

THE FOREIGN POLICY OF PRESIDENT HARRISON.

BY THE HON. THEODORE ROOSEVELT,
OF THE UNITED STATES CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION.

THE dealings of the United States with foreign powers should be considered from no partisan standpoint. Our party divisions affect ourselves purely; and when we are brought face to face with a foreign nation we should act as Americans merely. It is therefore a matter of profound congratulation that during the last three years and a half under the Administration of President Harrison, our intercourse with foreign nations has been carried on in a manner highly honorable to our Government, and in a way that should make all Americans proud of their country. During this time our State Department has had to settle many difficult diplomatic questions, sometimes involving the accommodation of our already peace-

ful relations with friendly countries in a manner that might make them even more advantageous; and at other times when the national honor was involved by the threat of hostile collision with a foreign power. In every case the same firm, resolute, and yet friendly policy has been pursued. With countries with which we were in alliance treaties have been obtained which have inured to our great material advantage. When our interests have clashed with our neighbors we have made it evident that we were quietly determined to uphold our rights, and at the same time desirable of an honorable and peaceful settlement, where this could be obtained. When it became evident that there had been wanton aggression against any of our people, we firmly demanded and obtained complete redress; and, on the other hand, we as promptly made suitable reparation where our citizens were at fault, altho taking care that it should be evident that this reparation was granted because of our own sense of right and justice, and not in the least from any fear of duress. In short, the record of our dealing with foreign powers for the past three and a half years has been one on which every American citizen, proud of his country and anxious to see her hold her own honorably and well among the nations of the earth, should look with genuine pride; and it is indeed a shortsighted and contemptible spirit of partisanship, or else sheer lack of proper American feeling, that can make any of our citizens adopt a different attitude. No other Administration since the Civil War has made so excellent a record in the management of our foreign relations.

At the very outset of its career, this Administration was suddenly confronted with a question which threatened, at one time, to involve the country in a conflict with the most powerful military nation of Europe. This was over the Samoan affair, in which the Germans had proceeded in such a high-handed manner as not only to bring about civil war among the natives, but to jeopardize the interests of all the other foreign residents on the island, including especially the Americans and the English. The peculiar exigencies of British politics at the moment forbade Lord Salisbury's interfering; but our Government was withheld by no considerations of the kind. Quietly, but with perfect firmness and with utter indifference to the clamor of that small section of our own press which has earned the unenviable distinction of invariably taking the foreign side of every international question, our Government took measures which offered an effectual check to the German pretensions, and caused Germany at once to lower her crest and come to satisfactory terms. In writing of the affair, one of the ablest and also one of the most bitterly anti-American of the British Tory editors was forced into the statement that Great Britain, in spite of her enormous naval force, submitted tamely to German aggression until it was left for the "navyless American Republic to show her the path of honor." (Parenthetically, I would remark that under the admirable administration of Secretary Tracy, we are rapidly approaching the point where the jeer of "navyless" will no longer be appropriate.) This incident was important, if for no other reason because it showed that the American Government, when it came to a question of its rights, recked nothing of the size or power of its opponent, and that it would demand them as fearlessly and resolutely from the most powerful European nation as from the pettiest.

The country with which diplomatic questions are most apt to arise, because of the extent and variety of our points of contact, is Great Britain; and the difficulty in dealing with her is enhanced by the fact that in relation to us she is really a dual power—that is, Great Britain and Canada; and any irritation arising because of the deeds of the one is sure to react on our intercourse with the other. The main question which has arisen between us and Great Britain during the last three years has been that of the Bering Sea seal fisheries, fisheries owned by Americans, operated in the interest of the whole civilized world, and at one time threatened with total extinction by the predatory acts of the Canadian sealers. To Canada the preservation of the seals was nothing. She cared only for the immediate benefit accruing to her citizens by their destruction; and Great Britain, whose interests really were merely those of the rest of the world in the matter, was pledged to back up Canada's pretensions. The interests of the United States, on the other hand, were the interests of civilization. We wish to preserve the seal herds for our own benefit, but incidentally this preservation is for the benefit of all men. In this controversy the United States behaved with the dignified firmness and wise liberality that marked its dealings with Germany over the Samoan affair. An open rupture was avoided, while at the same time an agreement was concluded which allowed us to put a definite stop to the piratical acts of the Canadian sealers, and provided that the whole dispute should be settled peaceably and honorably by a board of neutral arbitrators.

With Italy, the question that arose was of an entirely different nature, resulting from the lynching of a number of Italians in New Orleans in a time of civic disturbance and commotion. Here Americans were the aggressors, and our Government showed itself as prompt to offer satisfaction when its citizens had done wrong as in the case of Chile it afterward showed itself prompt to demand it when they had suffered wrong. Nevertheless on this occasion too, we made it perfectly clear that we acted as

we did because of our sense of justice, and not through fear of any possible consequences. When the Italian Government, over-irritated by the injury its citizens had suffered, made demands which we could not grant, while the Italian press freely indulged in threats, our Government instantly took the position that we could yield nothing to menace, and that we were politely indifferent to any hostile attitude our foes might take. Then when Italy had definitely abandoned this hostile attitude, and with it any idea of obtaining from us aught that we were not impelled to yield by our own sense of justice, we made reparation and offered indemnity for the wrong done.

Soon after the opening of the Administration, a great pan-American Congress was held in Washington. Great good resulted from this, both in the way of bringing about a better understanding among the Governments that took part in it, and recognizing the great principle of arbitration as the proper method of settling international disputes, thus lessening the chance of future wars, and also in paving the way for a closer commercial union. The immediate and tangible results of the policy then inaugurated and since successfully carried out by the President and his diplomatic agents, have been seen in the reciprocity treaties which have been successfully negotiated with Brazil and various West Indian Islands and Central American States, to the great benefit of American commerce. Commercial treaties inuring to the advantage of our industries have also been negotiated with the European nations with which our trade relations are closest.

Of all the diplomatic incidents that have occurred during the term of service of the present Administration, however, the most important was the affair with Chile, an affair of the most serious character, which at one time threatened open war, and the successful settlement of which reflects the highest honor upon the Administration and upon the American people, which it so worthily represented. It should be a matter of keen regret to every American who wishes well to his country that a certain number of the opposition newspapers, especially in the Northeastern States, should have habitually and uniformly treated this Chilean affair as they had before treated the Samoan and Bering Sea affairs, in a spirit of the grossest partisanship, and with the most contemptible lack of all true American feeling. They showed no hesitation in playing into the hands of our open enemies, the Chilean aggressors, and of their abettors, the English residents in Chile and the English newspaper press of Britain, who, actuated partly by national prejudice and partly by trade interests, did all in their power to foment Chilean hostility toward the United States, and steadily excused and apologized for the Chilean acts of aggression. Not even the English press itself showed more bitter and unscrupulous mendacity in traducing the actions of our Government and of its diplomatic and naval representatives in Chile than did these, I am happy to say comparatively few journals of the Northeastern States; and by the consistent malevolence of their utterances and their unwearying perversion of the facts, they have actually clouded the minds of many good people on this subject.

It is safe to state in the most sweeping terms possible that throughout the controversy with Chile the United States was absolutely in the right and Chile absolutely in the wrong, and that the United States and its diplomatic and naval representatives in all their actions affecting the Chilean Government behaved with a strict impartiality, with a dignity and moderation, and yet with a firm determination to uphold the honor of the flag which was beyond praise. The facts in the affair are briefly as follows:

One of the revolutions, so deplorably common in the South American States, broke out in Chile and was attended by unusually bloody and desperate fighting, the Chileans being a fierce and brave race. Immediately upon the outbreak of hostilities, the State Department at Washington notified our Minister, Mr. Egan, that the United States would preserve an attitude of absolute neutrality; and at the same time the Navy Department issued most full and explicit orders to the commanders of our naval vessels on the Chilean coast to see that neutrality was rightly observed, while protecting the rights of American citizens. Both our diplomatic and our naval representatives carried out these instructions to the very letter with the utmost fidelity. Minister Egan, in conjunction with the diplomatic representatives of other countries, including France and Brazil, at the request of some of the most prominent members of the warring Chilean factions, sought to bring about a peaceable settlement of the difficulty, purely in the interest of humanity. The attempt failed. Mr. Egan in his conduct toward the two parties behaved with entire impartiality, and showed himself to be actuated, in every particular of his conduct, solely by a desire to uphold the honor of the American flag, and at the same time to render such services as he could in the name of humanity to the unfortunate who were threatened by the vindictive ferocity of whichever faction happened for the time to be uppermost. At one time, while the Presidential party was still in power, he was forced to extend the asylum of his legation to certain members of the Revolutionary party; and when the Balmacedists threatened to take these refugees away by force he promptly notified them that he

would raise the American flag over his building, and shoot the first man who attempted to make forcible entry into it; he thus made practical proof of his willingness to risk death rather than see the flag dishonored by the surrender of the refugees who had trusted to its protection. It is hard for a man with a particle of American feeling in him to read Mr. Egan's action in this case without feeling his veins thrill.

The Chileans, as a whole, are hostile toward foreigners; and, tho with many fine qualities, are a turbulent people, with a peculiar hatred of Americans; and Minister Egan was at times obliged to interfere on behalf of American citizens who were maltreated by the natives. In at least one case the authors of the maltreatment were identified with the Presidential party, then in power; and Mr. Egan, always on the alert to see that the rights of American citizens were fully observed, promptly demanded and obtained reparation and apology. When the Revolutionary party triumphed he continued to act in the same way. Exactly as in the hour of trial he had let the threatened Revolutionary leaders find asylum in the American Legation, so when the Revolutionists were successful, he protected in the same manner various Balmacedist officials from the cruelty of their foes. The Revolutionists dared not actually violate the American Legation; but they set spies all around it and harassed the Minister and the other American inmates in many different ways, and declined to allow the refugees to leave, demanding their surrender. Mr. Egan, supported cordially by our Government, refused point blank to allow any such surrender, and insisted upon our rights with dignity, firmness and moderation. He was very properly continued in his position; and, but the other day, had the pleasure of receiving in person the promise of indemnity, given by the Chileans, to atone for the acts about to be narrated.

During this period there were instances of friction with the Chileans with which Minister Egan had no concern. The first occurred in reference to the "Itata," a ship belonging to the insurgent party, which came to one of our ports, as was alleged by competent authority, with the purpose of violating the neutrality laws. Upon a *prima-facie* case being made out, it became our duty to seize her until the courts could pass on the question. This was done, and a United States officer was put in charge; but she made her escape, ran off with the official, putting the latter ashore some hours afterward; took on board a cargo of arms while in American waters (which she was thus able to do only by committing this breach of arrest), and continued her voyage to Chile. Such a breach of arrest could, of course, not be permitted. One of our vessels followed her, and upon her arrival in Chilean waters she was promptly surrendered by the Revolutionary party, the acting Minister of Foreign Affairs for this party voluntarily taking this step as soon as he was made acquainted with the circumstances under which the "Itata" procured her cargo and made her escape. It is thus seen that the Revolutionists themselves instantly admitted the entire propriety and justice of the action of the United States in this "Itata" affair. It is difficult to believe that, in spite of the fact that the equities of the case were thus plainly admitted to be with the United States even by those most intimately concerned in the matter, some of the more unscrupulous among our own party opponents at home should have actually had the audacity to represent this simple punishment of contempt of judicial process as in some mysterious way an act of hostility to the Congressional or Revolutionary party.

Soon after the complete triumph of the Revolutionary party the most serious incident of all occurred. The Chileans were excited to the point of madness by their ferocious internecine strife, and their smoldering hatred for Americans was beginning to break into a blaze, fanned by the jealous rivalry of the English residents and representatives in Chile, and encouraged by the worse than folly of those Americans who were persistently appearing as apologists for the Chileans, whether from sheer lack of a proper patriotic spirit or from narrow and reckless partisanship. Two weeks after the final triumph of the Revolutionists, when ample time in which to restore order had elapsed, and when the other foreign war ships in port were granting their sailors the usual liberty, a portion of the crew of the American war ship "Baltimore" was similarly allowed ashore. The men were unarmed, and behaved in a perfectly proper and orderly manner. Suddenly they were assailed by an organized mob, several of the men were killed and others mishandled with circumstances of inhuman and revolting brutality; and the police in many cases rendered active or passive assistance to the rioters. The most careful investigation has shown conclusively that the American sailors committed no act of disorder, and that the attack was wanton and unprovoked, and due merely to the fact that the unfortunate victims wore the uniform of our Republic. Under these circumstances our Government made immediate demand for reparation. To this the Chileans at first refused to accede, continually evading and seeking to delay any settlement. Our Government acted with the utmost patience and forbearance, granting all reasonable, and, indeed, some unreasonable, requests for delay; but it soon became apparent that forbearance was thrown away. The attitude of many of the Chilean representatives

in public and military life, as well as that of the Chilean press, continued to be most hostile toward all Americans. The commander of one of our war ships in Chilean waters was obliged to give the Chileans fair notice that he would repel any attempted injury by force in order to save the flag from insult. The Chilean Secretary of Foreign Affairs, *Senor Matta*, actually issued a grossly offensive and impertinent open circular letter in reference to the perfectly temperate reports of the President and Secretary of the Navy of the United States dealing with the affair. At the same time that all reparation was thus refused, the American legation was practically put in a state of siege. The Chileans were without doubt encouraged greatly to adopt their attitude by the conduct of the American newspapers so often alluded to, which persisted, not only in taking the side of the Chileans, but in roundly asserting that under no circumstances would the United States go to war with Chile. These utterances amounted to putting a premium upon Chilean contumacy; and had there been a conflict it would have been more directly owing to the conduct of this portion of our press than to anything else, while for us to have yielded would have been an intolerable national disgrace and humiliation.

Fortunately, however, the Chilean authorities themselves at last became convinced of the falsehood of these statements that there need be no fear of war. From the moment when hostilities became possible, the Navy Department had been quietly preparing a thoroughly adequate naval force, working with an energy and success that argues well for the conduct of this department in any future crisis. So admirably was the work done that by the time affairs in Chile came to a head the cooler statesmen of the country saw plainly that the United States had made ready a force amply sufficient to insure the destruction of the Chilean Navy, the bombardment of the Chilean forts, and the ruin of Chile's foreign commerce, as well as probably the rending from it of the nitrate ports which had been taken from Peru. All that was necessary was to show the Chileans that this force would be used forthwith, if there was not an immediate compliance with our just demands for reparation. Accordingly the President sent to the Chilean Government his ultimatum, and four days afterward very properly sent a message to Congress explaining what he had done, and practically announcing that unless his demands were complied with immediately and fully by Chile there would be a war. The ultimatum to Chile was sent on January 21st; the message to Congress was sent on the morning of the 25th; the entry by the telegraph operator on the last sheet of the telegram containing Chile's reply to the ultimatum, the original of which I have before me, shows that it was received at the telegraph station in Washington, at 6 A.M. on the 26th.

This timely display of firmness, together with the knowledge of the effective preparations which had been made by the Navy Department, produced a change of heart in our opponents. The Chilean Government promptly replied to the ultimatum granting all that was asked. They withdrew the offensive *Matta* circular and receded without reservation from all the positions that they had taken. Finally, only the other day, they voluntarily agreed to pay to our representative, Mr. Egan, the sum of \$75,000, as indemnity for the lives of the sailors who had been slain by the Chilean mob.

It is a noteworthy fact that the Secretary of State, by whom this agreement was made, is *Señor Errazurez*, the same gentleman who, acting on behalf of the provisional Government at Iquique, had so promptly admitted the justice of the American position in regard to the "Itata." No man was better able to judge of the rights of the case than *Señor Errazurez*, and his action as regards both the "Itata" and the sailors of the "Baltimore" show that the Chilean authorities who were best acquainted with the facts were among the first to recognize the entire justice of the American position.

Throughout this whole trying controversy the position of Minister Egan and of the American naval officers, was misrepresented in the most scandalous manner by that small portion of the American press already alluded to. These papers actually went to the length of copying and distributing broadcast letters of various Chilean citizens which can be stigmatized only as gross and willful slanders, upon our representatives, and this apparently without so much as taking the trouble to inquire into their veracity. Every kind of accusation against both Minister Egan and the American commanders of the ships in Chilean waters was published. On the other hand, it would be unjust to accept these papers as representing the attitude even of their own party. The heart of the American people is sound enough when it comes to dealing with a foreign foe. I fully believe that the majority, even of the Democratic opponents of the Administration were resolute in their purpose to hold up its hands in the Chilean matter; and I gladly bear testimony to the fact that this was the attitude assumed by very many of the Democrats, including their most honored leaders, in Congress, and especially of the Southern Democrats—such men as Senator Morgan and Congressman Blount, for instance, to mention merely men who, being on the Foreign Affairs committees, naturally had their attention especially directed to our foreign relations.

A careful study of the records of the State and Navy

Departments shows that the Administration did not enjoin the strictest neutrality upon its representatives, which neutrality these same representatives strictly obeyed, but also shows that the Administration did not trust blindly to its instructions being obeyed but did even more than was required of it, keeping a jealous eye on the action of its subordinates, and promptly telegraphing for full information concerning any case of alleged infringement of the neutrality laws that was reported from any responsible source. The letters from the Department of State and from the Department of the Navy to their Government agents in Chile show that prompt inquiry was made as to the facts in each case of alleged wrongdoing; but in every case the accusations as far as any wrong to Chile was concerned, proved absolutely groundless. Thus, at the time of the killing of the sailors of the "Baltimore," the American authorities made a full report, showing that the attack was a wanton, unprovoked and deliberate piece of brutality. The Chilean authorities denied this, and our more violent factional opponents in our own country, accepted their denial as true. Yet we have now just received the report of the testimony taken in the Chilean court of inquiry itself, and this practically corroborates in the most important particulars the original statements in the American report, showing that the conclusions reached and stated by our American officers at the outset were just and exact.

Recently a paper was published in our press coming from a Chilean named Trumbull, a paper couched in grossly abusive language, and filled with the most slanderous misstatements. Not only was this paper widely circulated, but its statements were accepted as true, and were used as material upon which to base editorials. Yet it was simply a tissue of slander, as regards Mr. Egan and our naval officers; and those who accepted its statements either did know this at the time, or ought to have taken the trouble to find out before adopting its contents as their own. There was one very comic feature of this paper. Mr. Trumbull was a fanatical hater of Mr. Egan for the very good reason that Mr. Egan had performed his duty in an able and upright manner. He therefore filled his paper with coarse abuse of Mr. Egan and with innuendoes against him, but ended by stating that Mr. Egan was so shrewd that he had been entirely unable to obtain any proof of his wrongdoing! In other words, the most unscrupulous opponent of Mr. Egan, tho willing enough to indulge in a foolish and rancorous tirade against him, is forced to admit, practically, that his conduct has been so admirable, under peculiarly trying circumstances, that it is impossible for his worst foes to find a scintilla of evidence against him. It is difficult to wish a stronger tribute than that thus offered to Mr. Egan. I was no friend of Mr. Egan's original appointment; but he has acted as an American representative in a way that proves that he deserves well of all Americans, and I earnestly hope that his career in our diplomatic service may be long, and that in it he may rise to the highest positions.

The only other important statement in the Trumbull letters was a revamping of certain old and malicious untruths about our naval representative, especially Admiral Brown. It stated that Admiral Brown had practically acted as a spy in the interests of the Balmacedists at the time of the final landing of the Congressional forces near the capital city, having steamed down to witness the landing and then having returned and given information of it to the Balmacedist authorities, thereby helping to bring about the needless slaughter of the final struggle. The statement is simply false from beginning to end. Mr. Trumbull either did know or ought to have known that it was false when he made it, and the American editors who have copied it into their papers likewise must have known, or ought to have known, that they were copying and circulating a falsehood. Admiral Brown's testimony on the subject is perfectly explicit, and is borne out by the testimony of another eye-and-ear witness, Captain Sampson, also of the United States Navy. This testimony shows that the first information that the American naval people had of the landing came from the Balmacedists themselves early in the morning of the day; that the Balmacedist admiral then told them from information he had himself previously received, not only about the landing of the troops, but as to the number of troops that had landed, and even of the very names of the ships and transports. Thereupon, fulfilling his duty, the admiral steamed off to the spot where the landing was taking place, taking with him an officer of the German Squadron, but no other outsider, and that he returned in the evening; that he did not give, and could not possibly have given the Balmacedists any new information, for the excellent reason already set forth, that he had obtained the information from them themselves originally, and that not only the authorities, but the people at large, knew all the essential facts, at least ten hours before Admiral Brown landed again after his return from the point of debarkation of the Congressional forces. Admiral Brown and Captain Sampson are men of the highest standing, and when they positively assert that such and such facts are so it would need the strongest testimony to overturn their statements. So far from such testimony having been produced, there has not even been an attempt to produce it. Not one shred of evidence has been offered in support of the malicious slan-

ders originated by Mr. Trumbull and various other Chileans, and circulated, to their own infinite discredit, by the English and a few American papers.

Trumbull's summing up about Egan is: "I frankly own that his shrewdness has made it impossible to get any proof against him"; as extraordinary an admission as ever ended a slanderous attack. Most of the Trumbull letter is devoted to the deeds of an American consul, who is alleged to have speculated on the exchange, which is forbidden by consular regulations, altho not by those of some other nations; but these alleged misdeeds have no bearing on the complication between Chile and the United States. The only direct charge worth notice affecting our relations with Chile is couched in the following language:

"The United States Navy's effective support was given to (Balmaceda) and his cause. . . . On the afternoon of August 20th he (Admiral Brown) ran out to Quinteros and came back flying. He at once sent an officer to cable his cipher dispatch to Washington. That officer, Lieut. S. L. Dyer, at the same time handed in a dispatch for the *New York Herald* (which must have been read by the Intendencia, since it bears his signature, 'Viel,' and a countersign to allow of its being forwarded), giving in plain English, which he thoroughly understood, the result of the 'San Francisco's' observation. No one can gainsay this, or the fact that it establishes that the United States Navy effectually assisted Balmaceda to prolong his iniquitous reign."

In reference to this charge Admiral Brown made a detailed report, as follows:

"At 9.30 A.M., on August 20th, I went on shore and, when near the Intendencia, met Major Herera, of Vice Admiral Viel's staff, who speaks English perfectly. On asking if there was any news, he replied that the Opposition had landed in force at Quinteros at daylight, and that this fact was known to everybody.

"To verify this statement, I went immediately to the office of Vice Admiral Viel, Intendente of Valparaiso, and on meeting him he informed me that it was true that a landing had been made at Quinteros, and that he had informed the President. He gave me the names of all the ships of war, transports and tugs, and said that about ten thousand men were in the expedition. I asked him if he was sure that a landing had been effected. He then detailed to me the facts. . . .

"I asked the Admiral what the Government was going to do to oppose the advance of the insurgents. He said that the Government forces had advanced, and that fighting would probably take place to the north of the Aconcagua River; that the insurgents would be attacked and driven back to their ships at Quinteros. He allowed me to look at the maps, and pointed out the location of the insurgents at that time, and the routes which the Government troops would take. I then asked Admiral Viel if this information was to be considered confidential, and he said, 'No; it is known to every man, woman and child in Valparaiso and Santiago.' (This statement of Admiral Viel was subsequently, at my request, repeated by him in the cabin of the German flagship 'Leipzig,' in the presence of Rear-Admiral Valois of the German Navy, and Captain Sampson of this ship. . . .

"We got under way a few minutes after noon (the engine-room log showing that the engines were started ahead at 12:03 P.M.) and steamed to Quinteros, a distance of eighteen miles. We made a turn around the bay and returned to Valparaiso, where we anchored at 4:50 P.M."

In short, Mr. Trumbull accuses Admiral Brown of having given Admiral Viel certain information on the evening of the 20th; and Admiral Brown responds by showing that the exact reverse was the case, and that the information was given to him by Admiral Viel on the morning of the 20th!

This answer is absolutely conclusive until it is contradicted by proof. None of the papers who have adopted and made their own the statements in the Trumbull letter have presented such proof, or have attempted to do so. If they have it in their possession let them produce it; if not let them make frank and humble apology for the baseless slanders into which they were led by trusting to the Trumbull letter, with its foul attack upon the honor of the United States Navy.

To sum up, then, in the Chilean affair the Americans were wholly blameless, and the Chileans the aggressors in a peculiarly brutal fashion; and the conduct of the Administration, of its diplomatic representative and of its naval representatives in Chile, have throughout the whole affair been beyond praise, and have nobly vindicated the honor of the American name.

WASHINGTON, D. C.