left a stain, vague and faint, but indelible.

The correspondence, under the most charitable interpretation, betrayed indiscretion, if no more, that came near the frontier of culpability. It furnished his enemies with ammunition to which his supporters interposed no armor save silence.

But Blaine was fertile in resources and a born tragedian. Conscious that it would be fatal to rest under the imputation that he had secured the letters in order to stifle damaging disclosures, he decided on a *coup de theatre*, rose Monday morning, June 5th to a question of privilege, and hurled defiance at his foes.

He stood on a narrow neck of land.

The convention at Cincinnati was to assemble one week from the following Wednesday. His friends were perturbed and restless. His rivals sneered. His enemies were noisily exultant. The Democratic majority was eager to convict. The stake was enormous. The situation was dramatic. He had the Nation for his audience. When he began, there was a silence deep as death, and the boldest held his breath for a while.

Reciting the resolution, he briefly reviewed its objects and purposes and the methods of his accusers. He denied the power of the House to compel the production of his private correspondence, and particularly the letters purloined by Mulligan.

He affirmed his readiness for any extremity of contest in defense of his sacred right, and then added, with immense emphasis: "And while I am so, I am not afraid to show the letters. Thank God Almighty, I am not ashamed to show them! There they are"—holding a packet at arm's length above his head. "There is the very original package. And with some sense of humiliation, with a mortification I do not attempt to conceal, with a sense of the outrage which I think

any man in my position would feel, I invite the confidence of forty-four millions of my countrymen while I read those letters from this desk."

They were not pleasant reading, but Blaine had a thunderbolt in reserve. At the close, turning to the chairman of the committee having the investigation in charge, after a preliminary colloquy, Blaine said:

"I tell the gentleman from Kentucky now, and I am prepared to state to this House, that at eight o'clock last Thursday morning, or thereabouts, the gentleman from Kentucky received and receipted for a message addressed to him from Josiah Caldwell, in London, completely and absolutely exonerating me from these accusations, and that he has suppressed it!"

This put Proctor Knott in a hole. He could not deny that he had received a message, because he had incautiously shown it to a Democratic friend, who in some way conveyed the information to Blaine, and thus gave him the opportunity of turning the tables upon his adversaries by showing that their object was not justice, but political persecution.

Knott claimed that this pretended cable was bogus, a fake made up this side of the Atlantic, and palmed off on the committee for this specific use.

There was room for suspicion, but Blaine won. It was an unprecedented forensic triumph, although far enough from a moral vindication. The people like nerve, sand, and intrepidity, and attach small importance to political indictments. Their sympathies go out to the man who fights against desperate odds and succeeds.

There have been many turbulent and disorderly episodes in the House of Representatives, but no one who witnessed

this gladiatorial combat will ever forget the uproar, the uncontrollable frenzy and tumultuous thunder of that historic day. Every one seemed to have eaten of the insane root that takes the reason prisoner. A yelling mob of trespassers broke past the guards and turned the floor into a bedlam. The crowded galleries howled with derision at the puny efforts of the Chair to enforce the rules and preserve order. It would have been as easy for Nero to keep silence in the Coliseum when the Christians were fed to the lions.

The Sunday morning in Washington preceding the Cincinnati convention was suffocatingly still, hot, and breathless.

I was sitting by the window in my apartments at 1411 H Street when Blaine, with his wife and Miss Dodge ("Gail Hamilton"), walked slowly eastward on their way to the Congregational Church at the corner of Tenth and G Streets. He was a little in advance of the ladies, and was sunken, apparently, in the profoundest reverie. He appeared heavily dressed for the oppressive day, and one hand was thrust in the breast of his closely buttoned frock coat.

His head hung heavily forward, and his gaze seemed bent vacantly on the ground at his feet. His countenance had a deadly pallor, and I was hardly surprised to hear a few moments afterward that he had fallen unconscious in the vestibule while entering the church, and had been taken home apparently dying.

Later in the day I went around to his house. He was lying on a bed, partly undressed, and still unconscious. His eyes were fixed, and he breathed stertorously at laborious intervals. I never expected to see him alive again.

The following Friday evening, going down Fourteenth Street after an early dinner with a friend on Highland Ter-

race, I saw an immense throng reading the bulletins before the telegraph office on the Avenue. The announcement of Wheeler's nomination as Vice-President had just been chalked on the board, and was received with silence that could be felt.

After a contest between such giants as Blaine, Morton, Conkling, and Bristow, the outcome of Hayes and Wheeler seemed disrespectful, and like an affront, as when the star performers in an opera are replaced by understudies, and the audience clamor around the box office and want their money back. It was a most lame and impotent conclusion. The political mountain had been in labor and brought forth two mice.

Suddenly the crowd turned simultaneously eastward with eager gestures. The air was dense with hats. Convulsive, volcanic cries and shoutings broke out, exulting and sympathetic, but with a tone of vengeance and rage penetrating the uproar, like the savage acclamation which welcomes the victim of injustice escaping from cruel oppressors.

Looking for the cynosure of these neighboring eyes, I saw on the back seat of an open barouche, with Secretary Fish by his side, slowly driving up the Avenue, Blaine, bareheaded, bowing his acknowledgments to the salutations of the multitude that dispersed as the carriage turned up Fifteenth Street and disappeared. It was like one risen from the dead.

This sunstroke, or physical collapse, whatever it was, unquestionably had a depressing effect upon Blaine's prospects at Cincinnati. His rivals industriously spread the report that he was stricken with apoplexy, and even if the termination were not fatal, his bodily and mental faculties would be permanently impaired.

Robust health, capacity to endure strain, tough fibre and, a placid temperament are indispensable requisites for a Presidential candidate. The White House is no place for a valetudinarian, a dyspeptic, or a nervous invalid. The importunate selfishness of place-hunters, the inconsiderate thoughtlessness of village idols who wish to pay their respects, of visitors who desire to shake hands, added to the legitimate demands of senators, representatives, and officials, together with the requirements of public duties, would drive a weakling to Saint Elizabeth's or the grave. Like a lawyer, however bad his conscience may be, the President must have a good stomach.

His friends spared no effort to counteract this unforeseen calamity. And their solicitude was partially allayed by this telegram, which he sent from his sick-chamber:

"I am entirely convalescent. Suffering only from physical weakness. Impress upon my friends the great depth of gratitude I feel for the unparalleled steadfastness with which they have adhered to me in my hour of trial."

The convention met Wednesday, June 14th. The next day the roll of States was called alphabetically for nominations.

Connecticut presented Marshall Jewell, a majolica statesman in pumps and ruffles, with a porcelain smile, whom Grant had summarily dismissed from his Cabinet for disloyalty to his chief.

Richard W. Thompson—born the same year as Lincoln and a Whig member of Congress during the Presidency of John Tyler, the apostate—named Morton, of Indiana, the Danton of Republicanism; a sombre giant, paralyzed below his hips, whose physical disability prevented the opponents of Blaine from uniting on him as their candidate.

Kentucky nominated Bristow, who had secretly conspired with the enemies of Grant, while Secretary of the Treasury under him, and became, therefore, the logical representative of the Superior Persons who advocate "sweetness and light" in politics.

Robert G. Ingersoll, then of Illinois, presented Blaine as the "Plumed Knight," a ridiculous *sobriquet*, suggestive of the circus and the theatre, in a speech otherwise of remarkable power, which first gave the great agnostic national renown. Woodford, of New York, nominated Conkling, whose desire for revenge knew no satiety.

Ohio named Hayes, on whom the opponents of Blaine united on the seventh ballot; and Pennsylvania nominated Hartranft as a "favorite son," to enable Cameron to throw the delegation to Bristow or Hayes, though Blaine received 30 of the 58 at the end.

Friday the convention proceeded to vote. Six ballots were taken, 378 being necessary for choice. Blaine led in each, his tally being 285, 296, 293, 292, 286, 308. In the sixth ballot Morton and Conkling were out. It was evident the seventh ballot would be decisive by a combination either on Bristow or Hayes.

Blaine was sitting in the library of his house on Fifteenth Street in Washington at this hour. A telegraph instrument was on the table, with his secretary at the key. He was just recovering from the stroke that prostrated him Sunday morning. As the details of the seventh ballot came in, State after State, the tension was extreme. Blaine alone seemed self-possessed and unmoved.

Arkansas transferred her vote from Morton to Blaine. The Morton votes from Florida were also given to him. The

chances all seemed in Blaine's favor till Indiana was reached, when the chairman of the delegation withdrew the name of Morton and cast 25 votes for Hayes and 5 for Bristow. When Kentucky was called, Harlan withdrew the name of Bristow and cast 27 votes for Hayes, who was nominated, receiving 384, to 351 for Blaine.

Blaine made one suppressive exclamation of surprise, and immediately wrote this dispatch to Governor Hayes:

"I offer you my sincerest congratulations on your nomination. It will be my highest pleasure as well as my first political duty to do the utmost in my power to promote your election. The earliest moments of my returning and confirmed health will be devoted to securing you as large a vote in Maine as she would have given for myself."

He spoke in twelve States. His reception was that of a victor, but he showed great fatigue, and his health was unequal to the strain.

In fact, Blaine was a hypochondriac. His life was a hand-to-hand contest with imaginary diseases, which is itself a disease, due, perhaps, to some hereditary or pre-natal lesion, and hence obscure and fatal. In his speaking tours he soon grew hoarse and husky, and became depressed.

His colleague, Hannibal Hamlin, the former Vice-President, told me there had never been a time since he had been acquainted with Blaine when, if three friends were to meet him one after the other in the morning, on his way down town, and greet him successively with the exclamation "what is the matter? How ill you look!" that, tho' perfectly well when he started, he would not in return home, go to bed, and send for the doctor. no doubt humorous exaggeration, but it illustrated his attitude toward himself, which was one of brooding and forboding introspection.

As early as 1867 he visited Europe, mainly to consult an eminent French physician at Paris about some symptoms that gave him alarm; but, after examination, the doctor laughed at him and gave him a prescription, at which every one else laughed when Blaine told the story.

Soon after the convention (July 19, 1876), Blaine was appointed United States senator *vice* Morrill, who became Secretary of the Treasury under Grant. When the Legislature met, he was elected for the unexpired term, and for the full term ending March 4, 1883.

He was forty-six, and his powers were at their meridian. He was above the middle height, of large frame and heavy proportions, but extremely agile and alert in his carriage, with an erect and martial bearing. The deadly pallor of his complexion was framed in iron gray hair and beard, always carefully trimmed. His large mouth was set diagonally from left to right. His nose was heavy, bulbous, and pendulous; his eyes mirthful and inquisitive, with heavy lids drooping exteriorly, and bulging saes beneath.

His attire was always costly and in the mode, but not expressed in fancy. His voice, though neither rich nor well-modulated, had resonance and penetration. His manners were affable, familiar, and cordial, with dignified gravity enough on occasion. In conversation he was vivacious and good humored rather than witty, with great fondness for clean jokes, apt anecdotes, odd incidents and reminiscences, and pertinent illustrations. He was inclined to be noisy and boisterous if time served, with much laughter. He liked to "jolly" his intimates, but was domestic rather than convivial in his habits.

His chief mistakes came from desire for money, which he wanted not for himself, but for the power it brings. He was

liberal in his way of life, but not ostentatious, and his table was always spread for hospitality.

He studied the arts of the politician assiduously: the recognition of unimportant men seldom seen, small personal attentions to rustics; and was a most inveterate advertiser.

He had no fear of traditions, and took an active part in the business of the Senate from the first. He had a great nose for majorities, was a good guesser, and instinctively took the popular side of open questions.

The Senate has always been controlled by lawyers, who are the aristocratic class in the United States, and Blaine was at a disadvantage because he did not belong to the profession. The law lords were disposed to disparage and flout him, but he was disrespectful to the verge of irreverence.

"Does the Senator from Maine think I am an idjit [idiot]?" roared Thurman, in reply to an interrogatory Blaine put to him one day in the Pacific Railroad debate.

"Well," bellowed Blaine, "that depends entirely on the answer you make to my question." Which gave "the merry ha-ha" to the old Roman.

He spoke at length on silver, Chinese exclusion, the Electoral Commission, protection and the American marine, and troops at the polls.

This paragraph is a good illustration of his methods in debate. Replying to the charge that soldiers were used to intimidate Southern Democratic voters, he said:

"The entire South had 1,155 soldiers to overrun, oppress, and destroy the liberties of 15,000,000 people. In the Southern States there are 1,203 counties. If you distribute the soldiers, there is not quite one for each county. If you distribute them territorially, there is one for every 700 square miles of territory.

So that if you make a territorial distribution, I would remind the honorable Senator from Delaware, if I saw him in his seat, that the quota for his State would be three: 'One ragged sergeant and two abreast,' as the old song has it, is the force ready to destroy the liberties of Delaware."

His speeches were like reading editorials rather than orations. He spoke with extreme rapidity and violent gestures, but never stopped over. He was brilliant and interesting, but never sank into eloquence, as that word goes.

Even his eulogy on Garfield, perhaps his most ambitious effort, reads like an essay rather than a panegyric.

Without ascribing to Blaine the absence of convictions, it is not unjust to catalogue him as an opportunist. He was not so much a student as a specialist.

He wrote little and read less, but devoured newspapers omnivorously. His intellectual efforts were what the doctors call *pro re nata*.

But in running debate, which is like a duel with swords, Blaine was the Cyrano de Bergerac of his generation. Imperturbable, versatile, confident, never disconcerted, at the last line he hit.

## II.

Blaine and I were next-door neighbors in the Senate, my desk being at his left, then Hamlin, and then Conkling in the last seat of the middle row east of the gangway.

Blaine's conduct in the preliminary movements of the campaign of 1880 was mysterious and inexplicable. He remained the popular favorite, but his enemies were, if possi-

ble, more malignant and relentless than at any previous time in his career.

Morton, his great competitor in the West in 1876, was dead; but Conkling, Sherman, Logan, Cameron, Edmunds, and others, while they had no love for one another, were still united by the common bond of hatred for Blaine. He was unmistakably the enthusiastic choice of nine out of ten Republicans, black and white, North and South; but the knowledge of his popularity only whetted the rage of his foes, and gave edge to their determination to spare nothing, foul or fair, for his destruction.

These astute political veterans saw clearly that a crisis had come in which the ordinary regulation tactics would fail. Blaine, having no rival in the affections of his party, it became necessary, therefore, to discover or invent a competitor. It was not easy.

Various "favorite sons" were brought forward, only to be received with indifference, disdain, or derision. General Sherman was approached, but he refused peremptorily, almost contemptuously, to permit his name to be used.

There was one gigantic figure which had grown still more colossal in the interim since the decree of the Electoral Commission. General Grant's last term had been prolific in scandal that had nearly wrecked his party, but the people saw that rogues and knaves had imposed on the simplicity and inexperience of a generous nature, and the memory of his errors was obliterated by gratitude for the vast services he had rendered the Republic.

He was at this time in the Orient on his tour around the world, and as the nations through which he traveled rose up and stood uncovered while he passed by, the American people obtained a new conception of the grandeur of his achievements

and the immortality of his fame. It seemed not so much the judgment of contemporaries as the verdict of posterity.

But there was no popular desire to give him a third term. No emergency existed which rendered even his great qualities indispensable. The traditions and precedents of our history were against it. It was an innovation that verged on revolution; and yet, if Grant wanted it, many were willing that he should have it in further acknowledgment of the obligation that could never be fully acquitted.

Whether General Grant was himself ambitious for another term, and aware of the movement in his favor, I never knew. My belief is that the opponents of Blaine, looking over the field, concluded that Grant was the only name with which they could conjure, and put him forward without his knowledge, trusting to the agitation and excitement of his return to the United States to make it appear that he was the popular choice and overwhelm all opposition.

The New York papers, one day while the contest was raging, contained the account of Grant's reception in Siam. Conkling read to me with much dramatic effect the General's reply to the King, and commented upon Grant's remarkable intellectual development in later years.

As the occasion seemed opportune, I asked him whether Grant knew anything about the movement going on to put him in nomination for a third term. Conkling replied with much emphasis that he had never had a word of conversation or a line of correspondence with him on the subject, and that the movement, so far as he knew, was a spontaneous demand of the people. Logan said substantially the same thing.

But notwithstanding this popular demand, Cameron, who was in absolute control of the Republican "machine" in Penn-

sylvania, had a convention called many weeks earlier than customary, and secured the election of a Grant delegation, though the Republicans of that State were practically solid for Blaine.

Logan did the same in Illinois, another Blaine State, in May. In the meantime, Sherman, who was Secretary of the Treasury, secured Ohio, and by his agents picked up many negro delegates from the Southern States; while Edmunds, in New England, got Vermont and Massachusetts.

I asked Blaine how he expected to win while his enemies were packing conventions and setting up hostile delegations in his territory. He did not appear to be disturbed, and thought the people would take care of the convention at last.

The day of the nomination (Tuesday, June 8th) the Senate met at eleven, and considered the Calendar and the Sundry Civil Appropriation Bill, but the proceedings were languid and perfunctory.

Blaine took part in the debate occasionally, but betrayed no agitation. The bulletins were brought into the chamber every few minutes, in duplicate, one for the Vice-President and the other for Blaine. To the groups that gathered around he exhibited no concern. He strolled in the intervals about the chamber and in and out of the corridors, chatting freely about the incidents of the convention brought over the wire.

Conkling's "Appomattox and its famous apple-tree," and his quotation from Raleigh, "The shallows murmur, but the deeps are dumb," were much approved.

When the details of the thirty-fifth ballot were brought to his desk, between two and three P. M., he studied them attentively a moment, and then said: "Garfield will be nominated on the next ballot."

About four o'clock the announcement of Garfield's nomination came. Blaine showed no emotion, and after a brief silence, said to me: "I did not expect the nomination. The combination was too strong for my friends to overcome. But there is one thing I have done."

"What is that?" I inquired.

He answered: "I have put an end forever to the third-term idea in this country."

Then he took part in the discussion of an item in the Appropriation Bill concerning the census in Rhode Island. Senator Beck, of Kentucky, good naturedly twitted him with his defeat, which he thought had thrown him into ill humor; but Blaine took no notice of the gibe, and made no sign.

Although he accepted Garfield's offer of the place in a characteristically gushing and indiscreet letter of December 20, 1880, Blaine was in doubt, or to his intimates professed to be, about the policy of entering the Cabinet as Secretary of State. The Senate was congenial to him, and he felt that his incumbency was for life if he so desired.

Great as were the prerogatives of the premiership, it was a subordinate position, whose term must be brief and might be uncertain. He seemed to halt and hesitate to the end. Just before leaving the Senate Chamber for the last time, he looked around on the familiar scene and the familiar faces with an aspect of pathetic regret. "Well," he said, "good-bye; I am going; but I have arranged so that I can come back here whenever I want to."

Blaine's evil genius seemed for the moment to be placated. Though he had twice failed in his efforts to reach the Presidency, he had riches, honor, and power.

He was still young, as years count in great careers. After two terms in Garfield's Cabinet, which he anticipated, he might reasonably reckon on the succession, and he would then be but fifty-eight. So, facing eastward on Dupont Circle, he built a noble place, which was to be the scene of his stately triumphs, his diplomatic functions, and his political hospitalities.

But Fate's truce was brief and hollow. Destiny, the mighty magician, sinister and sardonic, touched the trigger of the assassin's pistol, and throne, crown, and sceptre vanished as in the vision of Macbeth on the blasted heath.

The nomination of Arthur was a sop to the forces led by Conkling to salve their humiliation at the defeat of Grant. It was a placebo to New York and the stalwarts. Even in "the stuff that dreams are made of," there was no thought that he would be President. But, by the legerdemain of doom, Guitcau reinstated the vanquished. Blaine ceased to be an actor in the drama, and became a spectator again.

The accession of Arthur gave that urbane and imperturbable politician an opportunity to which he was not equal. He was meshed in complications he could not unravel.

He trod the paths of his feet with marvelous circumspection, but the labyrinth was too intricate, and he lost the clue. His personal bearing was princely and incomparable. His presence was majestic, and his manners were so engaging that no one left him after even the briefest interview without a sentiment of personal regard.

Transferred suddenly from the arena of municipal politics, where he was a most successful manager, he was brought face to face with an immense exigency to which parochial

maxims were not applicable. He was not familiar with the strange stories of the death of kings.

His motives were high, but he did not discern that the factions he sought to unite were irreconcilable. As the direct beneficiary of the heinous crime of an assassin, he was to some an object of suspicion, to others, of aversion.

Garfield's Cabinet was an incongruous mosaic, hastily thrown together, incapable of cohesion, and certain to disintegrate. Arthur could not peremptorily remove Garfield's ministers without arousing resentment; but their relations soon became so strained that after a few weeks, to relieve the President from further embarrassment, they resigned.

In filling their places Arthur exhibited singular infirmity. Blaine was succeeded by the mild and inoffensive Frelinghuysen. Lincoln, *in loco parentis*, was not disturbed. Allison, of Iowa, had declined two portfolios in Garfield's Cabinet, preferring to remain in the Senate, but, to save the honors for his constituency, persuaded his colleague, Governor Kirkwood, to take the position of Secretary of the Interior. He and Naval Secretary Hunt remained a little longer than their associates, but were followed in April by Teller, of Colorado, and Chandler, of New Hampshire.

James, Postmaster-General, a representative of the "better element" in New York, was succeeded by the amiable but obsolete Howe, of Wisconsin, who died two years later, and was followed by Gresham and Frank Hatton before the term ended. To the office of Attorney-General came Benjamin H. Brewster, of Philadelphia, the frightful distortion and disfigurement of whose features were forgotten in the grace of his manners and the charm of his conversation.

In the choice of these successors, had Arthur, while exasperating Garfield's friends, propitiated Conkling, his course would have been explicable; but he alienated both. The defeat of Judge Folger, of New York (who succeeded Windom in the Treasury), as the Republican candidate for Governor of that State three years afterward, by Grover Cleveland, by 200,000 majority, was the Cossack's answer.

There was a Washington's birthday luncheon February 22, 1884, at General McKee Dunn's, Lanier Place, Washington, just east of Capitol Park, at which the most amusing incident was the very obvious chagrin of a rural statesman who appeared in evening dress among a throng arrayed in morning costume.

Blaine was one of the guests. I had not met him before during the winter. I was busy in the Senate, and he was occupied with his "Twenty Years in Congress," and with social afternoon recreations.

I asked him how his Presidential canvass was going on.

He said he had received above seven thousand letters from correspondents in every State, asking his wishes and plans and proffering help, to no one of which had he replied.

He seemed to regard the outlook for Republican success as exceedingly dubious on account of the factions in New York and Ohio and the record of the party in Congress. He said he neither desired nor expected the nomination, adding, however, with great emphasis and intensity: "But I don't intend that man in the White House shall have it!"

June 6, 1884, on the fourth ballot and the fourth day of the convention at Chicago, Blaine was nominated by 541, to 207 for Arthur, and 41 for Edmunds.

The campaign that followed was the most feculent and loathsome in our records. It was a carnival of revolting filth and indecent defamation: the *cloaca maxima* of American politics.

To his extraordinary power of attracting friends, Blaine added an inexhaustible capacity for making enemies. He had an indiscreet pugnacity, and could not resist the temptation to bump and thump and jolt an adversary, whether in his own party or on the other side. The Democracy hated him for his attack on Davis and the South eight years before. Grant bore him no good-will. Conkling's vengeance was eternal. Arthur would have been more than human had he felt no resentment for Blaine's avowed hostility and contempt.

The day of their revenge had come. His foes—and they were many among Republicans as well as among Democrats—adopted the apothegm of Beaumarchais:

"Calumniate! Calumniate! Something will always stick."

Caricature reinforced lampoon and pasquinade. The terrible "Tattooed Man," perhaps the most cruel and brutal, as it certainly was the most effective cartoon of our time, kept constantly before the people the vague assault upon his integrity, which was one of the most formidable weapons of his opponents.

He was abstemious in his habits, correct in his life, and a church member, but he never had the unreserved confidence of the moral element of the country.

Conscious of the desperate malignity of the coalition against him, Blaine conducted his campaign with immense energy. Many Republican papers deserted him and openly supported Cleveland. Others were lukewarm, and carped

and sniveled, but he "flew an eagle's flight, bold and forth on." His health was precarious and the strain enormous.

With a physician and a private car, he traveled North and West, arousing prodigious enthusiasm, like a conqueror returning from battle. Hope elevated and joy brightened his crest.

Had he remained on his tour as originally planned, it seems now he might have won; but New York was doubtful, and its electoral vote would decide the result. A vast procession of merchants and representative business men, marching with Cleveland banners many hours to the refrain,

"Dear Mr. Fisher: Burn, burn, burn this letter!"

terrified the Republican managers, who thought some counter-demonstration indispensable, and Blaine consented to attend a banquet October 29th. At ten o'clock the morning of that day a delegation of clergymen called on him at the Fifty Avenue Hotel with assurances of their sympathy and support. The spokesman was the Rev. Dr. Burchard, who said in the course of his improvised remarks: "We are Republicans, and don't propose to leave our party and identify ourselves with the party whose antecedents have been Rum, Romanism, and Rebellion!"

How many votes this apt alliteration alienated will never be known; but after several days of suspicious delay subsequent to the election, the Democratic officials announced that Cleveland had carried the State by 1,047 votes. That they falsified the returns, gave Butler's vote to Cleveland, and stole the State from Blaine is beyond reasonable doubt.

After his defeat, Blaine finished his "Twenty Years in Congress," and in 1887 went to Europe. He wrote from Paris, in

November, to the chairman of the National Committee, that under no circumstances would he be a candidate again.

His withdrawal turned the contest of 1888 into a free-for-all scrub race. Hawley, Gresham, Harrison, Allison, Alger, Depew, Sherman, Fidler, Rusk, Ingalls, Phelps, Lincoln, and McKinley received votes on the first ballot, June 28th, Sherman being in the lead with 220. Blaine cabled from Edinburgh, June 24th, requesting his friends to refrain from voting for him.

Harrison was nominated and elected, and Blaine entered his Cabinet as Secretary of State, to complete the work interrupted by the death of Garfield. But his strength was not equal to the task. While in Italy the previous year, he had been stricken with paralysis, and his physical and mental powers never regained their vigor.

He became irregular in his attendance at the department, and performed its routine duties at his house, one of the famous mansions of Washington, shadowed by the memory of many tragedies. Its first occupant was Secretary Spencer, whose son was hanged at sea for mutiny. At its door Philip Barton Key was shot by General Sickles. In one of its upper chambers Secretary Seward was assaulted by Payne the night of Lincoln's assassination, and nearly stabbed to death. Secretary Belknap was its next tenant, and death was his guest.

When Blaine entered this abode in 1889, his three sons and three daughters were living. January 15, 1890, the eldest son, Walker, a young man of great promise, the prop and staff of his father, died.

A little more than two weeks later, February 2d, the eldest daughter, wife of Colonel Coppinger, died under circumstances peculiarly tragic and distressing. June 18, 1892, his second

son, Emmons, died in Chicago from exposure and over-exertion to secure his father's nomination at Minneapolis. His sorrows came not as single spies, but in battalions.

There was no cordiality between Harrison and Blaine. The Secretary had been a confirmed invalid since 1887, and was unable to bear the burdens of his great office. Much of the work of the Department of State for which Blaine refused credit was performed by the President, who had refused, it was rumored, to appoint Walker Blaine First Assistant Secretary and to nominate Colonel Coppinger as brigadier-general over many seniors in the service.

Blaine's friends characterized Harrison as a scorpion, and the situation became tense as the time for nominating his successor drew nigh. Harrison was a candidate for a second term, and Blaine stated publicly that he was not in the field. His declaration was superfluous, for it was an open secret that he was mortally ill and incapable of the fatigue and stress of a campaign.

Suddenly yielding to what sinister suggestion, what evil importunity, can never be known, at the last moment, the afternoon of Saturday, June 4th, he resigned from the Cabinet.

The convention at Minneapolis was to meet the following Tuesday, and Blaine's action "could only mean one thing": an open alliance with the enemies of the President. He immediately left Washington for Maine, tarrying at Young's Hotel in Boston to receive bulletins from the convention.

On the fourth day, June 10th, he was put in nomination by Senator Wolcott, of Colorado.

The scene was indescribably pathetic.

All knew he was at the threshold of eternity, but at the mention of his name the innumerable hosts broke into con-

fused and volleyed thunders that for twenty-seven minutes seemed to shake the foundations of earth and sky.

Like the chorus of an anthem, with measured solemnity, the galleries chanted, "Blaine! Blaine! James G. Blaine!" myriads of stamping feet keeping barbaric rhythm, while plumes and banners waved, and women with flags and scarfs filled the atmosphere with motion and color and light.

It was the passing of Blaine. That gigantic demonstration was at once a salutation and a requiem. The Republican party there took leave of their dying leader, and bade him an eternal farewell.